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Lari and Kuma, the chief tellers of the story

# BY CANOE TO CANNIBAL-LAND

BY

J. H. HOLMES, of Papua

*Illustrated by Savile Lumley*

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## FOREWORD

“**B**Y Canoe to Cannibal-land” is a Papuan story of a missionary journey in the Gulf of Papua, New Guinea, told by Papuan boys in a Papuan way. The story is written in this way so that readers may discover what the thoughts of the Papuans are and what they talk about to one another.

The names of the boys, men, rivers and villages have all been changed into easier forms to enable British readers to read and utter them. The “Old Man” of the story was, as will be guessed, a missionary, and was so named, as a Papuan form of respect, when he was not called

HOMU.

Chapter  
One

WHERE LARI  
FOUND GOD

(SCENE.—*Inside a Papuan hut. The boys, Lari and Kuma, are talking. Two younger boys, Cookie and Mami, enter one after the other.*)

O O'AH, oo'ah! (*Hurrah, hurrah!*)  
Cookie, you noisy brat, don't you know all the fellows are asleep! Where have you been!

I've been with the Old Man, and, Lari, I've got such news!

Where's Mami?

He's with him now.

What's he doing there?

Any more questions, Lari? Here he comes, ask him; he can answer for himself.

(*Mami enters, bursting with news.*) Oo'ah, oo'ah! Halloa, Lari, are you here? I say, Lari, we are going on a journey! Really, we are, we are going on a journey!

Who are the "we," Mami?

Why, the Old Man, You, Kuma, the crew, Cookie and I.

Cookie and you! Who says so?

The Old Man says so. He says we are going on a journey with him.

Where are we going?

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

I don't know! But, Lari, my thought-things tell me that it will be to cannibal-land.

Well, don't listen to them. Go and turn in, you kids ought to have been asleep ever so long. Go and turn in!

Do you hear, Mami? Go and turn in, as Lari has told you. Get to sleep, that your spirit may go with Cookie's on a journey into dreamland.

Yes, I hear the noise of your words, Kuma. We are going to sleep, but don't you talk about our spirits and what they are to do when our bodies are asleep.

Do go away and sleep, dream, or what you like, only stop talking! (*Cookie and Mami go away.*)

Those two kids are a handful.

Let us make up the fire. I wish we could stop that howling wind and driving rain outside. The wind, the rain, the breakers pounding the beach, the thunder pealing, the lightning flashing; these tangle my thought-things to-night, try as I may to keep them apart.

You speak truly, Lari; my thought-things, too, are being swung to and fro, sometimes here, sometimes there, until I know not where they are, but, Lari, tell me about yours, and if the darkness-time has not passed when you have done I will take out mine and show them to you.

All right, Kuma, we will talk about things! Put on some firewood. Good! Pass the lime-gourd. Halloa! Where did you get all this lime?

Where did I get it? Ha, ha, ha! "Where

## Where Lari found God

did I get it ? ” Listen, Lari, I got it in this way from the people in the village. The Old Man sent me to tell them to get all the oyster shells they could find, burn them into lime and he would buy all the lime they could make, as he wanted it to make lime-wash for the inside of his water-tanks. I gave them his message and told them that if they had any over they could put it into my lime-gourd.

You were very wise, Kuma. It is good, fresh lime, with a nice bite in it.

So it is, Lari, but try a bite of this ginger-root with the betel nut and lime, then you will have a chew worth while ; and, I say, Lari, tell me about your thought-things ; take them out and show them to me.

My thought-things sometimes go back to the journeys I have made with the Old Man, sometimes to the journey we are about to make. Yes, my thought-things ! Well, listen, to these that have been stirred up to-night.

A long time ago, and soon after the Old Man came to live with us, he appointed me to be the “ capena ” (*captain*) of the boat he had at that time. One day he sent for me, asked me to pick out from among his boys a crew, and told me to get everything ready for an early start on a journey to the west.

Knowing that a journey to the west might mean a hurried visit to cannibal-land, or an equally risky venture up rivers unknown to us and, possibly, among tribes, hill-tribes, Kuma, with whom we had no friends, the boys I chose



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

as crew did not like the job, but for reasons I could not then understand we all felt that we must do as he bade us ; so we got to work and made ready for the journey.

The following morning, when the boat had been launched, food and baggage had been stowed and everything was ready for a start, the Old Man, with two of his houseboys, came along, got aboard, and in a jiffy we were away from the beach, heading west to anywhere he might wish to go.

It was a good morning for setting out on a journey on the sea. The sea was calm ; the breeze from the land was very gentle ; in fact, so light was it that we had to pull the oars for some time, whilst our sails flapped from gunwale to gunwale, to catch any cat's-paw of breeze that happened our way. So we carried on until about noon.

The Old Man, as is his custom, was mum about his plans. We talked to one another ; we talked to him ; we tried to draw him, to find out where we were going. It was no good ; he left us guessing things until, almost suddenly, what breeze we had had died away from the land, freshened into a strong wind astern ; a fair wind for our course west.

We took in our oars, goose-winged our sails, stowed ourselves as ballast, got our pipe going and a smile all round, as if we didn't care where we were going, or whether we should ever come back again to our kin.

The sun had reached the top, in fact, it had

## Where Lari Found God

made a start on the downward slope, when the Old Man began to rap out orders as if he had just made up his mind as to where we were going. Mainsail and jib were thrown over to the leeward; the crew lined up on the weather gunwale; the wind seemed to become suddenly angry and whipped the sea until it, too, became angry. We all knew that dirty weather was coming.

We carried on and tried to guess things, but we could not guess where we were going. We lowered our foresail, put a reef in the mainsail, but that did not seem to help us much. Still the seas broke over us; bale as fast as we might, still the water poured into the boat; the wind and the sea showed us no pity. Still the Old Man was silent.

At last I guessed things rightly. I saw we were running into a bay. I told him and he only said, "carry on as you are doing." We did carry on, and presently we were able to make out faintly the outline of a bay and we knew that we were heading for the shore. We ran in as far as we dared without making too much leeway, if we had to beat out again. When we were within a quarter of a mile from the beach we could see houses, and we then guessed where we were and began to hope that we should sleep ashore that night.

It was not to be. As we got nearer to the beach we got into shallow water; the waves became huge breakers, their spray became so dense that we could not see clearly what the people ashore were trying to signal to us.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

The next thing we had to do was to "bout ship," throw our sails over to starboard, reef and up foresail, and beat out of that bay as we best knew how. That *was* a beat out, Kuma! It is always on top of my thought-things when the Old Man talks about going on another journey on the sea.

Well, we got out and shaped our course for the next village west. What had already happened at our first try to get ashore happened again in our second attempt to get ashore. If anything, the second try was worse than the first, because twilight was upon us and there was nothing left for us but the whole of the darkness-time out there with that angry sea.

What the thought-things of the Old Man were we knew not. He sat in the stern-sheets with his two houseboys huddled against him. The sun had gone over the rim; the darkness-time was coming quickly upon us. If he had not shouted an order to me from time to time we might have thought that he was asleep.

The fury of the gale seemed to lash the sea into a frenzy. I knew not how to steer to keep the waves from coming aboard. Now and then one would catch us side-ways and the crew had to bale out the water until their backs ached. Just as things seemed to be at their worst, the Old Man told the boys to throw the sails over to port, so that I was able to bring her up a bit nearer to the wind, and we had not been going long on that tack before I knew he had changed our course.

## Where Lari Found God

By this time the moon was up and we could see high land starboard abeam, but the seas were still as bad as ever, and we did not seem to get much protection from the land we were passing. The moonlight, such as the racing clouds would allow us to see, looked friendly. The white crests of the huge waves as they tore by seemed to smile at us. But, Kuma, it was an awful night. I prayed to the god of the wind, and he only seemed to jeer at me. I prayed to the god of the sea, and he did not seem to heed my prayers. All I could do, that was any good, was to listen to the waves chasing up astern and try to dodge them so that when they swept by us we did not take any of them aboard.

At last, it might have been about the middle of the darkness-time, the Old Man got busy with words. He gave the order to lower the peak of the mainsail a little and told me to ease her off a bit. That seemed to ease things a little, but the wind was still very strong; and as I watched the great white combers rushing by, or heard others break almost every moment right astern, my thought-things tell me, even now as they come back from the long ago, that it looked as if we were making our last journey west.

Not long after we had changed our course and were running with a freer sheet, the Old Man became very alert. So had we, but we said nothing. What could we have said? What could we have done?

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

We could hear a thundering of waters ahead. The noise was other than that of the seas breaking about us. He, too, had heard it, and in quick time he had the lot of us busy enough. Long oars, to port and starboard, were put out and two boys to each oar were told off to man them. Other two boys had to stand by to let go jib and mainsail, and the rest of the crew had to out oars and be ready to pull for their lives when the order was given.

Well, there we were, ready for anything and kind of waiting for it to come along, when quite suddenly and just as if we had been in church the Old Man said, "We can do no more for ourselves, boys; let us bow our heads and ask God to do the rest."

I couldn't hear what he said to God, but I heard him say to his house-boys: "Now, my lads, you just sit tight by me. If you cry, or squeal, when we go over the bar you will not be my boys when we get back to the station again."

I can't get all the strands of my thought-things in their proper places, Kuma. They have got mixed and tangled with other storm-things, but to-night's storm brings back a lot of them, and I shall never forget saying to myself, "Lari, if the Old Man's God takes us safely over yonder bar and spares us to meet the coming daybreak, his God must be your God." Yes, Kuma, those were the words I spake to my other fellow inside, "his God must be your God."



**“ Then came a dash forward which took my  
breath away ”**

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

I don't know, now, just what happened. The sea had become all spume; one moment we seemed to be falling down and it looked as if the boat would dive right through the froth of the sea to the very bottom; the next moment it was as if something very big was sucking us backward; then came a dash forward, which took my breath away; there was a tug at something inside that made me gasp and then, quite suddenly, we knew we were in still water. The churning sea on the bar was astern; we had crossed it safely, and were floating quietly on the calm, still water of the lagoon. Yes, Kuma, we were floating on the calm, still water of the lagoon!

And what did you do then, Lari?

The boys shouted, "Oo'ah, oo'ah!"

Of course they did; but you, Lari, what did you do?

I don't know, Kuma! All I know is that my thought-things of the Old Man's God were turned upside down. I used to hear him talk about Him, pray to Him, and I used to say, "that is his custom, the custom of the men of his race," just as it is our custom to talk about our gods and to pray to them in our times of need; but that night, Kuma, there, in that lagoon, light came to my thought-things, I saw that the words I had spoken to my other fellow inside were true words: "his God must be your God." He is, Kuma! I found Him that night when we were floating quietly on the calm, still water of the lagoon.

Chapter  
Two

WESTWARD  
BOUND

*(On board the Sailing Canoe.)*

**S**HALL we get anywhere before another darkness-time, Lari ?

This canoe can't sail. She's too slow to get out of her own way. Why a water-logged craft, with only a cockatoo-feather for a sail would overtake us, pass us, and be out of sight before this old craft could get a move on.

Are you tired of the darkness-time, Kuma ?

Listen, Lari ! I'm tired of nothing, but I'm just aching to get somewhere. Out here on the great water (*sea*) it is kind of lonely. It is water before us, water behind us, water everywhere. No tree-things, no bird-things, to be seen during the darkness-time, and, Lari, one's thought-things talk, talk, they will talk. I'm tired of nothing, but if we must go to cannibal-land, well, the sooner we get there the better.

The Old Man whistles up the wind all the daytime ; we coax the land-breeze all the darkness-time, and what have we got ?

You speak truly. One squall with more rain in it than wind. Darkness and sleep ; well, they are kind, but darkness and keeping



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

watch out on the great-water are unfriendly, cold and lonely.

You are all in bits, Kuma. Pull yourself together and don't grumble! We are out here somewhere, which is no-where to us; but the coming day may bring a kind wind, and if it does before the coming of another darkness-time we shall be at the Veiai river. My word to you, Kuma, is, don't grumble. Don't forget that the Old Man is trying you out this journey. He doesn't know you as we do. He is sleeping now. What if his spirit is roaming about, and has heard your words about his canoe? He is very proud of her and speaks of her as if she were his child. She is not the child of his thought-things, because our people had double-canoes long before he came to live with us. With his axes and adzes, which are sharper than our stone-adzes, he was able to fell and hollow larger and longer trees than our people, but he has lashed them together in our way.

Yes, I know! The deck and the masts are different from ours and so are the sails, but he had them made so to make his canoe look like a fore and aft "sukuna" (*schooner*).

"Sukuna"! The men of his race seem to have a lot of different kinds of canoes, Lari. "The John Williams" they call a "kikima" (*steamer*). She has two masts for sails and a short, hollow one, out of which come clouds of black smoke. She must have a big fire in her inside, Lari! There are other canoes of theirs we see some-

## Westward Bound

times that the Old Man calls "katas" (*cutters*). I don't know how he remembers all the names of the canoes of his people!

I have learnt from him many of the words of his language, Kuma. They are hard to speak, but harder still to understand, because so many of them sound alike, but do not mean the same thing.

There you are, Lari! I have always told you that the Beritani (*British*) are a strange people, as strange as their language, because they never seem to do things as we do them and as they should be done.

We don't know the Beritani people, Kuma. The Old Man is the only man of his race that we know.

That's so! Perhaps he is just one to himself. Who knows? If he is not, well, all I can say is, that I am glad I am not a Beritani man!

What is it that bites your thought-things this darkness-time, Kuma? Are they itching because the Old Man has brought you on this journey? Are there no daylight-things that we can speak about?

Look at the sails, Lari; see how they flap forward and back; listen to the booms, how they creak and groan; thus it is with my thought-things. What happened about the middle of the darkness-time (*midnight*), when that rain-squall burst upon us? In a jiffy we got off all our clothes, stowed them away in a dry place and were ready for all the rain

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

that came our way. We did a sensible thing, because by the time the rain had ceased our bodies were dry and we had dry clothes to put on again.

What did the Old Man do? When the rain came he put on another coat, huddled where he could to keep dry, got soaked to the skin, and when the rain had ceased he had to strip off every shred of his clothes, get into dry clothes and Cookie had to make him hot kawfi (*coffee*) to warm him and keep away the shaking-sickness (*malaria*).

I can't understand his strange ways!

He's the same about his food, so Cookie tells me. Of course, Cookie doesn't mind, because many tit-bits come his way that he would not get if the Old Man were not so faddy about his food.

Cookie says that the best parts of a fowl, like the entrails, he will have taken out and thrown away, thrown away, Lari! and what he gets of the fowl, after he has chased it about his plate with a knife and fork is not worth eating. He must be one to himself, Lari, or his countrymen would not be strong enough to do the things he says they do.

As with fowl so with fish, Cookie says. If, by chance, Mami cleans a fish for the Old Man's table and overlooks something inside which gives each fish its own flavour, poor Cookie has to clean the fish for a long time to come; but, as he says, it doesn't matter, because he and Mami know what to do with what the

## Westward Bound

Old Man will not eat. If it is just his custom, well, it does not matter much, because we get on very well with him. If, however, it is the custom of the people of his country to put on more clothes when it rains, and if they are all as faddy about their food as he is; well, I must say again, I'm glad I'm not a Beritani man!

That'll do, Kuma! You have thrown off a lot of words. Lift your chin from your knees. Stand up and look astern towards the east. Good! What do you see?

O joy-things! I see the rim of daybreak, Lari, rising out of the sea.

True, O Kuma, and what do you feel?

O ye spirits of my ancestors! It's the kiss of the morning-breeze playing upon my cheeks!

You are a child of the daylight-things, sure enough, Kuma! Slack out the main-sheet! That'll do! Now go for'ard, see that the foresail is drawing, then stir up Cookie and the crew, but do it quietly, because the Old Man is sleeping.

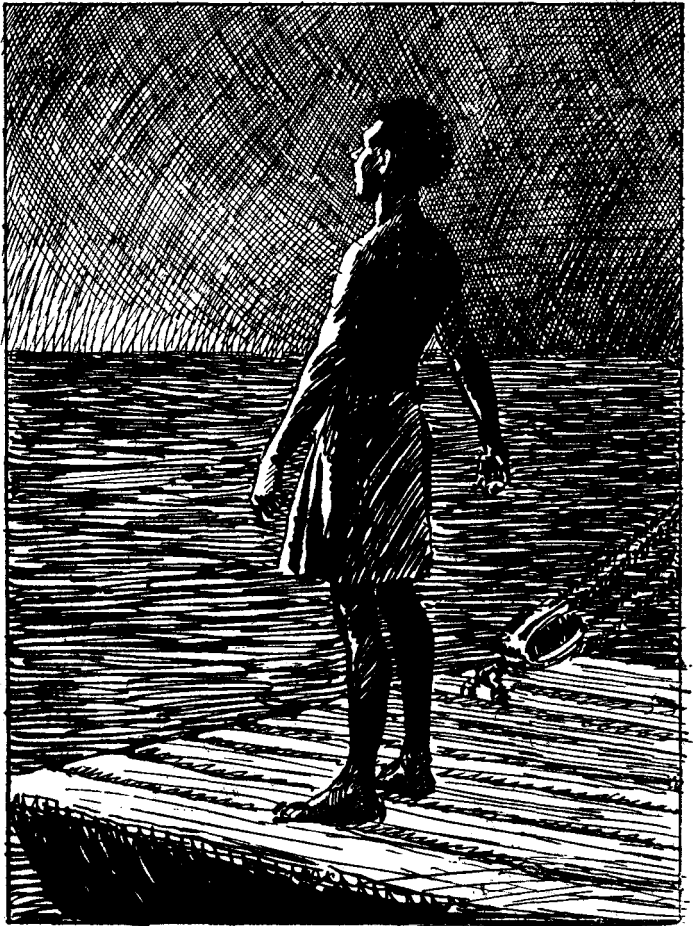
Cookie, Cookie, wake up!

Is — that — you — Mami? Mami — come on — ratting — Mami — let's go —

Cookie, Cookie, wake up! Hush! don't make a noise! The Old Man is asleep.

The Old Man is very happy to-day, Lari.

When I took his coffee to him this morning he said: "We shall reach the Veiai river before the sun goes down, if this wind holds, Cookie."



**" O joy-things ! I see the rim of daybreak "**

## Westward Bound

And what did you say to him, Cookie ?

I am speaking to Lari, and not to you, Kuma.

Did you ask him if you and Mami might go ratting ?

Kuma thinks that a joke, Lari. When he woke me this morning he shook me nearly to bits. Made me get up and would not give my spirit time to get back to my body.

Hush, you fellows, the Old Man is speaking. Yes, Sah, I see low lying land on the starboard bow.

Bring her in a little, Lari ! sang out the Old Man. That'll do ! Keep her at that ! I think we are heading now for the eastern passage of the Veiai river. You shin aloft, Mami, and keep a good look out. Get for'ard, Kuma, and be ready to handle the sails. I want to get into that passage before the sun goes down !

What do you say, Mami ? Shout boy ! We are not ashore now.

There are breakers on the sandspit east of the passage, Sah !

Can you see the passage ?

There is no passage, Sah. Only breakers right across the mouth of the river.

Do you think we can cross the bar, Lari, or get through the breakers in the passage ?

We can't get in either way, Sah. Yonder sandbank to the westward is high and dry. The tide must be at its lowest ebb. If we try to cross the bar, or to get through the passage, the canoe will be smashed to bits and what

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

the seas leave of us the crocodiles, or the cannibals ashore, will pick up.

You speak truly, Lari. Slack out your sails, wear her away a little, we'll get to the leeward of the westward sandbank, and try to get in through the western passage. This is a spanking breeze!

Look alive, you fellows for'ard, throw the foresail over to starboard, give the mainsail a little more slack, that's good! Now she's moving! Kuma, come aft! What's the matter with the crew!

They don't like going into the western passage of the Veiai, Sah. They are afraid the Korian scouts may be about, and——

And what, my boy? Speak out!

Well, Sah, they know what the Korians will do to us if they catch us.

"If they catch us." "If they catch us." Yes, I hear! "If they catch us." Well, until then, it is up to us to carry on. We're in a bit of a mess, I can see. This wind is going to blow hard the coming darkness-time. The sea will become bigger. We cannot get into the eastern passage; we dare not risk a night out here; the Korians may be in there. There is nothing else that we can do but carry on. We must try to get inside the western passage before the darkness-time comes. All hands come aft! Squat on the deck! Keep her as she's going, Lari! Listen, boys, to these words which I have read to you many times from God's Holy Book. They tell us that

## Westward Bound

“ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” You know the verses which follow this one. Well, they are ours just now. This is no time for talking to one another. We can do no good by taking out our fears and showing them to one another, but it will help us to talk to God.

The sun is going down away there in the west. Let us bow our heads, close our eyes and talk to God.

Our Father, Thou art the God of the winds. At Thy command they cease to blow and are silent. Thou art the God of the sea and can still its troubled waters to quietness and calm. Thou art the God of all peoples of all lands, our God and the God of the cannibals ashore. Thou knowest our need just now. Thou knowest that we are so helpless that we cannot save ourselves from the wind and the sea out here.

Show us the way into safety that after this darkness-time has passed we may go whither Thou wouldst have us go and tell the peoples whom we meet the Good News of Thy Love.

Hear our prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Now, my boys, cheer up ; it's not your custom to be afraid. Pull yourselves together and be men ! There's light enough left to find the passage. We will make a try for it. If we cannot get in, we must stand out to sea, and with God's help do the best we can until another daytime comes to show us what next we must try to do.



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Throw the foresail to port! Luff, Lari, that'll do!

There's the passage right ahead. It's a heavy sea running in, but the breakers are nothing more than we can tackle. Get out steer-oars and one of you boys come here to help Lari.

Lower fore and main sails. Stow them safely that the seas may not get them overboard.

Ship oars, boys! Take stroke, Kuma, but don't pull until I tell you!

Mami and Cookie stand by the staysail and jib! When I shout "let go," do it quick and lively!

Now boys, ready! All together, bend to the oars. Good! Pull away, my boys! Put your backs into it! We are right in the passage now. Keep her head straight, Lari! Hang on to those steer-oars you fellows! Down jib and staysail! Belay, sit tight, boys! Here they come! Swish! Hang on to those steer-oars! Good! We are nearly through! Stick to it, Lari, keep her head straight, man!

Thank God, we're through!

Now, Kuma, give them the stroke. Pull away, boys! Get across the estuary and then into the creek that runs down to Paimuai. We will anchor inside that creek this darkness-time.

What is it, Cookie?

"Makiki," Sah, to light the fire.

You will have no matches to light the fire, my boy, until we are well inside Paimuai

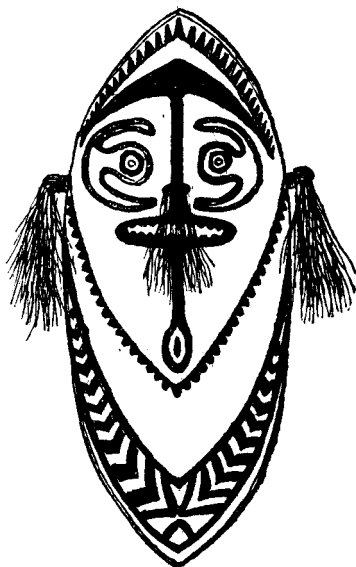
## Westward Bound

creek ; and listen, all of you, as soon as we come to our anchorage, put up the awning, let down the flaps and tie them tightly, before you light a match or make a fire.

Firelight tells people things in the darkness-time.

Let go the anchor ! Boat oars, boys ! Make everything snug as quickly as you know how !

We are in Paimuai creek at last !



*Papuan Carving*

Chapter  
Three

WHO IS  
AVI ?

*(In Paimuai Creek.)*

**D**O tell a yarn, Lari. I don't like this place. How long shall we be here ?

Don't be a kid, Mami ! We shall be here just as long as the Old Man wants to stay here, or as long as the bad weather outside keeps us here, if the wind blows out to-night he may tell us to up sail and get away to-morrow.

Get away to where ?

I don't know. Ask him, and——

And he won't tell me !

Now you are speaking sense, Mami, he won't tell you because he rarely ever tells us where we are going, not even when he, himself, knows where we are bound for ; sometimes he cannot tell us because the wind and sea drive us where he does not want to go. He says, "we are going west," or "we are going east," and if it happens to be inland he says, "we will push up river, to-day," which means going anywhere. I don't like the "up river" journeys, one never knows where they lead, whereas, the sea outside is all right. If in a big blow we get swamped we can always

## Who is Avi ?

manage to get ashore somehow and somewhere. It's knowing where you are that makes all the difference. On the coast we know where we are ; " up river " means going in search of inland villages and once we get into the bush we don't know where we are.

Are we in—— What was that, Lari ?

What is the matter, Mami ? You were going to ask, " Are we in cannibal-land ? " We are, and you had better pull yourself together. Don't let the Old Man see you jump as you did just now ; besides, don't forget that the men of our tribe are never afraid of anyone, anywhere, not even of the cannibals in cannibal-land.

That is good talk, Lari, in the daytime. I am not afraid when I can see things, but at night, in the darkness-time, I hear things. There, I heard it again !

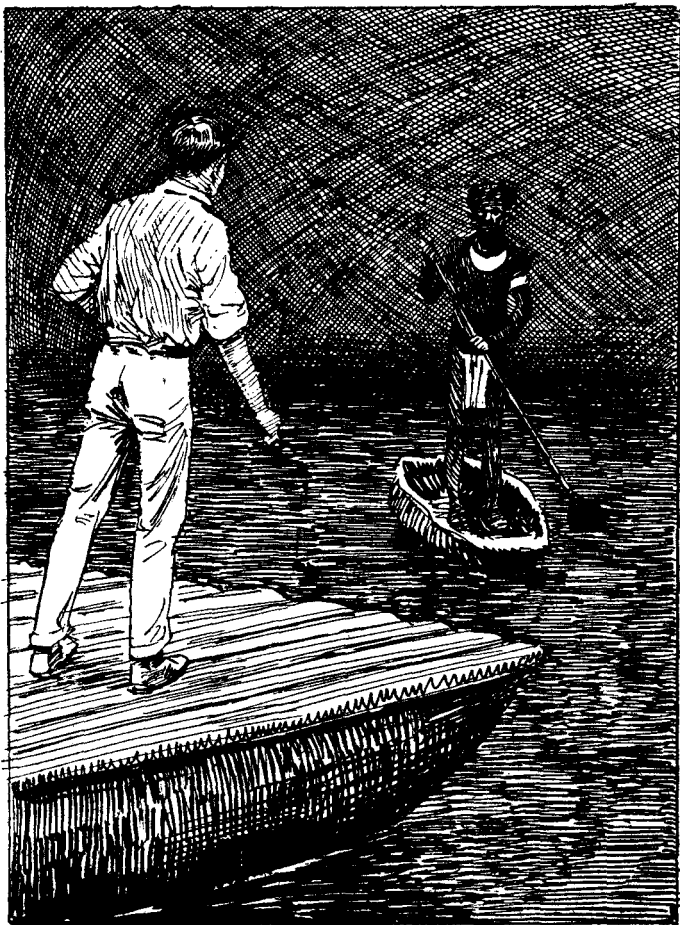
Keep quiet, lad, cover over the firestick. I, too, heard it. Sit quite still with your head bowed forward as if asleep. I will slither forward and peep out under the awning-flap. Put one hand on the oar behind you, if I shake it the least bit, creep aft at once, quietly wake the Old Man and tell him someone is coming towards us in a canoe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Someone is coming towards us in a canoe, Sah.

Who is it ?

I don't know, Sah. Lari sent me to wake you.



“ ‘Are you there, O White Chief?’ called a voice  
out of the darkness”

## Who is Avi ?

Where is Lari ?

He is for'ard, peeping out under the awning-flap.

Creep back to him, and don't wake any of the crew in doing so. Tell him I am awake and not to hail anyone coming to us. We shall be all right.

Are you there, O White Chief ? called a voice out of the darkness.

I am here. Who are you ?

I ? I am Avi, son of Kave !

Good ! Avi, son of Kave, get aboard quietly so as not to wake my boys.

What are you doing on the river at this hour of the night, Avi ?

I saw you, answered Avi, standing in this afternoon as if you were trying to find a passage into the Veiai river. Because of the heavy seas breaking across the passage you changed your course and headed west. I told Eku, son of Evara, the supreme chief of our tribe, and he sent me in search of you.

And having found me you return to him at once, Avi ?

Not so, O White Chief, for where thou goest thither I go.

But I go to Ravi when the day breaks.

Be it so, then, and I will go thither at once.

Stay with me to-night and we will go together.

It cannot be so. You will go by the way of the great water (*the sea*), I go by the narrow waterways (*creeks*).

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Let us go together by the way of the creeks.

That cannot be, O White Chief. The Korians are abroad. Some of them are of the hawk-people, their ears hear and their eyes see the moving things of the darkness-time.

Then why must you go to Ravi because I go, O Avi ?

Many moons ago, O White Chief, you told me that you go where the Great Sky Spirit sends you. I go where the supreme chief of my tribe sends me.

I see, so he sends you to Ravi because I am going there ! What message do you bear to the Ravi people ?

During last moon, this moon and the next, a black cloud rising in the north-west tells us we may have rain, but we are only guessing things, because it sometimes passes us by without a drop of rain. If, when stepping from your canoe to mine I step into the water, that is knowing things, O White Chief. If we meet at Ravi I shall have to take care that you do not step into the water when you step off your canoe.

You speak as the son of Kave, O Avi. Do as your chief bids you and may we soon meet at Ravi.

You stay here, O White Chief, until the day breaks, and may the land-breeze waft you safely out to the great water and all the way to Ravi. (*Avi leaves in his canoe.*)

Lari, come here ! Listen ; when the morning-star rises wake Cookie, see that he makes my

## Who is Avi ?

coffee promptly and gets something hot for the crew. Given a good land-breeze we will put out to sea at daybreak.

What was the Old Man saying, Lari ?

He said we shall put out to sea at daybreak, if there is a strong land-breeze.

Did he say where we are going when we get outside ?

Listen, Mami, you turn in and get to sleep. Here comes Kuma ; he will keep the rest of the watch with me.

Who was that man with our Old Man, Lari ?

He is Avi, or, as he calls himself, Avi, son of Kave.

Phew, I don't like the looks of that old fellow. His bald head and that deep dent across his skull. I wonder how he got that dent. He must have had an awful blow from somebody !

Be sure of it that he got it in the same way he got most of the many scars on his body. By all I have heard of him at one time he lived solely to fight, to kill and to eat his enemies, and when he could not get at them he would kill and eat any of his people who would oblige him with a quarrel. He's a decent old fellow in his way !

You seem to know him pretty well, Lari. I hope he won't betray our Old Man !

Don't worry yourself on that score, Kuma. Whilst keeping watch to-night I have been turning over my thought-things, getting the tangle out of them and putting them together



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

again. If I am not mistaken the Old Man is going to make a real friend of Avi before he has done with him.

The Old Man is going to make a real friend of Avi! He will never do it, Lari.

But he has done it, as I will show you when you give me a chance to tell you things.

He has made him his friend? Well, a Beritani man turns my thought-things inside out. To make a friend of a man-eater, why! why! my words will not come, Lari. You talk now!

All right, I will. Just now you wanted to know who Avi is. I told you who he says he is, but that did not tell you very much. At one time, when he was much younger, he was a great fighting-man, a warrior chief among his people, before the Old Man came to cannibal-land. I have heard it said that he got the dent across his skull when leading a raiding party in one of the hill villages; someone cracked his skull with a stone-club, but he never tells anyone how he got it.

He is good at telling yarns around a camp fire, but he never tells anything about himself and his past. His pig-yarns are fine. He tells one about a pig a bush-tribe gave to the Old Man when he was visiting them. I remember that pig because we boys who were with the Old Man on that journey thought we should have the joy of eating it. The Old Man, however, for reasons we could not understand, put a taboo on that pig and no one dared kill it.



**"A crowd of young warriors rushing after him"**

*(See page 36)*

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

What became of the pig, Lari ?

Ask Avi when he comes our way again. The last time I heard him yarn about it the pig had grown so high that there would not be room for it to stand between this deck and our awning.

You said just now, Kuma, that I seem to know Avi pretty well. I think I do, and for that reason I am not afraid of his ever betraying the Old Man's trust in him. I was with the Old Man on his first visit to Avi's village. We got into the Veiai river and near to the village just before the sun went down. The Old Man told us to stay on the canoe and he went alone up to the village. He was away some time, the light was failing, and we were beginning to get anxious about him, but were afraid to go to the village to look for him. Our capena (*captain*) got so concerned for the Old Man's safety that he decided to go ashore and look for him. He told us to keep our places with the oars dipping ready to push out and away if anything had gone wrong.

He jumped overboard, waded ashore and was just starting for the village when we saw the Old Man coming towards us. As he came nearer we could see he was taking things very quietly, smoking his pipe and seemingly happy enough. When he had got to within a few yards of the canoe we were alarmed to see a crowd of young warriors, led by Avi, rushing after him, and they would have been

## Who is Avi ?

upon him before he could have got aboard had not our capena caught hold of him from behind and swung him on to the deck of the canoe.

Just what happened then I do not know. Our capena yelled to us "pull away" and the Old Man shouted "belay." By this time Avi and his braves were right up to the stern of the canoe. The Old Man swung around and faced them ; he dared Avi and his braves to come a step nearer, and said something to the old fellow that made his face turn as white, almost, as a Beritani man's face. Avi hung his head like a beaten man. He was a beaten man. There and then something inside him died. What it was I do not know. Perhaps it was the cannibal-man inside of him who died.

We pulled up river not very far away from the village, where we found a good place to moor our canoe alongside the river's bank. We dared not anchor out in the stream because of the strong current rushing out to sea. We had supper and prayers, the Old Man told off the watch for the night, turned in and fell asleep.

He made a big mistake, however, in his choice of a watch for that night. We had some Rokoro boys aboard who had been engaged to help us in the rivers. Avi's rush at the village had frightened them. Our watch must have fallen asleep ; we had had a heavy day before we got into the river. Be that as it may, those boys slipped off the canoe during the night, swam ashore to Avi's village, and

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

we heard later that they stole a canoe and got back to their own village.

All we knew at the time was that they had gone; as a crew we were not strong enough to go where the Old Man had planned, so we got out of cannibal-land as quickly as we knew how.

We came back again a few moons later and got in again through the passage of the Veiai river, but we little thought the Old Man would go straight to Avi's village. He did, and when we left to go to other villages of the cannibals, Avi went with us. At first we did not like having him aboard. We did not trust him; we were afraid he would get his own back on the Old Man. We went into some strange places, places where all hands kept the night-watches, but we had not been long on the journey before we saw that Avi was truly the Old Man's friend. He guarded him night and day, and helped us into and out of places we could not have gone near by ourselves.

You know, Kuma, how our people dislike these cannibals. I am not going to say that I have grown to like them; but, all the same, I say again what I said to you just now of Avi, "He's a decent old fellow in his way," but I can recall an occasion when I thought he was a heartless old brute.

It was when the Old Man made a camp in Avi's village many moons ago. We did not want to camp there, but he said we deserved a few days' rest after the bad time we had

## Who is Avi?

with him in seeking bush-villages. Well, one evening Avi came home from fishing, and because of some tittle-tattle he had heard during the day about one of his wives (he had six wives at that time), he made a big fire in front of his house, brought out the wife who had been accused of wrong-doing, sat her on the blazing fire, and held her there until she was badly burnt. The Old Man heard the poor woman's screams and rushed to where the awful crime was being done. Avi saw him coming, picked up his wife, carried her like a child into his house, placed her on the floor, came out to the platform entrance to his house and dared the Old Man to enter.

We thought the Old Man would have had enough of Avi, and were hoping that we should break up our camp and get away the next day. When daybreak came we were all up and hoping that we should hear after prayers of making a move to another camp, or back to our kin and to our own territory.

Soon after the sun had risen over the mangrove trees Avi came and asked the Old Man to give him medicine water that he might wash his wife's burnt body. It was given to him, but we all thought that the Old Man had done with Avi and we hoped that this crime would end our visits to the cannibals.

We stayed on in that camp until the woman began to mend. Avi watched over her, cooked and cared for her, and would not allow anyone else to do anything for her. At last we got

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

away and we felt sure that the Old Man would never come to Avi's village again. He did again and again, and strange as it may seem to you, Kuma, they have been friends ever since. When we come to cannibal-land, when we go inland to the bush tribes, be the people we visit friendly or hostile, Avi trusts no one; he is the Old Man's shadow all through the daytime, squats on the ground at the Old Man's feet, wide awake, night after night through the darkness-time, lest someone should come and hurt him whilst he is asleep.

That's all right, Lari, but it does not untangle my thought-things about the Old Man. If one of his students beats his wife he rows no end, stops his weekly supply of tobacco, and makes a lot of fuss. I know our women-folk have to be kept in their place, but none of our menfolk would dare put his wife on a blazing fire. If he did he would not be allowed to live in our tribe, he would be driven out. Yet, you say, "he is a decent old fellow, in his way," and "he is a friend of the Old Man's." Lari, am I awake, or am I asleep and dreaming? An old cannibal like Avi a friend of our Old Man? Shake me, Lari, wake me, say I'm dreaming!

Well, Kuma, you wanted to know who Avi is. I have told you what he was as well as what he is and who he is. I have brought darkness to your thought-things rather than light. My thought-things were in darkness,

## Who is Avi?

too, quite a long time, until the light shone on the Old Man's words and teaching about Iesu (*Jesus*). Many times he told us boys, when we murmured against going to cannibal-land, that Keriso, that is Iesu, you know, died for men-eaters as well as for us; perhaps that is why he has been so loyal to Avi and so patient with us.

However, light the pipe, Kuma, whilst I have a look for "Oa Malara" (*morning star*); it is cold enough for it to be about rising.

Ha! ha! there it is away there over Kivio. Yes, and away there our kin are sleeping. O kin, sleep is good! If the wind is kind this coming day once we get out to sea, I, too, will sleep, for I know not where I shall keep watch during the night that follows the day.

Pass the pipe, Kuma. Good!

Now wake Cookie and get the crew on their feet. When the Old Man has had his coffee we shall get lively. Here comes a spanking land-breeze, heigho, soon we shall be meeting the daylight-things; soon we shall be out on the great water again.



*Papuan tobacco pipe*



Chapter  
Four

IN THE  
RAVI RIVER

**N**OW, boys, bend the oars, give them two long pulls and one short one! Good, keep on at that and we shall be inside the mouth of the Ravi river before that north-west squall can get to us.

I don't like an oily-looking sea at this time of the year, Lari. What do you think that black cloud has in it?

Wind and rain, plenty of both, Sah.

There is no doubt about the wind in it; see how it is racing towards us. I wish we were inside the river. Bring her head around a bit. That will do. Steer for the windward side of the passage lest the squall breaks on us before we get inside the estuary. Now, boys, put your backs into it, pull away, we will beat that squall sure enough. That's right, we are through, keep at it, two long and one short. Head for the lee bank, Lari. Good! there she goes. That will do, now bring her head up river, steady! We shall be out of reach of those high mangrove trees just here if the squall topples them over.

Belay! Well done, boys! Boat oars, down awning, and you slip for'ard, Lari, and see to

## In the Ravi River

the anchor. Give her plenty of chain, and then see that everything is snug and taut.

Shoo! Here it comes. Bang, bang; there go the mangrove trees. What a crash! Here's the rain right enough. It's a deluge. Mami, Cookie, come here; squat tight on the deck. Hang on you fellows for'ard or you will be blown overboard. What do they say, Cookie?

That they can swim, Sah.

Can they? So can crocodiles, and there are plenty of those fellows here. Real man-eaters that will pull a man out of a canoe if he sits with his legs dangling over.

What do you say, Kuma? Shout boy; I can't hear your mumbling in this howling wind.

The wind and rain are cold, Sah.

They are, and you foolish fellows have stripped yourselves of every shred of covering. As soon as the squall blows out, Cookie, get for'ard and make a big brew of tea for all hands. Serve out a pannikin of hot tea and a biscuit to each boy, and you may bring some for me after you have served them.

Well, Lari, what is it?

I think the squall is about blown out, Sah.

So do I, at least our portion of it, and that has been big enough for me. Our kin away in the east will get what is left of it and get it pretty soon, too, it is travelling so fast. Here are the matches, Cookie; get the fire going, give the boys a hot drink, bring me one, and

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

by the time we are all warmed up a bit we shall be ready to get up river.

Ha! ha! ha! the Old Man got one back on you just now, Kuma, when you grumbled about the cold of the wind and the rain.

It's all very well for him to talk like that. Look at him now, he is shedding all his wet clothes. He will look quite smart when we go ashore. If we had worn our clothes through that squall how should we look if he orders us to go ashore with him?

Here you are, Kuma, take this pannikin of hot tea and don't grouse.

You cheeky kid, Cookie, wait until we get back home; I'll——

Yes, you'll lock your arm in mine and want me to swagger about with you and say "that's true" to all your yarns about our journey in cannibal-land.

I won't forget, Cookie, if ever we get back from this miserable country. You are all right here, under the Old Man's wing, wait until we get back, if ever we do! I can't understand our Old Man coming again and again into this dirty country; why, it's all rivers, swamps, mud and men-eaters.

Drink your tea, Kuma. There's the sun coming out; soon the sunshine-things will be about and you will be as happy as a butterfly.

Now boys (*the Old Man called*), stow away your pannikins. You go for'ard, Mami, and keep a good look out. Ship oars, heave up the anchor, Kuma. Ready! Pull away, boys.

## In the Ravi River

Dodge the current all you can, Lari, the day is before us. We shall soon get to the village and if things are quiet ashore we shall be able to stretch our legs a bit in the village before sunset.

Now, my lads, pull away; you are just chopping water. Just get yourselves down to things; that's better, two long and one short; that's right; now she has a move on!

What is it, Mami?

Up there, near the bend in the river, is a canoe, Sah, full of fighting men.

Why do you think they are fighting men?

They are all wearing on their heads crescents of white cockatoo feathers. There, two of them have just jumped ashore, and gone into the bush on the river's bank, carrying bows and arrows.

How many men were there in the canoe when you first saw them?

Eiti, Sah.

Eighty! Count them on your fingers that I may see. Yes, you may begin with the little finger of your left hand if you like.

Wanee, tu, t'ree, foa, faivi, wrist, elbow, biceps.

No! no! that won't do! Count them Beritani fashion.

Wanee, tu, t'ree, foa, faivi, sikisi, seveni, eiti.

Don't say "eiti," lad, say eight.

Eiti, Sah.

What is it, Kuma? Were you trying to say "eight"?

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

No, Sah. I was speaking about the fighting-men waiting for us up there.

Well, let them wait. If they have trouble for us we shall come to it soon enough. Now "stroke," lead them with the two long and one short. The sooner we are alongside those fellows the better. Head straight for them, Lari. If I mistake not they are only scouts, and the two who got ashore have gone to the village to report our coming.

What is it now, Mami ?

An old man in a canoe, Sah. Just now he beckoned to us to come on.

All right, sonny, keep a good look out ; we shall get up to him presently, but where are the fighting-men we saw just now ?

I don't know, Sah, I think they have slipped away by a small creek.

Belay ! Hallo, Avi, what are you doing here ?

May I come aboard your canoe, White Chief ?

Yes, there is room enough for one more. Get aboard and tell me what you are doing here on this river.

We have a saying, O White Chief, that birds are the messengers of travellers.

I see. You want me to understand that a bird has told you of our coming, and because of his message you have come to meet us ?

O, White Chief, I would speak of the things which bring me to thee.

Great is the silence of the river ; the noise of words travels far over its water ; when coming

## In the Ravi River

towards you my heart was gladdened because of the noise of the oars. I hoped to be able to speak that you alone would hear the noise of my words.

It shall be so, Avi. Now, boys, pull away !

Speak, O Avi, of the things which bring you down the river to meet me. Speak and be not afraid, for neither boys on my canoe, nor the birds in the nipa-palms on the river's bank, will be able to hear the noise of your words.


I have a great pain inside, O White Chief, to tell you everything about my visit to this village and why I have come down the river to meet you ; but what to tell you first and how much I may tell you, I hardly know, so bright is the light of the sun and so dense is the darkness of my thought-things.

One can speak of glad-things in the brightness of sunshine ; they are kin : but the sad-things belong to the darkness-time ; they are the children of the night.

You speak truly, Avi ; your words are very like Iesu's.

What Iesu, Son of God ?

Yes ; you know what I have told you about Him and what He said about men and darkness-things.

Sometimes, when alone with the great silence of the river, when the sun shines and the birds sing, I pick over the words you have told me about Him, look at them, they seem then good words to me, but they do not come to me in the darkness-time. 

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Well, tell me now why you have come to meet me.

When I left you in our creek I told you I was going to Ravi and why I was travelling in the darkness-time. You guessed that I was bearing a message from my supreme chief, Eku, son of Evara, but I did not tell you that the message was for Rove, son of Kairi, the supreme chief of Ravi. I cannot speak of the words in that message just now, but I can tell you why I have come down to welcome you to Ravi.

Is that it, Avi; so you have come down river to welcome me to Ravi? You have done well, old friend, not to let my boys hear what you have told me, but where is Rove that he has not come down to greet us?

Well may you ask, O White Chief, "Where is Rove"? Men are like birds and fishes in their comings and goings. They are here now, presently they are elsewhere. Who can say where Rove is now?

Belay! Speak out, Mami; what's the matter, my boy?

I don't know, Sah. I'm not afraid, Sah. There are men on the western bank of the river shooting arrows at something.

What is that awful squealing row?

Ha! ha! ha! can't you see, O White Chief, what they are doing?

I can see arrows flying into the river and something trying to get across to the opposite bank. That's all I can see!



**" Arrows flying into the River "**



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

It's a crocodile chasing a pig and the men are trying to shoot it because they don't want to lose their pig.

Oo'ah! that's good! There's one arrow into the back of the crocodile, but he's a plucky fellow. He'll get the pig yet! There's another arrow just at the back of his head; that's good shooting, if you like.

Oo'ah! the pig has won through; see, he is getting up the side of the river-bank!

Where is the crocodile?

True, O White Chief, where is the crocodile? He is under water, where a crocodile always goes when he is frightened, but once the great silence comes back to the river again he will come to the surface to look for prey. In time he may break off the hafts of the arrows; the heads will remain in him because they are barbed. One day he will crawl out of the river and on to a mudbank to die. The village men will kill him. That will be a day of rejoicing.

Now, boys, all your weight into those oars. We are entering the village. Let the fellows ashore see that the boys of the east know how to get a canoe along. Two long and one short; splendid, she's moving like a "kikima" (*steamer*) now.

Show us a good anchorage off Rove's village, Avi!

Not so, O White Chief, because Rove may not be at home.

Well, and if he is not, what?

## In the Ravi River

I speak for Eku, son of Evara, and it is his wish to meet you again.

You speak in parables, Avi, but never mind. Show us an anchorage. Once the anchor is down we can talk over things.

Tell Lari, O White Chief, to steer right across to the distant village. We are abreast of Rove's village now, but we must not anchor here this visit.

Whose village are we steering for now ?

That, too, is Rove's village, but his bloodman, Koi, son of Kairi, is ruling over it in Rove's name. Anchor here, O White Chief. If you go nearer the noise of the village will disturb you.

Belay ! in oars, boys ; look lively you fellows for'ard and let go the anchor.

Now, Lari, get up the awning, make everything snug and tidy, and wash down the decks as soon as I have gone ashore.

Do you speak of going ashore, O White Chief, and immediately ?

I do, Avi, and shall go after you and I have talked.

Whilst we talk, O White Chief, a canoe may come from the village to see who we are and to find out what we want. If it comes may I speak to the village men in their own tongue ?

Certainly, Avi, only be sure to tell them that I am coming ashore immediately. Now let us talk about Rove and why he is not here to greet me.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

How can I speak about the thought-things of Rove, O White Chief, and how can I say why he has not come to welcome you to his village ?

That will do Avi, you are hiding things from me ; the things you hide are now in darkness, I cannot see them, but they will come out to the light one day, and when I see them, I shall know what to say to you.

You speak true words, O White Chief, and I beg you to speak yet one word more before the canoe which is coming from the village gets alongside. Say that you will not try to get ashore to-day, then my thought-things will become light ; now they are heavy because of the darkness which presses upon them.

Well, Avi, I have trusted you before and I promise you that I will not try to go ashore to-day.

The boys are waiting to wash down decks, Sah.

Well, let them get at it, Lari.

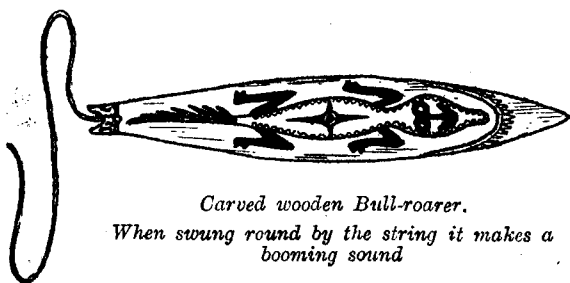
We are waiting for you to go ashore, Sah.

That's all right, let them carry on. I shall leave the going ashore until to-morrow. Half a moment, Lari. Listen, if any of the village men come alongside after sunset, don't let any of them step aboard without permission from me. About to-night's watch ; whose turn is it to take the watch from prayer-time to midnight ?

Kuma's turn, Sah, but I will take it if you wish.

## In the Ravi River

No, let him take it, and tell Cookie off to share it with him. But what I want to say is this, we shall need to keep a good watch right through the night. Avi has gone ashore, he may come back during the darkness of the night, we never know what he will do, should he do so before you come on watch tell Kuma not to allow him to get aboard without waking me. Don't talk about this to the boys as if there is anything to be alarmed about.



*Carved wooden Bull-roarer.*

*When swung round by the string it makes a booming sound*

Chapter  
Five

GOLGOTHA—A  
PLACE OF SKULLS

**T**HOU wouldst speak of thy thought-things,  
O Avi ?

That is so, O White Chief, but quietly that the noise of my words may only be heard by thine ears. I would speak of the things that journey in the darkness-time, as trees that come down our rivers, pass the abiding-places of menfolk, out to the boundless space of the great water, and no one heeds their passing ; no one knows of their coming and going.

Unless the menfolk abide, as we do now, O Avi, on a canoe at anchor on the river where, at any moment in the darkness-time, a drifting-tree may be carried by the current right across our anchor-chain when we know all about it in quick time.

Thou art wise, O White Chief. Thou speakest true words, but a canoe is a tree, yet, something more than a tree, nevertheless, it can drift as noiselessly as a tree. Yes, it is a felled tree, hollowed and shaped into a canoe. Menfolk travel on it whither they would go, but if whilst journeying on it they fail to moor it by the riverbank, or to anchor it, at the coming of the darkness-time, like the tree

## Golgotha—A Place of Skulls

that comes hither and goes thither unheeded, it, too, would drift, drift, and who knows whither ?

And what have trees and canoes that drift to do with thy thought-things, O Avi ?

When I would see my face, O White Chief, I look into the water lying at the bottom inside my canoe ; when I would make known my thought-things to thee I take them out and put them into words that thou canst hear. Listen, the supreme chief of a people is their head. All his people are as his hands and feet to do as he commands. If he goes on a journey his bloodman (*brother*) becomes the head of the people until he returns to them. As a bloodman he only knows the thought-things of his chief as he heard them in words.

But why speak in parables, O Avi ?

Because it is not for me, thy servant, O White Chief, to tell thee what thou shouldst do, or not do, but it is for me to protect thee when thou wouldst do the things thou shouldst not do.

The men of my race, O Avi, speak of their thought-things in few words and speak them quickly. Your words are like the trees of your forest, they are so many that the sunlight cannot shine through them, and I grope amongst them to find a way out into the light that I may see them as thou wouldst have me see them.

The men of thy race must be all chiefs, O

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

White Chief, and now I can understand why thou did'st say when the sun was overhead, "Koi, son of Kairi, one night more I sleep at Ravi and with the coming of to-morrow I shall leave for Vaimu."

Yes, those were my words to Koi at noon to-day, and at daybreak to-morrow we shall get away.

Must it be at daybreak and not at the coming midnight? A canoe drifts as noiselessly as a tree when the menfolk on it are asleep, and when the village people are asleep they will not see it drift away. Must it be at daybreak, O White Chief?

It must be at daybreak, O Avi!

Then I must go ashore, O White Chief!

Can you not stay with us a while? Listen, I call the boys to gather together. We are about to talk to the Great Sky Spirit, stay with us for our evening prayer, and if after you must go ashore, be it so, I leave Ravi to-morrow at daybreak.

Yes, we leave Ravi at daybreak to-morrow; hence I must go ashore and now, immediately, I must go ashore.

Follow the light of thy thought-things, O Avi!

Stay, then, and talk to the Great Sky Spirit; when the day breaks may we meet again, O White Chief.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lights out, boys!

## Golgotha—A Place of Skulls

You turn in, Mami. Kuma and I will take this watch.

What is your move, Lari ?

Oh, nothing, but you know what a terror the kid is to talk about gruesome things, and he is fairly full of them to-night.

Small wonder, after what we saw ashore to-day. Why didn't they name this village, "the village of skulls" ?

Skulls! Why there are skulls everywhere in that village. Human skulls of men, women, and children, old and young, big and little. Skulls of crocodiles, of pigs, of dogs and iguanas like pebbles on the beach, so many are they wherever we went whilst ashore. Listen, Lari, some of the human skulls we saw at the back of the village were a bit fresh, too, and were being sun-dried. Hoo! I shall be glad to get away from this place!

It was the same in the big guest house. The front partition, from floor to roof, was covered with human skulls, and there were heaps of them on the floor. Phew, I shall never want to go ashore again to see a cannibal village. It grips one somewhere, Lari. I can't get away from it!

Let's have a smoke, Kuma!

Ha! ha! good! so we will, Lari, a smoke will be good, so it will!

O my kin, far away in the east! Are you thinking of me as I am thinking of you? Oh, that we could smoke together by our village-fires! Oh, that we . . . . What was that Lari?



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

I didn't hear anything, hurry up with the pipe ; your thought-things are jumpy to-night, Kuma.

I don't know, possibly they are ; but I surely heard something. It might have been one of the crew turning over in his sleep. I thought it was the splash of a paddle. One thing I know, it is that I would rather be here on the canoe smoking with you, Lari, than ashore with all those skulls. For the life of me I can't see what good the Old Man can do by coming down here to talk to these men-eaters.

Why are you looking so scared, Kuma ? Why don't you go and turn in ?

Don't say again, Lari, that my thought-things are jumpy. I surely heard something. There, I knew I was right !

Yes, you are right, and I think it is Avi. Hold on until he comes near enough to be quite sure. If it is he, you can go and turn in, but there will be no need to wake Mami. I want to yarn with Avi.

Is that you, Avi ?

It is I, Lari !

Why do you come aboard at this time of the night ?

Why should I stay ashore, O Lari ?

I know not why you went ashore, how can I say why you should stay there ?

I had something to do ashore. I have done it, and now it is well that I come aboard. You see, O Lari, there are daylight-things

## Golgotha—A Place of Skulls

and darkness-things. A man may do some darkness-things in the light of daytime, there are others he can only do during the darkness-time.

Are your thought-things very heavy this darkness-time, O Avi? If they are, can you not take them out that we may together look at them and try to make them lighter?

Lari, you were young when I first saw you on the White Chief's canoe. Many moons have come and gone; the north-west wind has striven against the south-east wind many, many times since we first met; you know much of the White Chief's thought-things; you have been into many strange places and met many strange people with him; I know, because we have often gone together. I say, you know much of the White Chief's thought-things and you know that he often puts them into words, shows them to people, when he should keep them to himself.

Speak on, O Avi, and tell me why you went ashore!

I went ashore because the White Chief put his thought-things into words that Koi, son of Kairi, might hear them, might know them, and in so doing he put himself, his boys, this canoe and everything on board into the hands of Koi. He told Koi that he would leave here to-morrow morning at daybreak. Koi told me that he should not. I spoke to him in shadow-words, I showed him how we might drift out from here, on the ebbing-tide during

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

the darkness-time, as quietly as a tree drifts out to the great water. If all the men of his race hold to their words as tightly as he does it is a good thing for me that I do not belong to his people.

What is going to happen at daybreak, O Avi, if Koi will not let us go ?

At daybreak ? Umph ! " If Koi will not let us go ? "

Well, we shall go, at daybreak we shall go and Koi will not know until long after we have gone that we have gone.

Koi is asleep, he is as dead, he will not awake until after we reach Vaimu, he will not come there to bring us back.

I had to come between Koi, son of Kairi, and the White Chief's folly of telling him his thought-things. I could not spirit him away into the bush, I dared not make a quarrel with him and kill him, there was only one thing to be done, put him to sleep.

Did you give him medicine-water, O Avi ?

Medicine-water ! ha ! ha ! ha ! O Lari, you have travelled far and still there are good things you should know but do not know them. Medicine-water ! ha ! ha ! ha ! no, I am not a sorcerer, I am a friend. I chewed betel-nut with him, but took care that he did the chewing whilst I did the watching. He got merry and chewed more, he got stupid, fell asleep, and is now as dead.

We leave for Vaimu at daybreak.

Chapter  
Six

A NIGHT OF  
SUSPENSE

(SCENE.—*The Village of Vaimu.*)

**H**ALLO, boys, what's the matter ?  
Mami says the men on the bank  
have tails behind and clam shells in  
front, Sah !

Well, what if they have ? Surely they can  
please themselves whether they wear cassowary-  
tail feathers and shells, or paper-mulberry-  
cloth as your people do. Get a move on, like  
the good lads you are, that we may get to  
our anchorage quickly.

What is Kuma muttering about ?

He says the Vaimu men on the bank mean  
no good to us. If they were pleased at our  
coming, their women and children would have  
been down with them to see us come in.

Now, Kuma, put your back into that oar.  
You are all to pieces. Why, if you could see  
your face just now you would be afraid of it.  
Pull out a smile from somewhere. That's  
better, now wear it like that for the rest of  
the day. If those fellows ashore get the idea  
that we are scared of them they will want  
to eat us before morning.

What do you say, Avi ?

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

There is the guest-house of my bloodmen of Vaimu.

Good! Steer for that big house with a front like the open mouth of a crocodile, Lari. That house over there on the left-hand bank of the creek. Bring her in, boy, you are heading for the other bank. That's better, now run her right alongside the bank, we will moor there to-night.

Would it not be safer to anchor in midstream, Sah?

And let them think that we regard the absence of their women-folk and children as a hint that they want to fight, or that our visit is untimely?

No, no! We are on the warpath, sure enough, but not the one they might choose for us. Get alongside that bank. That is our next move. We shall know soon enough what theirs will be.

Steady, boys, that'll do! Belay! Make fast for'ard! Stow oars, boys, and all hands get to work to scrub deck!

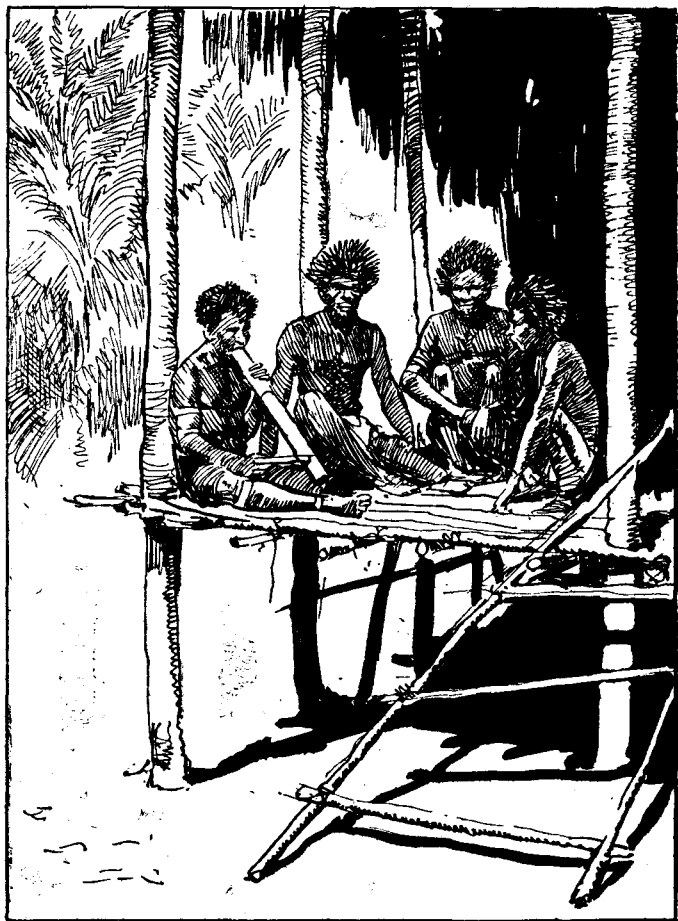
What is it now, Cookie?

Yes, Sah! May I go ashore to get water from the village well?

Is the water-barrel empty?

No, Sah, but when we were at Ravi, Lari said I must never use water from the barrel when we are alongside a village.

Lari was quite right, but draw water from it now. I will tell you later if we shall need to fill the barrel here.



**"There are bloodmen of my people sitting on  
the platform of yonder guest-house"**

*(See page 64)*

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

May I speak, O White Chief ?

Speak, O Avi, but let it be in words that I can understand quickly !

There are bloodmen of my people sitting on the platform of yonder guest-house. May I go and chew betel-nut with them ?

You may go, Avi. But stay a moment ! Where is Koimi, son of Raku, the Highest of Vaimu ?

We have come from a distant village, O White Chief, and have met no one to tell us of the going of Koimi, son of Raku.

So you think he is away from his village ?

Not so, my thought-things tell me nothing of his whereabouts. No bird has told me of his goings and his comings. My spirit met not his spirit last night and I have not a dream-thing to tell you of his doings. When I get ashore and chew with my bloodmen they will talk and I shall hear the things thou wouldst know about Koimi.

Be it so, O Avi ! But, listen, let me see, here is a sign ! When you see the side-flaps of the awning are let down you will know that I wish you to come aboard.

Now, Lari, get the boys to lash the steer-oars together, make fast the ends to the masts for a ridge-pole and get the awning over it as quickly as you know how. See that they make a good job of it and have all the awning-flaps in place in case we need them to-night. We shall camp here until the morning.

Yes, Sah ! But——

## A Night of Suspense

But what, my boy ?

Nothing, Sah ! Only that I do not know how we shall manage if no one can go ashore to get fresh water and firewood.

See to the awning, like a good fellow, and get the boys to put plenty of sing-song and laughter into the job. Don't let them mope. Do your utmost to keep them happy and on the move. Give them this bit of tobacco, let them work and smoke and, well, and anything but look as if they were seasick. Cheer up, my boy, remember the words I have read to you many, many times, "Lo, I am with you always," they are good words because they are true words, they are the words of Iesu, so cheer up, my boy.

Hallo, Avi, you haven't stayed long ashore !

You speak truly, O White Chief ! Our people do not talk much and for long in the daytime.

What news do you bring of Koimi the Highest of Vaimu ?

I will speak of what I have heard of Koimi but my words will not be the shadows of my thought-things.

The women-folk have all gone to the creeks and bush to catch crabs. The men are all busy preparing a feast. They are pleased that you have come to their village and would like to give you a chief's welcome, but——

That will do, Avi, cut out the palaver and come to the point, where is Koimi, son of Raku, the Highest of Vaimu ?



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Who knows, O White Chief? He may be busy with the night-time-things. Not even his bloodmen know if his words are like unto his thought-things. The words my bloodmen spake unto me I have spoken unto you. They speak not of him by name because he, too, is preparing the feast.

We will eat food now, O Avi, but before the sun goes down we will go ashore. Did Lari tell you that we shall want water and firewood from this village?

Kuma and Cookie spoke about it last night. I told my bloodmen that your boys would go to their well to draw water and, at the same time, gather firewood. They were not pleased but promised to send their women to fill the barrel and put a supply of firewood on board for a small payment in tobacco.

I see! Now we are getting at things. So they do not want the boys to go ashore. Is that so, O Avi?

Thou, too, O White Chief, must be of the hawk-people, for thou can'st see the hidden things. Thou knowest their thought-things, and if Koimi, son of Raku, comes not to welcome you to his village, his people will not expect the boys, or anyone aboard, to come ashore.

Then I, too, must not go ashore until Koimi has been aboard?

Thou art wise, O White Chief, and knowest the thought-things of the people ashore, though their words be as hollow as drums.

## A Night of Suspense

I am not so sure that I do know their thought-things, O Avi, but go now to Cookie and get your food and as you go tell Lari to come to me. Yes! go for'ard now. Go, O Avi, and eat food!

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, Lari, about the water and the firewood. Avi says the women will bring both when they return to the village. Fill the barrel with water, take from them all the firewood you can stow away and pay them well for both. Do you understand my words?

Yes, Sah, but——

Another "but," my boy! What is the matter with you?

Nothing, Sah, but the boys do not feel very happy about lying here to-night. They do not like the surliness of the men who came alongside this afternoon. Further, their great Chief, the Highest of Vaimu, has not been aboard to welcome you to his village. These things to us are as the black cloud which rises in the north-west when a big squall is coming; all these things are signs to us of coming trouble.

I see the meaning of your words, Lari, I cannot help seeing it; it hits me hard and causes me pain. My boys, and you among them, Lari, are afraid; have got the funk, because you have all been guessing things!

Well, go on, what were you going to say? If the boys are not happy about lying here

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

to-night, where would they like to go for greater safety ?

We thought we might "let go" here, drop down the creek and anchor near its mouth to-night. We could easily get back to this mooring at daybreak, Sah.

Stow it, Lari, every word of it. We have come with a message for this people and shout it as loudly as we might they could not hear it from the mouth of the creek. Slink away from here, eh ? Anchor down at the mouth of the creek do they say ? Lari, we dare not listen to the talk for'ard. When and where did we ever "up stick and clear out" because of funk ? Lari, my boy, forget that you have told me the talk of the boys this evening ; it is not good talk, it is not the talk of the messengers of the Good News ; why, it is not the talk of the braves of your people. Now listen to my words. We have not come here to hurt the people of Vaimu, and we are not going to anchor elsewhere to-night lest they hurt us. We are just going to stick it, right here, do you hear, Lari ? Right here until daybreak. If they do not give us an opportunity to speak to them—well ! we will sing to them ; they shall hear us, whether they want to or not.

Your thought-things are all in bits to-night, Lari ; pull them together and be the man you always are. The God who has always made for us a safe highway on the great water, and protected us when among the wild peoples

## A Night of Suspense

of the bush, is caring for us now and will see us safely through this darkness-time. Cheer up, my boy, go for'ard to cheer up the boys.

\* \* \* \* \*

Is that you, Lari ?

It is I, Kuma.

The Old Man has spoken many words to you, Lari. Did he say we may go down and anchor at the mouth of the creek, to-night ?

He did not so speak, and you will do well, Kuma, not to grouse any more to-night about having to stay here. The words he did speak were like barbed arrows, they got right inside, and tug at them as I may, I cannot get them out.

Can't you pull them out that we may see them, hear them and measure them ?

There you are, Kuma, that's the call to prayers: perhaps the Old Man himself will tell you the many words he has spoken to me !

Now, boys, let the Vaimu people hear how we can sing. Let us sing our journey-song, "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah," and don't forget that whilst the Vaimu people hear it as a song, God will hear it as our evening prayer.

That's good, you have sung it well. Cheer up, boys, turn in and sleep soundly. Lari and Mami will take the first watch.

\* \* \* \* \*

What's the matter, Kuma, have you seen a ghost ?

Lari ? O, Lari ! what shall we do, Mami

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

is not aboard? The crew are all sleeping, the Old Man's lamp is turned down very low; he is not with the Old Man and he is not in his place beside Cookie. Where can he be? Mami, O Mami, where are you? Come back to us, O Mami, come back to us. We dare not go back to our kin without you!

Hush, Kuma, don't wail lest the Old Man hears you! Have no fear, if Mami is ashore, and I am afraid he is, he will get aboard again all right, but, listen, the Old Man must not know anything about it.

Shoo! Listen! Do you hear anything?

I thought I did. Yes! I heard it again. It may be a village pig nosing about the bank. It's quite near now. Peep out, Lari, under the awning-flap.

Lari, Lari, open the flap a little that I may get aboard, quick, Lari, O quickly! that I may get aboard. That's good; I'm glad I am back again. Is the Old Man asleep, Lari?

Where have you been, Mami?

I've been ashore, Lari, and seen things, heard things; bad things, awful things. Why did the Old Man bring us to this bad place?

I saw Avi slip ashore when we were at prayers. I told the Old Man but he didn't seem to mind. My thought-things began to run after Avi. When the Old Man began to talk to God and we bowed our heads and closed our eyes they wouldn't come back to the Old Man's words, they ran after Avi, ran

## A Night of Suspense

so fast that I had to run after them and they led me to Avi.

Did Avi see you ?

No, but I saw him and I saw Koimi, son of Raku, as Avi calls him, and, Lari, I saw lots of human beings cut up as our people cut up pigs ready for cooking. O Lari, it was awful ! Put a coconut on the fire, heat it through, I must have a warm drink, I am feeling sick inside.

Lari, don't tell the Old Man that I have been ashore. If he knows he will not let me journey with him again and I don't want to stay always on the station with the women and children. You won't tell him will you, Lari ?

Well, I don't know, you have disobeyed his orders. I don't know, but, well, I won't tell him now, Mami.

Hark ! Surely I heard footsteps. Peep out under the flap, Mami !

Don't, Lari, don't tell me to peep out ! My inside is shaking, I am cold all over. I am—— O Lari, you peep out !

Is that you, Avi, coming aboard ?

It is I, O Lari. Is the White Chief sleeping ?

He may be, who knows ? His lamp is turned down very low.

That is well, O Lari, and I will go aft and sit at his feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Are you there, O Avi ?

I am here, O White Chief ?

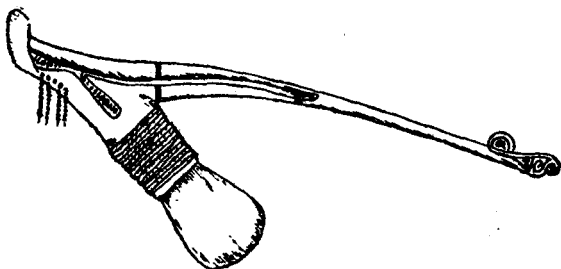
## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

What news do you bring me from the village, O Avi? Hast thou seen Koimi, son of Raku, and will he come with the daylight to me?

Thou cleanest thy teeth with a brush and water; thou washest thy hands before eating food; thou sleepest in clothes. None of these things do my people. We say "those are the customs of the Beritani man." When our people prepare a feast, a great feast, the greatest feast, they welcome not the people of another race to their feast. They are under taboo. They dare not anger the spirits of our ancestors by breaking the laws of taboo. Such are our customs, O White Chief.

Then I am not to meet Koimi, son of Raku, this visit, O Avi?

Thou hast unravelled my thought-things, thou hast spoken truly, O White Chief, thou cannot see Koimi, son of Raku, this visit. It is his wish that with the coming of the day we go away from his village. It is his wish that we go. Let us go, O White Chief.



*A stone-headed adze*

Chapter  
Seven

A MORNING  
DIP

(SCENE.—*Back at Ravi.*)

**H**EIGH-HO, Lari, here we are back again at Ravi! It seems to me that we are like Cookie's crabs.

What of Cookie's crabs, Kuma?

The Old Man told him to cook some crabs for him Beritani fashion by putting them into a saucepan, and not in our way of throwing them all alive on red-hot embers. Cookie put some water into the saucepan, stood it on the fire, put in the crabs and went away to do something else. When he came back to see how the crabs were cooking he found them in the fire.

Well, in what way are we like the crabs?

At daybreak this morning we were at Vaimu; to-night we are at Ravi. Which is the better place? Tell me, Lari, which is the better place? At Vaimu we were like crabs in a saucepan, we got out and now, here at Ravi, we are, like Cookie's crabs, in the fire. I don't like this place any more than I liked Vaimu. There is something wrong here. I can feel it. There is something that stifles me; I know I am working hard to breathe, whereas, I should breathe and not know it. Lari, Vaimu was a



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

saucepan sure enough but Ravi is a fire, and, Lari, we are in it.

Think of those fellows at Vaimu this morning. What was their game when we were getting away.

Don't think of them, Kuma, we have done with them for the time.

Done with them, eh? I wish we had! If the Old Man had allowed us to bring our bows and arrows on this journey some of those Vaimu fellows' spirits would have been hunting to-night for the spirits of their ancestors.

Listen, Kuma, and I will tell you what I think of your brave words. They are so many noises like the croakings of the frogs in yonder swamp. Just as one flash of lightning silences suddenly the croakings of the frogs so one word of light from the Old Man's Holy Book stops all the talk about what you would have done if you had had bows and arrows this morning. You know as well as I that we are not out on the warpath and you know also that we have no heart for fighting unless it be to help the Old Man out of a tight place.

But, Lari, surely it was tight enough this morning for a fight?

It was so, but the Old Man's God got us out of it without any fighting.

True, O Lari, just as He got us safely through the western passage of the Veiai river, but somehow this morning's trouble seems different.

You speak truly, Kuma, and I know how you feel about it. Like you I wanted to get at

## A Morning Dip

those fellows when they accused us of having fouled their village-well and stolen their fire-wood, but——

Halloa! what's the matter, Mami? What are you doing here? This is not your watch, go back and get to sleep!

I can't sleep, Lari! I have tried and tried until I am tired of trying. I want to sit here by the fire with you and Kuma.

What is keeping you awake, boy?

Oh, nothing much, only I cannot forget this morning at Vaimu.

So you were frightened, kid?

I'm talking to Lari and not to you, Kuma. I wasn't frightened for myself; I can swim as well as the Vaimu fellows, but I was troubled for our Old Man's sake; they wanted to get him under water.

Yes, and what then?

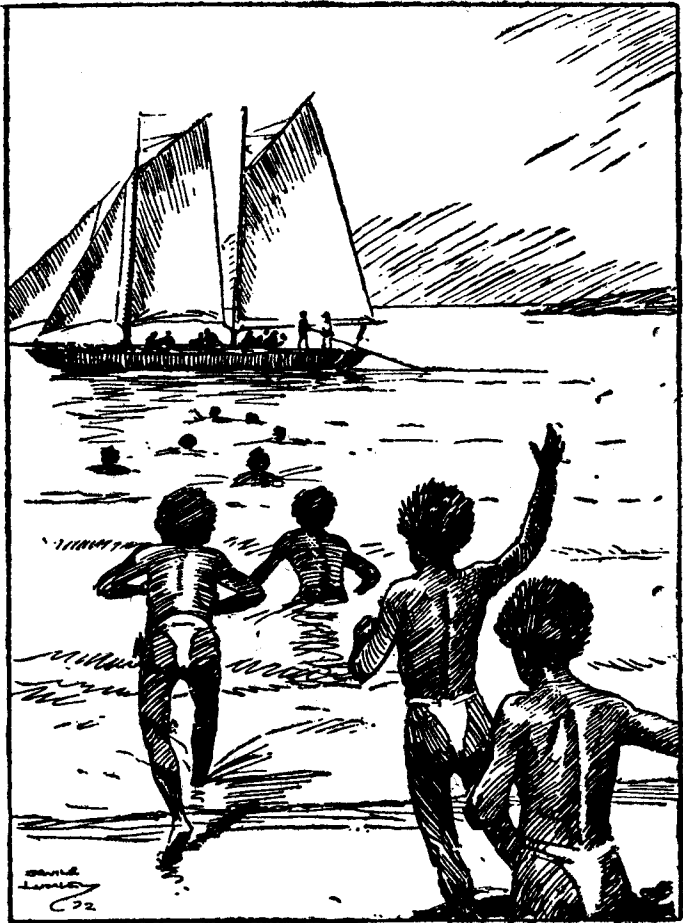
Why, drown him, of course, and who knows, Lari? Possibly go for us, get us under, seize the canoe and everything aboard.

Well, they didn't get the Old Man under, Mami, thanks to Kuma and the way he threw that fellow off the Old Man.

Yes, Kuma was brave, Lari. When we make a new song we will put Kuma's name in it that our people may know how he saved the Old Man from the Vaimu men.

And we will put your name in it, Mami, that our people may know that you were so frightened that you could not sleep.

Shut up, Kuma, I am talking to Lari. I



"They were swimming after us for all  
they were worth"

(See page 78)

## A Morning Dip

cannot sleep because there are thought-things which I cannot understand. Why did the Old Man dally about for a swim as soon as we got away from Vaimu this morning? He knew the village men were angry with us and wanted to quarrel with us. Those are the things I cannot understand.

Now you are coming to things, Mami. You are right; the Vaimu men did want to quarrel with us. They accused us wrongfully of doing things we had not done, and pretended to be angry with us. You saw the Vaimu men jump into the water and swim after us, and by what had happened before we left their village you know they did not swim after us because they loved us and did not want to lose us. Now listen! When the Old Man visits a new village he always promises to come back again. He cannot very well do so if he leaves behind a people very angry with him. The Vaimu people tried very hard to force on him a quarrel; he knew there was really nothing to quarrel about, but he also knew that because we left their village so suddenly they would think that we were afraid of them and ran away. He didn't want them to think that he was angry with them, or afraid of them. Now do you see why he told all hands to jump overboard for a swim?

No, I do not, Lari!

Ha! ha! ha! go aft, Mami, wake up the Old Man and ask him.

Be quiet, Kuma! Lari and I are talking about things.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Look here, kid, Lari doesn't want to talk to you right through the night-time. If the Old Man wakes up, comes aft to light his pipe and finds you here Lari and I will know all about it.

That's all right, but I can't see why the Old Man told us to jump overboard and place ourselves at the mercy of those Vaimu fellows. They were swimming after us for all they were worth, and if we had not been pulling strongly they would have overtaken us.

Ha! ha! ha! you are young, Mami. You ought to have stayed at home on the station to help the women to care for the gardens and the babies!

Shut up, Kuma! You cannot speak unless you ha! ha! ha! like a laughing jackass.

Tell me, Lari, why the Old Man told us to jump into the water when the Vaimu men were chasing us, then I will go back and go to sleep.

If that will send you to sleep I will tell you quickly enough. The Old Man knew that the Vaimu men chasing us were fairly well puffed, that they had only hands and feet to help them the same as we had, so by telling us to jump overboard with him he let the Vaimu fellows see that we were not running away from them, neither had we any angry feelings towards them.

If the Ravi canoe had not hove in sight at that moment and hailed us do you think we should have beaten them, Lari?

Beaten them? Of course we should have

## A Morning Dip

beaten them! Kuma was equal to any two of the Vaimu fellows and the rest of us could have more than held our own as well as protect the Old Man.

Of course we could, Lari, we could have beaten them easily, now I will go and turn in. (*Mami turns in.*)

You answered his questions all right, Lari, and he has gone to sleep, but there is one thing about the tussle with the Vaimu men this morning that seems strange to me. It was quite true what you told him, but how did it happen that the Ravi canoe came and hailed us in the very nick of time when things might have gone anyway with us?

Yes, that was strange. I, too, have thought about it but it has not worried me. The Old Man seemed to welcome them as if he knew they were coming. At all events, by the time he had dried himself and got into his clothes and we were alongside of the Ravi dugout he was ready to take on the next job. I noticed that he lost no time in getting the Ravi Chief's son aboard of our canoe.

What did he call himself?

A string of names. Here it is! "Kairi, son of Rove, the Highest of Ravi."

I say, Kuma, let us keep an eye on Avi. It will be worth our while to watch him these days and nights, too, as far as we can.

Do you think he is working against the Old Man?

No, he is not working against him, but I

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

have grave doubts if he is doing much to help him. When talking to the Old Man he is full of palaver and pretends that he knows a lot about the people ashore, but he does not seem able to bring his friends, the great chiefs, aboard our canoe when they do not want to meet our Old Man.

The great chief of Vaimu, Koimi, son of Raku, as Avi calls him, did not come aboard to welcome us to his village. Avi went ashore a time or two and told us when he came aboard that he had been to chew betel nut with his bloodmen. He said nothing about having met Koimi, but Mami saw them sitting and talking together.

To-day, when the Old Man got Kairi to come aboard our canoe he went straight to Avi, they squatted on their haunches on the deck, rested their chins between their knees and mumbled to one another, as if they were afraid some stray spirit would hear what they were talking about.

I don't know the people of Ravi any better than I know the people of Vaimu, but I do know that the Old Man thinks them worth while; if they are good enough for him, well, Kuma, they just have to be good enough for us.

We shall know more about them to-morrow, Lari ?

Why to-morrow, Kuma ?

To-morrow is Sabati (*Sunday*).

Why, it's Sunday now! Look! do you see those stars away in the east ?

## A Morning Dip

Well, what of them ?

They have been my friends on this journey. When they appear they kind of nod to me. They are glad-things are those stars, and when they smile and blink at me I know they are telling me that my friend, the morning star, is following them as quickly as he can.

That's good, you talk about the glad-things, your friends the stars, and all the sunshine-things, Lari, then you will be always Lari, our Lari; leave the grumble-things with me and then I shall always have something to talk about. Do you hear, Lari ?

I'm glad it's Sabati already. We are going ashore to-day. The Old Man told Rove that we should all come ashore in the morning to have a service with his people.

And what did Rove say, Kuma ?

He said he would send Avi to tell us when his people were ready to receive us ashore. But he looked ! Well, what shall I say ? He looked as if it would be a long time before he sent Avi to ask us to come ashore.

Hail-o ! there is the morning star ! Stir up the fire, put on the kettle and move things about a bit ; it's time Cookie got a move on, too, or he will be late with the Old Man's coffee.



Chapter  
Eight

SUNDAY  
AT RAVI

**C**OOKIE, what are you doing here by the fire? Get away and turn in, or when the morning comes and the Old Man wants his coffee you will not be able to turn out.

He says it's no good to turn in, because he can't sleep, Lari. He can't forget the spoiling of his brand new cummerbund.

Shut up, Mami! Your new cummerbund is not burnt, is it? When we get back to the station you will be able to wear yours and will look smart. The Old Man won't give me another. He said he won't, and I think he is angry with me. He said I am the most careless cookie he has ever had.

Go and turn in, Cookie. The Old Man is not angry with you. That's his custom to speak like that. When his thought-things get topsy-turvy his words just flash out like lightning. You kind of see them, they are snappy, quick, gone and forgotten. Better so than the words of some folk which mumble, grumble and rumble like thunder.

It's not my spoilt cummerbund that keeps me from sleep to-night, Lari! Who is asleep on our canoe? The crew are all wide awake, the Old Man is reading and writing. Who can

## Sunday at Ravi

sleep whilst those mad men ashore blow conch-shells, beat drums, rush hither and thither with flares, shout and yell as if the spirits of the men they have killed to-day are sitting on their shoulders and prodding them with sago-spikes? Who can sleep, Lari, amid all this madness? When shall we get away from Ravi?

Don't start asking questions, Cookie! Listen! you and Mami go at once and turn in. Kuma and I keep watch to-night.

Lari, don't tell us to turn in. Let us sit here by the fire with you. We won't talk, and we will keep your pipe lit for you when you want to smoke.

Ah! now I know what is the matter. You two kids are afraid. Is that it, eh? Kids, have you forgotten the traditions of our tribe? Does the mad revelry ashore wilt your courage as the north-west squall bends and breaks the mangroves in yonder swamp? If the guardian spirits of our mighty ancestors are hovering over us to-night what think ye are their thought-things of us? Can't sleep! Afraid! Listen, kids! You are all in bits, pull yourselves together, you are the sons of men as brave as the bravest Ravi man ashore to-night. Besides, what has the Old Man been teaching us to-day about his God? Those words, too, that he read from the Holy Book that he calls Salamo (*Psalms*). "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." Many times when I have been with the Old Man and we

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

have been as we are now, what the Holy Book calls, in trouble, he has called on his God and sure enough he has delivered us every time. You want to know, Cookie, when we shall get away from Ravi. I don't know, but I am sure that we shall get away when the Old Man's God sets us free, opens the way for us to go out of this river.

But Rove, son of Kairi, as old Avi calls the great chief of Ravi, did not keep his word with the Old Man to-day, Lari. He promised to send Avi to tell us when his people were ready to receive us ashore that the Old Man might have a service with them. Instead, he sent all his fighting men, canoe after canoe, more canoes than I have fingers and toes, filled with braves, out on the warpath. Avi did not come off to us until the last canoe of the flotilla had got away clear of the village. And what message did he bring from Rove? Does Rove, son of Kairi, think our Old Man is a fool? He sent Avi to say that we were not to come ashore to-day because he had sent all his men away to get food. To get food! We saw with our own eyes the kind of food they had been out to get. Listen, Lari! it made me sick to see them throwing the dead men ashore, the men they had killed, according to Rove's message, for food. I don't know why our Old Man comes down to these men-eaters! It's all true what you say about the words of the Holy Book. It's true what you say about the Old Man's God, but—I don't know—

## Sunday at Ravi

I can't see—why he should trouble to come down here to tell these people about God and about Iesu.

He told you why, Kuma, when we stayed here on our way to Vaimu. You must have forgotten what he told us then. Those words of Jesus, Son of God, about going everywhere and telling everybody the Good News.

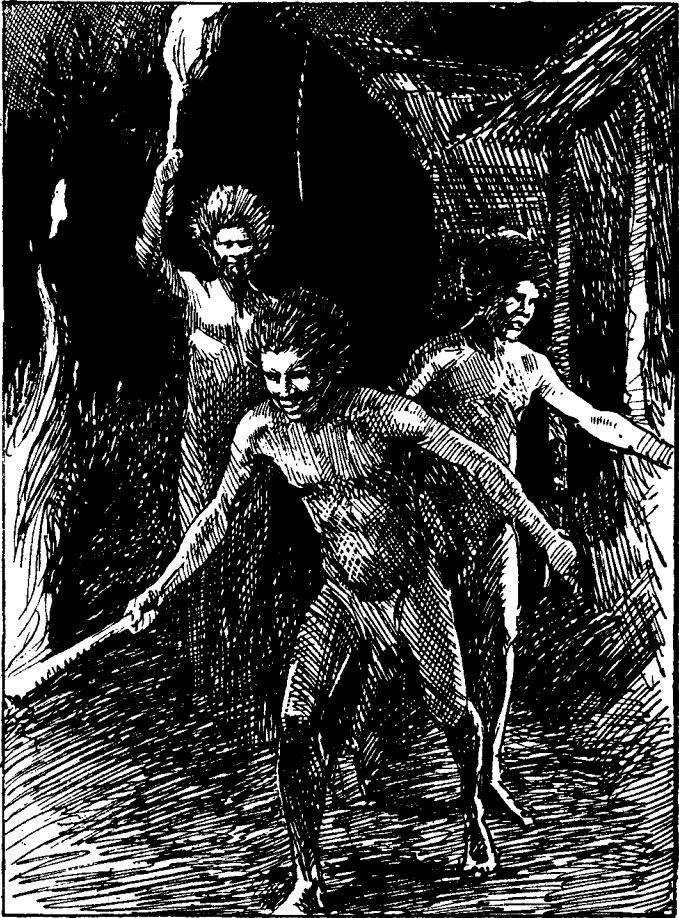
I don't forget, Lari, but it's the other fellow the Old Man has inside that baffles my thought-things. I can understand why he eats his food with a knife and fork. That may be the custom of the people of his race. It may be that he keeps on all his clothes when it rains because his skin is white and does not dry as quickly as ours. That's all right, at all events, it's his custom, but when he wants to treat these men-eaters as his brothers and tries to teach them the words of Iesu about loving their enemies, well it kind of mixes up my thought-things until I don't know one from the other.

Look at Cookie, Lari. He's asleep!

Good! and you ought to be, Mami!

Why ought I to be when everybody else on the canoe is awake. Look at the other fellows; they can't sleep. Whilst you and Kuma have been talking I have been back with them and have heard what they are saying. They want to get away from Ravi and have a plan for doing so.

That'll do, Mami. If you had gone to sleep when I told you, or had stayed here by the



**"The Ravi men going through the village with  
flaring torches"**

## Sunday at Ravi

fire with me and Kuma, you would not be now repeating the talk of the crew, and you would not have disobeyed the Old Man's orders. If you want to journey with the Old Man you will have to learn how to obey his orders.

But, Lari, listen! I'm not afraid to go to sleep because of the Ravi men. They won't come off to our canoe to-night, but the spirits of their victims may.

What do you mean, kid?

You know what I mean, Lari! You saw the Ravi men going through the village with flaring torches soon after dark and pushing them into every nook and cranny. You know they were driving away the spirits of the men they killed to-day, and you know those outcast spirits are very angry and delight in worrying sleeping people by tickling their feet and——

Oh, shut up, kid! Is that some more of the talk you have got from the crew?

Be quiet, Kuma! I am talking to Lari.

Oh, are you, Mami? Well, you have talked enough for one night. Just tuck yourself in beside Cookie here by the fire. The spirits of the dead do not like fire, so that those driven away from yonder village to-night will not come here to tickle your feet.

Ha! ha! ha! spirits tickle your feet!

You won't "ha! ha! ha!" Kuma, if they come and tickle yours.

Get to sleep, kid! Leave Kuma alone! I'm going aft to talk with the Old Man.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

You won't tell him, Lari, what the crew are talking about, will you ?

That is what I am going to talk to him about. But have no fear, kid, I do not tittle-tattle ; I knew all you told me before you heard it from the boys.

Shall we get away on to-night's ebb-tide, Lari ?

Get to sleep, Mami, and cease your prattle. You make as much noise as a white cockatoo.

What is it, Kuma ?

There is surely someone coming down from the village close to the near bank. Look, did you see that overhanging palm rise and fall ?

There ! I saw another rise and fall quietly in the same way ! It must be somebody coming here, or trying to pass us unnoticed.

It's all right, Kuma, and just as I guessed. It's Avi coming aboard, and he is evidently doing it cautiously, that he might not be seen by anyone in the village.

Yes, Sah ?

Is that you, Lari ? I'm awake, what's the matter ?

Yes, Sah, it is I, Lari, and I have come to tell you that Avi is coming aboard and to ask you if we might up anchor and drift down to the sea on the ebbing-tide to-night ?

What ! Drift down to the sea on the ebbing-tide to-night ? What's wrong with your thought-things, Lari ? We have done no one an injury here ; we've not stolen anything, we're

## Sunday at Ravi

afraid of nobody. Lari, are you awake or are you walking in your sleep ?

Halloa, here is Avi ! You may go now, Lari. We will talk about things after I have heard what Avi has to say.

Well, Avi, what has brought you aboard at this hour of the night ?

I would speak of the things Eku, son of Evara, the supreme chief of my tribe, foresaw when he sent me to shadow your goings and stand between you and death if needs be.

You were sent by Eku, son of Evara, to watch over me, to come between me and any attempt on my life ?

When it was reported to him that you had failed to get through the eastern passage of the Veiai river and had continued your journey west he thought you would try to get into Ravi. It was known to him that the scouts of the Korians were on the coast, and he knew if they saw you they would do all in their power to make you their prisoner.

Well, what has that to do with what is going on ashore and with all the fearful things the Ravi people have been doing to-day ?

To that I am coming, O White Chief. When I left you in the Veiai river I continued my journey to this village. I met Rove, son of Kairi, and asked him to go at once to Eku, son of Evara, which he did, as thou knowest, seeing he was not here to welcome you when you came in to his village.



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

The people of my tribe are ever at war with the Korians. It is only rarely that we can get into touch with them. Eku knows of your goings and comings; he knows, too, that you are ever going to strange places and amongst fierce peoples. What he knows about your goings and comings is known by all the tribes of this territory. He knew you would try to get to Ravi and from there to Vaimu. He saw the Korians' chance to get you between Ravi and Vaimu.

Go on, Avi, your words are like coconuts blown down by a gale, they are all over the place; never mind. I will pick them up and put them together. What I cannot yet see is the reason why Eku sent for Rove to come and see him at Paimuai, your great village.

Listen, O White Chief, whilst I put my words together. Eku wanted to get at the Korians as well as to protect you. He could not send his braves to fight over here in the territory of the Ravi people. He knew the Ravi men would be glad to fight the Korians. He sent for Rove, told him to keep a good look out on your movements, and to attack the Korians if they came into the Ravi rivers. That is all, you know the rest, O White Chief!

I see; so to-day's fight came about because the Korians came into the waterways of the Ravians with the hope of catching me and my boys?

That is partly true, O White Chief, only partly true. It does not matter who kills the

## Sunday at Ravi

Korians, my people, the people of Paimuai, or the Ravi people. What does matter is that no chance must be missed to kill them.

Why did you not tell me the night you came to me in the Veiai river what the plans of Eku were? Why did you allow him to use me and my party as a bait to draw the Korians into the Ravi waterways?

Who can change the course of the tides, O White Chief?

I don't know, but I do know, O Avi, that my work is done here at Ravi this visit, and I shall be glad to get out on the open sea again.

Then thou wilt go by the way of the great water, O White Chief?

By what other way can I go, O Avi?

True, by what other way can'st thou go?

Will you come with us, O Avi, or will you return by the way you came?

When Rove, son of Kairi, speaks, and by the noise of his words we know that we may go, then we will go together, O White Chief.

Why did Rove order us to anchor here and why are we to stay here until he says we may go?

When the waters of our rivers are swollen and dirty we people of the coast know that the people of the mountains have had heavy rain. When the acacia trees shed their bloom it is known to us that the season has come for us to journey to the upper waters of our great river. But of the thought-things of our fellows we can know nothing until they put them into words, or we see them in the things they do.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

I'm not talking about rivers, mountains and acacias, Avi. I want to know the thought-things of Rove, son of Kairi, about our staying here.

True, O White Chief, the thought-things of Rove, son of Kairi? What are they? Has he put them into words? Who knows?

That'll do, Avi. We have talked long enough. It is plain to me that you cannot bring any light to drive away the darkness from my thought-things.

Thou speakest truly, O White Chief.

Well, go now, Avi, before the darkness slips away. Come back again after the daylight has come. It may be that then I shall have words to speak of our going. It is time to sleep!

Sleep, O White Chief, and lose in thy sleep all the things of which we have spoken. Remember not that I have been with thee during this darkness-time. If thought-things will stir within thee when thou awakest, think of them as dream-things. I will away and to sleep.

As you go, Avi, tell Lari to come to me.

Just one word, Lari, before I try to get a little sleep. Are all the boys asleep?

Yes, Sah, they have talked themselves to sleep.

Who is for'ard, keeping watch with you?

Kuma, Sah? Cookie and Mami are with us by the fire, but they are asleep.

## Sunday at Ravi

Listen, Lari. I have been thinking about the thing you were talking about when Avi came. We may yet have to up anchor in the night and slip out to sea on an ebbing-tide, but I do not mean to try it until I am sure that it is the only thing we can do. What I want to say to you now, however, is this. Think hard, and all the time, of the glad-things. God has been very good to us; He has done more for us in the past few days than we can measure or speak of in words. He has indeed! Don't let the darkness-things grip you. Think of the sunshine-things all the time. I ask you to do this because I know the poor boys have had a bad doing to-day and we may all have a worse time to-morrow.

Dear me, so we have, we have really begun another day and I have not had a wink of sleep through the night. Neither have you, but you shall have it as soon as daylight comes.

That'll do, Lari. If Kuma grumbles about having to stay here, cheer him all you can. He's a good fellow and a brave one, too; we must put up with his grouching now and then. Good-night!

Chapter  
Nine

A DAY OF  
SURPRISES

**K**UMA, Kuma, get up, the Old Man is coming!

Are you keeping watch alone, Lari?

No, Sah; Kuma is on watch with me.

Is he asleep?

No, Sah, not now; he is just resting.

Poor fellows! You have all had a bad doing. Listen! I want you to wake all the boys, but you must do it very quietly. See that no one lights a lamp or makes a noise; the leaves on the river-bank seem to have ears.

What's it all about, Lari?

You have ears, Kuma. You heard what he said, and you know as much as I.

I heard what he said, but why does he want us to go aft before daybreak?

Why didn't you ask him when he was here. What is bothering me is to know how to wake the other fellows; they are sleeping as dead as stones. I think if I were to go to sleep now I should never wake again. He says we are to wake them quietly. How is it to be done?

How is it to be done, Lari? Are all the

## A Day of Surprises

men of his race like him ? He seems to wake just when it suits him !

Don't get on that track again, Kuma. I don't know anything about the men of his race. My inside aches for him ; the days we have been held as prisoners here have made him jumpy. If we can get him back to the station before the shaking sickness gets a hold on him I shall be glad. This everlasting mumbling and whispering to one another, too, just frays my courage. A few more days and nights of this kind of thing and we shall forget how to speak out like men.

Never mind, Lari, old friend, pull yourself together, it has been rough on you because you, like the Old Man, never seem to sleep. Here's a way to wake the boys and give their wandering spirits, at the same time, a chance to get back to their bodies.

Out with it quickly, Kuma ! How are we to do it ?

What do you think of this plan ? I will fill the deck-mop with water, whisk it between my hands, so ; they will slowly rouse themselves thinking it is raining ; then we can tell them what is on and all go aft to the Old Man.

That's good, Kuma, very good ! Get to work, there's plenty of water in the river. Give them a shower, and I will do what I can to hush them once they are awake.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! that's for you, Cookie !

Shoo, Kuma, don't laugh ! It's all right,



**"No, it's not raining"**

## A Day of Surprises

Cookie, it is I, Lari! No, it's not raining. No, you are not dreaming. Just wake up quietly like a good fellow. Don't talk, kid! No, the Old Man has not called for his coffee, but he wants you to go to him all the same. Get up and be quiet about it. I can't stay to yarn with you now.

Hallo, Mami! did you think it was raining? Now don't chatter, but get up quietly like the rest of the fellows are doing. You silly kid, shut off your laughing and giggling and come with us to the Old Man.

I couldn't help laughing, Lari. The boys thought a rain-squall had burst on them.

Hold your tongue between your finger and thumb, kid; do anything to it to keep it from wagging. That will do, Kuma! Now, boys, slither along the deck quietly to the Old Man; he has thought-things to tell us.

Lari! are his thought-things about getting away from this awful place?

Let us get aft, and you will hear for yourselves. If we are getting away from here this darkness-time we shall have to be lively about it; daybreak is at hand and if I know anything about the people ashore they will give us no chance to move out in the daylight-time.

Listen, boys! I am speaking in a whisper because we are closely watched by night as well as by day. When you have heard my words, slip back to your places very quietly and do not get up until daybreak. I have



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

brought you together in the darkness-time that we may not be seen by the men guarding us and be suspected of planning together to get away. This is the thing I would have you know. The fresh water in our barrel is nearly done. You drink the river water and it does not seem to hurt you. It is so brackish that I cannot drink it and we dare not go ashore to get fresh water from the village wells. My plan is to get permission to go to the beach, make a waterhole there and fill our barrel. If Rove, the great chief of this village, comes alongside when the daylight comes I shall ask him to allow us to go to the beach to get fresh-water. If he consents you will soon know and be in readiness to up anchor at once.

If we get down to the beach, Sah, shall we return to this place after we have filled the water-barrel ?

Listen, Lari, that is what I am coming to. If we get down to the beach it is not in my thought-things to return again, this trip, to this village. Once we get to the beach you will go ashore, make holes to find fresh water, but not be in any hurry to fill the barrel until you see the tide is on the ebb. That will be your part ; the rest we must leave with God. It seems to me that this will be His way of getting us out and away from all the sickening doings ashore.

Now get back to your places and when daylight comes get about your work as usual. Don't mope and don't let anyone from the

## A Day of Surprises

village who happens to pass by think that we are downhearted.

What do you make of it ; is it good talk, Lari ?

Give me time to sort out his words, Kuma ! I need to weigh and to measure them. He has been telling us his thought-things, but he sometimes tells us that he gets some of his thought-things from his God, and we know so little of his God that we need to chew them over and over again and again.

That's true, Lari ; but if his plan to go to the beach to get water is a thought-thing from his God, heigho ! we shall be all right and out on the open sea before another darkness-time makes our eyes heavier than our bodies.

You speak truly, Kuma, but do not make so much noise about it. There ! I was afraid of it.

Afraid of what ?

Why, that by your talking you would bring Cookie or Mami along.

What do you want here, Cookie ?

The warmth of the fire, Lari.

Is that all ? Well, put in some more wood and whilst you are about it fill the kettle and put it on the fire. The Old Man will soon be calling for his coffee.

Is Kuma asleep, Lari ?

No, I am not asleep, Cookie. There are two things I can do, Cookie that you cannot do. I can keep a silent tongue when there is nothing worth while to talk about. I can

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

dream and not want to tell everybody my dream-things.

Dead men only do the former, Kuma, and living men want to do the latter only when they have a dream worth telling.

Halloa, there's someone coming from the village !

Yes, I see him, it looks like old Avi. I can't make out his game. He seems to spend his nights and his days plying between us and the village. Yes, it is he, sure enough. Possibly he is bringing news to the Old Man. They talked together for a long time during the darkness-time.

You had better tell him, Lari, that Avi is coming.

There is no need to do so. You may be sure that he has seen him already. He is not missing much that passes these days.

\* \* \* \* \*

Is the White Chief awake, Lari ?

Are *you* awake, Avi ? See, the sun is rising over yonder coconut trees !

\* \* \* \* \*

What is it, Lari ?

Avi is alongside, Sah !

Let him come aboard !

He says he cannot stay but must speak to you, Sah.

All right, I will go to him.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A Day of Surprises

Thou comest with the sun, Avi, son of Kave.

That is so, O White Chief, and I would bring light to the thought-things which gathered about us during the darkness-time. If it will make thee glad I will bring Rove, son of Kairi, to speak with thee of the daylight-things, and it will be well for us, O White Chief, if thou can'st speak of them as thou seest them and as thou wouldst have the Highest of Ravi see them.

Go, Avi, and bring Rove here ! I will speak to him of the daylight-things I see and of the things I mean to do ; but listen, O Avi, and see to it that thou art nearer to me than Rove will be when I begin to do those things or thou wilt not see Paimuai when I greet your village again.

Thy words, O White Chief, cause the glad-things inside me to jump about like children at play. The wish of Eku, the Highest of Paimuai, has not slipped away with the things of the darkness-time. I shall be at thy side when thou art ready to do the daylight-things. I go to bring Rove, son of Kairi. Stay thou, O White Chief !

Lari, come here ! Now heed my words ! I have sent Avi to fetch Rove. When you see them coming keep the crew moving about their work and, at the same time keep an eye on me. I shall talk to Rove until Avi has got aboard. When you see me move aft and sit down, tell the crew to get into their place

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

quietly, man the oars, and have Kuma and the two kids for'ard to get up the anchor. When the anchor is up, let Kuma come aft, take the stroke oar, and then, my boy, away for the beach and, God helping us, out to the great water, out to sea, Lari, out to sea, my boy, before the coming of another darkness-time.

They are coming, Sah, Avi and Rove, just the two of them, Sah!

All right, you go for'ard, get the crew in hand, be ready to do your part as you see me do mine.

Thou bringest gladness to our eyes, O Highest of Ravi. Our ears would share the gladness of our eyes by hearing the sound of thy words.

Not so, O White Chief, but that my ears might hear the words of thy thought-things have I come to you.

Is it thy wish, O Highest, to remain in thy canoe, or to come aboard, to hear the thought-things of which I will speak?

I may not come aboard, but the reason is hidden from thee and the men of thy race, O White Chief.

As is most pleasing to thee, but I will sit as is the custom of my people when friend meets friend to talk about thought-things. The things of which I wish to speak.

See! O White Chief, your boys are raising the anchor!

That is so, and that is the matter of which I wish to speak. You have detained us here

## A Day of Surprises

these many days. You have not allowed us to go to see your village and to meet your people. We have drunk all our fresh water and are now going to the beach to find drinking-water.

Thou speakest true words, O White Chief, but why you have not been allowed to visit us in our village you can no more understand than why I cannot come aboard of your canoe.

Is it thy desire, O Highest, to go with us to the beach?

I go with you to the beach, O White Chief, that when your boys have filled the barrel with fresh water I may bring you back safely to your anchorage.

If such be thy desire, O Highest, then I must tell you more of my thought-things, because they do not speak to me of returning again to your village until I have met my kin far away there at the rising-place of the sun.

But it is not known to the elders, the braves and scouts of Ravi, that thou art leaving us, O White Chief.

That is so, but they have seen thee leave with us and they will know that we are in good company. When you return to them you will be able to tell them that I could not stay any longer with them on this visit.

Look out, Lari! Run her alongside the western sandspit. That'll do, don't go in too far, steady! Belay, boys! Let go the anchor! Mami and Cookie will stay aboard with me.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

All hands get ashore, dig for fresh water. Get lively and do not go too far away ; the tide will soon begin to ebb, and then——

What did you say, O Highest ?

Are you staying aboard, O White Chief ?

So speak my thought-things, O Highest !

Then I will stay here with you and Avi, son of Kave. I am sorting out things. I do not know if you can go, or if I must keep you here. I do not know if I am awake or asleep, if I am in the forest or on the river. Everything, daylight-things, darkness-things, are mixed. I do not——

Let us smoke together, O Highest. A pipe is a friend that does not weary one with words and things ; seen through the smoke-wreaths of a pipe, they often unfold themselves without words. Bring a firestick, Cookie ! That's right ! Roll a cigarette, stick it in the pipe, light it, go on, boy ; surely you don't want me to teach you how to do the thing. That's good. Now pass it to Rove, son of Kairi !

Not so, O White Chief ; the honour is thine to have the first smoke.

What is it now, Mami ?

Nothing, Sah, only to say that the tide is about slack and the canoe is about to swing head up the river.

That's all right ! You had better slip along to Lari and tell him your trouble. He will understand. Wait a moment ! Don't be in such a hurry ! There is no need to dash away

## A Day of Surprises

as if you were glad to be leaving. Just get along to Lari and tell him the canoe is swinging head up the river, and tell the boys they need not stay to fill the barrel to the brim.

The boys are coming, Sah !

You are right, Cookie ; they are ! Mami, come back !

My boys are coming with the water, O Highest, but before we leave you I have one other thought-thing to put into words. When telling thy people why we have not returned to our anchorage, will you, also, tell them that I shall hope to come back again before the great wind of the south-east begins to blow ?

I will tell them of thy words, but I know not if the things which take you away will be pleasing to them.

They will be pleased when they hear I am coming again, O Highest.

If thou must go, O White Chief ? Go !

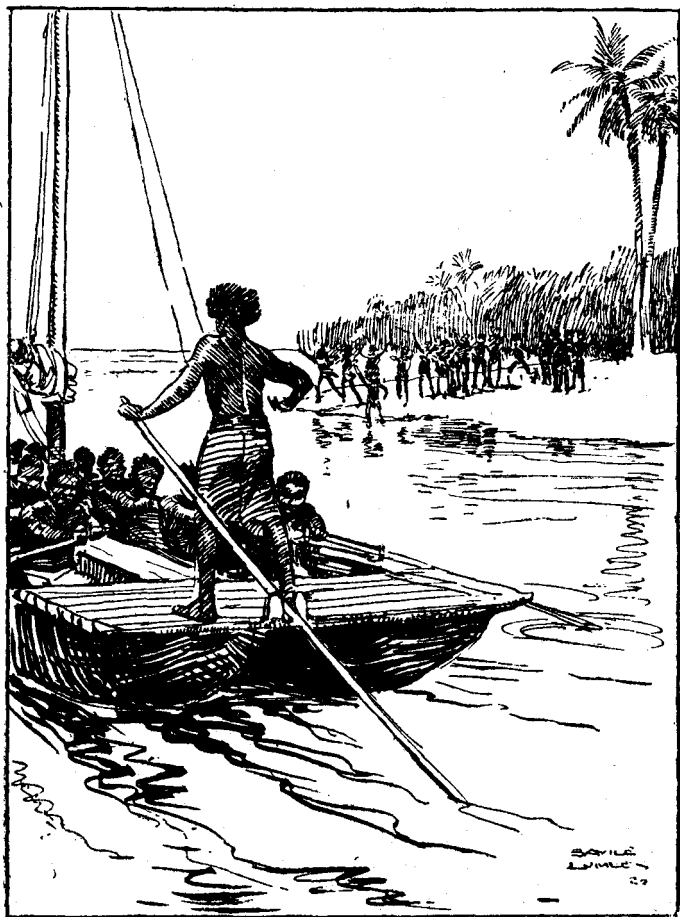
O Rove, son of Kairi, O Highest of Ravi, stay ! Stay, O Highest, stay !

To the oars, boys ! Look alive, you fellows for'ard ; up anchor ! Now boys, ready ! Pull away ! Swing her around, Lari, and steer for the middle of the passage ! There's a nice little breeze waiting for us outside ! That's good, boys, now we are away ! Put your backs into it, two long and one short, that's the stroke !

Halloa ! What's that ?

A whoop, O White Chief, it's the Korians'





**"They will cut us off—we are ambushed"**

*(See pages 107)*

## A Day of Surprises

whoop. See! there they are, rushing out to the eastern sandspit. They will cut us off; we are ambushed; who can save us from the Korians?

Shut up your wail, Avi! Keep her off, Lari, as near as we can go to the western sandspit! Come here, Mami and Cookie! Squat here by my feet and don't squeal! Keep her off, Lari; there comes a shower of arrows. Pull away, boys, pull away! Don't run us ashore, Lari; see where you are going, my boy!

They've taken to the water, Sah, they want to cut us off and board us!

I wish they were all in the water; their barbed arrows would not then worry us. Put your backs into it, boys. That's good, we are beyond the range of their arrows. See, Lari, they are doing good shooting, but we are beyond their reach. Pull, boys, keep on pulling; we have their swimmers abeam now. Pull away, they are about done up. In bow oars and you fellows up jib and staysail. That's good! Thank God we are through!

Get for'ard, Kuma, and help those fellows to up foresail! Ease down, boys. It was touch and go. We will get all our sails up and head for the Vaiai river. The Korians are already taking themselves off to the bush.

Where is Avi?

Here I am, O White Chief, behind you.

I know you are, O Avi, but where were you when we were coming out of Ravi river?

I slipped under the deck, O White Chief, to

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

see if, perchance, you had any bows, arrows, and daggers stowed there.

That will do, Avi; that old lie is worn thin; I want to talk about something else now. We must sleep to-night at Paimuai, and I want to meet my old friend Eku, son of Evara. I must know from him why the Korians persist in pursuing me whenever I come west to these villages.

Be it so, O White Chief, and may we sleep at Paimuai to-night!

What does Mami say, Lari?

The western passage of the Veiai river is in sight, Sah.

Carry on as you are going until you can see both sides of the passage.

Shall we sail in, Sah?

I don't know. The wind seems to be taking off, but there might be enough left to take us through if the breakers are not too big. Get for'ard, Kuma, and keep a good look-out with Mami!

Is the Old Man going to sail through the passage, Kuma?

Don't talk, Mami. Wait and see what he is going to do!

There's a break off the sandspit, Kuma, but it's nothing. We could sail through it as easy as anything.

You're a kid, Mami. You talk, talk, talk.

What's the matter, Kuma?

What's the matter? Can't you see the wind has nearly blown out? How can we

## A Day of Surprises

sail through the breakers if there is no wind to fill our sails ?

Yes, that is the passage. Bring her head around. That'll do ! Goosewing the sails, boys ; good ! Now out with a couple of steer-oars, get your rowlocks in place and be ready to pull if the wind fails us !

That's right, Cookie, you sit tight, my boy, and whistle up the wind ; we shall make a sailor of you yet.

Now, boys, to the oars ; we are not making headway. The tide is against us. Give them the stroke, Kuma. Pull away, boys ! Swish ! that's a beauty and here comes another and another. Hang on to those steer-oars. Keep her head straight. Pull away, boys, there she goes ; hurrah ! we are inside !

That's right, boys, get your wind, then down sails and with a little more pulling we shall be at Paimuai before sunset. Paimuai, all hands turn in, a night's sleep ; oo'ah ! It'll be simply grand !

Pull away, boys ! Avi says there are some of his people on yonder bank of the lagoon. Steer for that bank, Lari !

No, no, O White Chief, do not steer towards yonder bank. I know not the ways of the great water outside, but the rivers and the creeks, yes, the rivers and the creeks and their hidden things are known to me.

All right, Avi, as you like ; pilot us as you will, only get us to Paimuai as quickly as you know how.

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Those men on yonder bank, O White Chief, are the scouts of Paimuai. I have their signal, we may pass on.

There is the village, boys, just ahead. Pull away, that's good, we are nearly there.

The current of the river is very strong, O White Chief, and many trees are swept along by it during the darkness-time; may I take you into one of our creeks?

Anywhere, Avi, where the boys and I can sleep until to-morrow daybreak.

Into that creek, Lari, and tell Kuma to jump ashore as soon as we are alongside of the bank. That is very good, Lari. Thou art a great capena

Tell Mami to throw Kuma a rope and let him make fast to yonder post.

That is good, very good! We are at Paimuai, O White Chief!

We are at Paimuai, O Avi, but where are your people? There is no brightness of the sunshine-things in your eyes, O Avi. Does the silence of the village speak of things thou wouldst not know, O Avi?

Silence is a child of the night, O White Chief, and where it broods the darkness-things hover.

Stay and eat food with us, Avi!

Not so, O White Chief. Stay thou and eat food. I go to my kin.

Go thou, O Avi!

Chapter  
Ten

CROSS  
CURRENTS

**W**E seem to be going from bad to worse, Lari! This morning we got away from Ravi by a mere fluke; we made the narrowest escape from the Korians and their arrows; to-night! Well! what will it be?

I don't know, Kuma! There seems to be no end to this men-eating. I am sick and weary of it all! We may be held up here as we were at Ravi, and—— Did the Old Man call me?

He did, Lari. Get aft and hear what he has to say, and, Lari, try to find out if we are homeward-bound.

Oh, Lari, is that you? Cheer up, my boy, you are looking worried. I have called you to arrange for the watches to-night. I will take the first and I will stick to it as long as I possibly can. When I am done I will call Kuma, and you had better take the last watch that you will have a fairly long sleep. I want you to get as much sleep as you can to-night, because I cannot guess what is ahead of us here at Paimuai.

Yes, Sah, Kuma and I will keep the watches, Sah; we are not afraid, Sah, but are we going

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

back to our village when we leave here to-morrow, Sah ?

Who knows where we are going, Lari ? I would like to think that we are leaving here to-morrow, and going straight back to the station. We can't talk about the morrows, boy ; we have to take each day as it comes along and make the best of it. The morrows we must leave to bring what they may. Now get for'ard, and all hands turn in. This is my watch !

What are you fellows doing here ?

Nothing, Lari ! Cookie and I are having a smoke and keeping Kuma company.

You had better get. The Old Man is keeping this watch. If he comes along and finds you here you will know all about it.

You speak truly, Lari, but what is the good lying down if we can't sleep ?

Can't sleep ! What is there to keep you awake ?

Why, those people ashore, shouting, drumming, yelling and dancing, over the dead men they brought in this evening. Lari, come and lie down near to us. Do, Lari, quickly, because the Old Man is coming this way.

Who told you, Mami, that the Paimuans brought in dead men this evening ?

I did, Lari ! I was on the bank cooking our supper when the braves came back. When I heard the village-people shout and the conch-shells call I slipped into the village to see what

## Cross Currents

was the matter and I saw them throw the dead bodies ashore.

Are you sure that you were not dreaming of what you saw at Ravi, Cookie ?

Am I sure that I am at Paimuai to-night and not at Ravi ? I don't know, but I am sure that I saw the Paimuan braves throw a lot of dead men ashore this evening.

Well, let it be at that, Cookie. Get to sleep ; here comes the Old Man !

Halloa, Lari, you are not asleep ! What are you doing sitting up ?

Turning over my thought-things, Sah. Trying to understand why these people are always hunting, killing and eating everybody who comes their way. I can understand why they hunt and kill their enemies, but why do they eat them ?

I don't know, Lari, and we won't talk just now. You turn in, get some sleep, and leave your thought-things to look after themselves.

I can't sleep here to-night, Sah. The boys are not asleep ! Shall we get away from here in the morning, Sah ? We do not mind the day-things ; we were not afraid of the Korians this morning ; we could see them and had they got aboard we could have fought them, thrown them overboard ; but the night-things ! They are different ! They are creepy !

You speak truly, Lari, but there are other night-things than the mad revelry ashore. The stars up yonder, they, too, are night-things, bright but silent ; the noise and din



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

of the village cannot reach up to them. The beetles and insects, too, in the bushes on yonder bank are night-things; they chirp as if they are glad; the shouts of the people ashore do not disturb them. No, Lari, all the night-things are not bad!

I have been watching the stars to-night, Lari. I have been listening to them. Yes, they have been speaking to me! When I began this watch I felt, as you say, "creepy." Each whoop and shout in the village seemed to make me shudder and then, somehow, my thought-things got looking upwards, up to the stars. They shone down on me so brightly, winked and blinked at me, as if they wanted to be friendly, and presently they seemed to speak to me when, quite suddenly, a cloud came along, hid them from my sight and immediately I remembered that I was here on the deck on watch, and the yelling in the village was as awful as ever.

I looked upwards again, the cloud had passed, the friendly stars looked down at me, nodded and seemed to say, "See, lonely man, we are still shining; a cloud came between us and thee, but we have been shining all the time as we are doing now."

Well, Lari, I immediately took out my thought-things and picked out those that are kin of the promise-things in God's Holy Book. I turned them over, looked at them on this side and the other, they shone with a wondrous brightness that drove away all the darkness.

## Cross Currents

of the night-things about me and they seemed to say, "See, lonely man, we are still shining; the cannibal-revelry ashore came between us and thee, but we have been shining all the time as we are doing now."

Think of the awful things we have been seeing here, Lari, as you think of the big black clouds which come hurtling and screaming along from the north-west. Remember the nights when we have all had to stand-by, and how we longed for the coming of the morning star. Well, these awful things here, like the big, black clouds from the north-west, will roar and wreak like a squall of wind, but the Morning Star will yet arise here and the cannibals of these villages, like the people of your territory, will hail Him and He shall bring them peace.

We seem to be rather close to the bank, Lari. Give her a little slack for'ard; I will pay out a little aft and then turn in. Call Kuma and let him take his watch!

Has he turned in, Lari?

He's gone aft to do so. You must have been sleeping very lightly, Kuma!

Sleeping, eh? Sleeping! Did you say "sleeping," Lari?

Never mind about what I said. Give me a hand, Kuma. The Old Man told me to slack the bow rope a bit and now she's getting a bump from every log going out on the ebbing tide. Take the boat-hook and try to clear

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

the log that has got between us and the bank.

How's that, Lari ?

That'll do ! Now give me a hand to pull her head in a little. The tide is racing out.

I wish we were racing out with it. But, Lari, what are you doing here ? This is not your watch. Go and turn in, I won't forget to call you when your time comes.

This is your watch, Kuma ; keep it, but I shall stay here by the fire.

Stay, Lari, and listen to the row in the village. Are those people men or are they evil spirits ? The Old Man says, Eku, son of Evara, the Highest of Paimuai, is his friend. Everywhere he goes he preaches against fighting, but it seems to me that his friends fight as much as the men who will not be friendly to him.

Light the pipe, Kuma, and don't work up another grouse about the Old Man.

Grouse about the Old Man, eh ? I should be hard up for a growl if I did, Lari ! What wobbles my thought-things about him is the way his friends treat him. We came to this village before the sun went down, but his friend, the Highest of Paimuai, has not been aboard to welcome him. I try to think his friends are, well——

That'll do, Kuma ! Keep your watch and don't forget that all birds have not got white wings.

I don't see what birds and white wings have to do with the fellows the Old Man calls his

## Cross Currents

friends. Look at Avi! He's another of his friends and what does he do as soon as we reach this village? Is he aboard with his friend to-night, or is he ashore with those madmen?

That is all true, Kuma, but Avi's race and ours are not the same.

I see, and is that what you mean by saying, "all birds have not got white wings," Lari?

I mean more than that, Kuma. We are in a foreign country here. We know not the customs of these people. We cannot understand the comings and goings of Avi; the thought-things of the men Avi calls "the Highest" of one village and another are hidden from us; they may do things as they do them, and not as we do them, because it is their custom to do them as they do them. Custom, Kuma, like taboo, is sacred!

I do know that the Old Man brought peace to us and to our enemies. Who can say that the Message from the Holy Book that he is writing will not bring peace to these peoples?

Look out, Kuma, there's something wrong; she's swinging out astern.

So she is. Another log, this time right across her bows, sure enough!

There's no log here! Holloa, who are you? Oh . . . is it you, Avi? What's the matter, Avi? You want to come aboard, do you? Well, just let go our mooring-rope until I have called the Old Man!

Shall I call the Old Man, Lari?

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Hold on a bit. Are you sure it is Avi ?

I can't see him, it's too dark, but it is his voice. Whoever he is, he's certainly scared and afraid to speak out lest someone should hear him in the village.

There is too much row in the village for anyone to hear him shout, but he may be followed by someone. Get hold of the boathook and keep the bows of the canoe clear of the bank, Kuma. I will take him on now, and if he is Avi I think we had better let him come aboard.

Halloa, who are you? Speak out! All right, if you are Avi, son of Kave, you may come aboard, but stay a moment! Why do you want to come aboard? Well, you can't speak to the White Chief to-night. He is asleep. His friends do not walk about with the darkness-things. I am not sure that you are Avi, son of Kave, but if you are, come when the day breaks and speak with him when the daylight-things are about.

Oh, Lari, can it be that the noise of my words is not known to thee?

It's Avi, Lari, why are you playing him like a fish?

I know it's Avi, Kuma, but it's so dark that I cannot see if he is alone or if he has others with him. I know it's Avi, son of Kave, but, Kuma, I have known Avi as an enemy as well as a friend. Listen, let him come aboard, and as he does so, you get him by the arm nearest you and I will get him by the other. If he has a bone dagger, seize it!



**"Go for'ard and bring him along"**

*(See page 120)*

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Are you there, Avi? Pull on the rope and when the bow swings in, jump aboard. Kuma and I will catch you.

Good! Now push her off again, Kuma! Well, Avi, what brings you here in the darkness-time?

I would speak with the White Chief, O Lari, of the darkness-things and I must speak now. When the daylight comes it will be too late.

We have disturbed him. Slip along to him, Lari. There! he called to me, but you go, Lari. Avi and I will talk until you come back.

Yes, Sah, it is I, Lari.

What were you doing to the canoe?

We swung her bows into the bank to let Avi come aboard, Sah.

Is Avi aboard! What is he doing here in the darkness-time?

He says he must speak with you about the darkness-things, that when the day breaks it will be too late.

Go for'ard and bring him along, also your blanket. When he is seated beside me, roll into your blankets and pretend to sleep near my feet.

Do you see any light in my words, Lari?

Yes, Sah, it is as the light of the sun.

Is that you, O Avi?

It is I, Avi, O White Chief.

Why walkest thou with the darkness-things, O Avi?

## Cross Currents

If I speak of the river-things, O White Chief, the noise of my words will reach your ears and it will be the echo of my thought-things.

Speak, O Avi, of the things thou wouldst speak, but let thy words be few, because my ears are dull and my eyes are heavy.

I speak then, O White Chief, of the river-things. Of canoes and their mooring-posts; of tides and their ebb and flow; of currents which move swiftly and bear logs along their course noiselessly; of canoes which drift from their moorings and are not missed until the break of day.

Yes, yes, O Avi, all these things I have known ever since I first learnt anything of the ways of river-things. Speak of the things which bring you to me this darkness-time!

I am speaking to you of them, O White Chief. Did I not come to you at Ravi? Did I not go with you to Vaimu? Did I not listen to the words of the men of Ravi night and day that I might bring you safely to the presence of the Highest of Paimuai?

Thou speakest truly, O Avi, but where is the Highest of Paimuai? He has not welcomed me to his village.

Of that I cannot speak, now and here, O White Chief. If we were drifting noiselessly out on the ebbing-tide as the logs drift out to the great water, I might speak of the things which are now hidden from thee.

Is that it? You want us to drift out noiselessly, as logs drift out to sea? You want us



## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

to slink away as if we had done something wrong and are afraid of the people ashore? You would have us be ashamed of our own shadows?

Speak not so, O White Chief! When our people get the flesh of their enemies they hunger for more. As they eat, their joy turns to frenzy; all peace-customs fade away from their thought-things as daylight-things pass into the silence of darkness-things. Yes, when our people eat the flesh of their enemies they hunger for more, and who can say that they will not eat the flesh of foreigners when they have eaten all they have of their enemies?

Stay, O Avi! Are these words the echo of thy thought-things or the message of the Highest of Paimuai?

I speak of the thought-things of Eku, son of Evara, the Highest of Paimuai, O White Chief. He bade me so speak that thou mayest come again when there is peace in our village. What are thy thought-things, O White Chief?

I cannot put them into words that you will understand, O Avi. Iesu, Son of God, the Highest of heaven and earth, put them into words a long time ago when He sent His bloodmen to the villages to give His Message to the people. He told them that if the people did not receive them kindly they were to leave them and go elsewhere. That is what I must do!

If I may speak again, O White Chief, I would say that it will be well to let the boys sleep. It

## Cross Currents

will be well if we all sleep that if we are seen drifting by the village and are hailed the people will think we are all asleep and cannot hear their hails.

There is just enough light in your words, Avi, to help me to understand your thought-things. Lari, get up, my boy, and let go the rope astern! I will go for'ard and help Kuma to get the mooring-rope aboard.

No, no, let it not be so, O White Chief; leave the mooring-rope with me!

So you go ashore, O Avi, and we go away leaving our rope with you? My thought-things are other, O Avi! You may go ashore if you wish, but my rope must be coiled aboard before we drift out of this creek.

Listen, O White Chief, the mooring-post is loosened, so loosened that one big pull such as Kuma and I will make will pull it out of the mud; we will get the rope aboard. The village men will come down at daybreak to look for us, they will see the post lying on the bank and will know that we were carried away by the strong ebb-tide when we were all asleep.

Get at it, Avi, and quickly. If we are going, the sooner the better; but I do not like this kind of thing.

What is it, Kuma? Have you got the mooring rope aboard?

Yes, Sah, and Avi too, he is for'ard, he says, "keeping a look-out."

Down on your back, my boy, and you, too,

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Lari. We have to pretend that we are sleeping as dead as stones, until we are past the village. If anyone hails us, don't answer, but sleep for all you are worth.

We are past the village, O White Chief, and if Lari can put out the steer-oar very quietly I can show him the creek through which we must drift that we may not be found at day-break by anyone who may seek us.

Keep her in the middle of the creek, O Lari. We are moving as quickly as the shark out in the great water yonder.

I don't know where we are drifting, Sah! I can hear the sea breaking ahead somewhere but it is too dark to see where it is.

All right, Kuma, you keep a good look out for'ard. Avi has brought us into this creek. He will have to get us out of it. This slinking away in the dark is not to my liking, and I would not have been a party to it had I not to think of you boys and your safety.

What's the matter, Lari?

She won't steer, Sah. The tide is rushing by us but we are not getting anywhere.

What is it now, Kuma?

There's a break in the land, Sah. I can see the white foam of the breakers on the beach but we have drifted on to a sandbank between us and the sea.

Avi, come here! Where are we? Kuma says we were drifting out to the great water before we ran aground on a sandbank. We

## Cross Currents

don't know this creek. Why don't you keep a look out and tell us the way we must go ?

Sleeping men on canoes, as in houses, are as dead as stones, O White Chief. Their canoes drift they know not whither, and when they awake they can speak only of the things their spirits have seen in their wanderings.

That'll do, Avi, we are not having a palaver now! We are aground on a sandbank and the tide is falling very fast. Tell us the way we must go that we may get off this bank as quickly as we know how !

Thou speakest truly, O White Chief, we are aground and the tide is falling quickly. We must get off and cross over to the far bank of the creek. Then the boys must get out the oars and pull until we reach my village at the mouth of the eastern entrance to the Veiai river.

Now, boys, overboard and push the canoe off the sandbank !

Not so, O White Chief, because the sandbank is a resting-place of the crocodile and sleeping men on a drifting canoe dare not shout loud enough to frighten away the crocodiles lest the tree-things, the bird-things and other things having ears hear them.

All right, Avi, that'll do. Now, boys, all get for'ard, out with the oars and poles and try to push her off !

She's not moving, Sah.

Bring the anchor aft ! Slip over the stern, Kuma ! good ! Now take the anchor and carry it out into deep water and you, Lari, keep



**"Pull, boys, pull for all you are worth"**

*(See page 188)*

## Cross Currents

the steer-oar swishing to and fro to scare away the crocodiles. Oh, never mind Kuma; he will take good care that you do not hit him with the steer-oar. Pay out the rope, boys! Keep that oar swishing, Lari; it will be better for him to be hit by the oar than to be snapped by a crocodile.

Is it all right, Kuma?

All right, Sah! The deep water is only about the canoe's length astern.

Good! Get aboard and now all hands on that rope. Pull, boys, pull for all you are worth. Pull away, don't be afraid, you can't break the rope. She's moving! Pull, pull; there she goes, keep at it until the anchor is under the stern. That's good! Haul up the anchor! To the oars, boys; swing her around, Lari; there she goes, now we are away, stick to it, my boys, by daybreak we shall be at Avi's village.

Now, O Avi, we can talk! There are a few things which tangle my thought-things. I want to straighten them out before we reach your village.

You want to know, O White Chief, why the current in this creek which brought us quietly out of Paimuai and put us on the sandbank is now running strongly against us?

No, no, I have done with that current and the sandbank at the end of it this journey, but I shall never have had done with the slinking away from Paimuai in the dark. It was a darkness-thing. I came to your people to

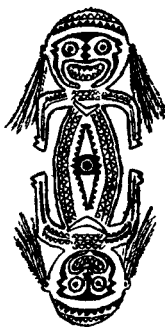
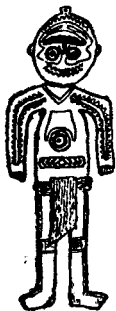
## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

speak of daylight-things, peace-things. We slunk away from them as if we were afraid of them, or as if we had wronged them.

I would speak of the two currents of this creek, O White Chief. The one which brought us quietly out of Paimuai and the one we are now pulling against that we may reach my village and safety. Between them those currents have made the sandbank astern, O White Chief.

Bother the sandbank! We are away from it now. Tell me why we had to sneak away from Paimuai.

Thou art wise, O White Chief. Thou knowest that men are as river currents that meet at one place and cut for themselves a common outlet to the sea. Such are the people of Paimuai. One current there is with you to help you; the other is against you and you cannot yet pull against it, O White Chief, you cannot yet pull against it.



*Carved Wooden Images, Papua.*



*Carved Wood  
Comb.*



*Bone Dagger.*



Chapter  
Eleven

HOMeward  
BOUND

**H**ALLOA ! look-out ! what's that ?

A snag, Sah !

A snag, eh ! It's something bigger than a snag ! Take the steer-oar, Avi, and you go for'ard to see what we have come up against, Lari.

It's a fallen tree, Sah, lying right across the creek from bank to bank.

Who's keeping the look-out ?

Kuma, Sah, but it's so dark here between these heavily-timbered banks that he cannot see any distance beyond the bowsprit. The bowsprit passed over the tree, Sah !

Get out the axes, boys, and all hands for'ard to cut away that tree. That's right, make plenty of noise ; scare away the crocodiles. We've seen enough man-eating this journey to last us a lifetime.

Splash ! that's good ! keep the log clear of the canoe, boys ! That's right, now we can get through. To the oars, boys, pull away !

Oo'ah ! oo'ah ! there's the morning star !

Kuma's right. It is the morning star and we are clear of that narrow creek. See, that is surely a big river ahead ! What river is it, Avi ?

## Homeward Bound

It is the eastern branch of the Veiai, O White Chief.

How much farther is it to your village, O Avi ?

We are so close to it, O White Chief, that if my people are waking with the daybreak-things they can hear the noise of the oars and their eyes will be gladdened to see us coming with the daylight-things. You will come ashore and eat food, O White Chief ?

Not so, O Avi ! We cannot stay to go to the village because the Ravi people kept us so long at their village. We must hurry back to our people before they begin to wail for us.

You will come again, O White Chief !

Yes ! and when I come again I shall want you to go with me to meet the people living on the hills of the east bank of your great river.

May you come quickly, O White Chief ! Great will be my gladness to take you to the people of the hill villages. They have many pigs and will be glad to make a great feast for you when we go to visit them.

All right, Avi, you will be welcome to all the pigs they kill for you. I shall need you to help me to tell them the Message I am carrying to all peoples everywhere.

That will be good, O White Chief ! You carry the Message, your boys and I will eat the pigs. That is good talk, O White Chief !

Well, here we are, Avi, at your village at last. Now get ashore, tell your people to bring us sago, sweet potatoes, taro, bananas,

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

crabs and coconuts. Tell them to bring plenty of food, enough drinking-water to fill our barrel and I will amply pay them. The day will be fine ; we must go out to the great water to-day. Do you understand, Avi, we must go out to sea to-day ?

Your thought-things are as the daylight-things to me, O White Chief. My people shall bring the food and the water and thou wilt pay them well as thou hast said ; and thou wilt pay them well, O White Chief !

Yes, Avi, I will pay them well, and after they have put food and water aboard I will speak to them of the Great Message Jesus, Son of God, brought to earth for all peoples of every land.

Listen, Lari ! Now that Avi has gone to the village I want to speak to you about the meeting I mean to have with his people. I shall tell them the same Old Story you have heard me tell so many times and when I ask them to bow their heads and close their eyes will you pray ?

I am not an Ekalesia (*Church-member*) but you very often tell us that your God will listen to the prayer of anyone who speaks to Him, be he an Ekalesia or not, and very often when everybody aboard is asleep at night I speak to Him, because it's not easy to keep brave down here among these men-eaters, Sah.

But why, Lari, do you call Him my God ? He is as much yours as mine. However, we

## Homeward Bound

will talk about that another time. Buy the food from the village people now, and after we have had a service with them we will all have a big meal and then, my boy, see that everything is ship-shape. We go out to sea to-day. Out to sea, Lari, a fair wind and a smooth sea! Why, all the good things come our way, boy!

Yes, we are going away, O Avi!

Go thou, O White Chief, that thou mayest the sooner return to us!

Stay thou, O Avi, stay thou!

Now boys, to the oars! Where's Kuma? Come here, my boy, and take stroke! You keep a good look-out, Mami! Ready! Pull away, my boys! Give them two long and one short, Kuma! That's the stroke! Keep straight out, Lari, so as to clear the lee sandspit. Good! That'll do! Belay! Stow oars! Now all hands up sails! Let her go off a bit, Lari! We are clear of yonder sandspit. Keep her at that, steady!

Oo'ah, Oo'ah! We're homeward-bound! Shout, sing, whistle up the wind, do what you like, boys, whilst this wind lasts. If it is kind to us to-morrow at daybreak we shall see the smoke of our village fires.

What's that out there on the rim of the sea, Lari?

A small canoe, Sah. The coast village men are out shark-fishing.

It seems to be a very small canoe. I can

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

see only two men in it. Is it a double or single canoe ?

A single canoe, Sah, with an outrigger.

They are a long way from the land. What will happen to them if the wind freshens and brings up big seas ?

They will be all right, Sah. No sea can sink those canoes. The men do not mind their canoes being swamped. They just sit tight in the canoes, ride the waves like gulls and steer for the beach. They mind the sharks more than the big waves.

Are they afraid of the sharks, Lari ?

Yes and no, Sah ! When they draw in their net with a shark in it they have to be careful that it does not break through the net and get away. By the time they get it alongside the canoe the shark is very angry, so that the men have to stun it with an axe whilst it is in the water, or it would get its teeth into them, or hurt them with its tail, if they got it aboard before it was stunned. On getting it aboard they kill it.

Have the people ashore no other kind of fish that they take the risks of shark-fishing or is its flesh nicer than that of other fishes ?

They do not fish for it merely for food ; they need its teeth. Before you came to live with us and brought glass bottles our people could not get on without sharks' teeth.

Lari, you are a funny fellow ! I can't see any likeness between glass bottles and sharks' teeth.

## Homeward Bound

I cannot tell you a lot about sharks, Sah. Kuma belongs to the shark-people and he knows the talk of his people about sharks.

You mean that Kuma's people are shark-fishers ?

No, sah ; the shark-people will not fish for sharks, will not kill them, and will not eat shark's flesh.

The meaning of your words is hidden from me, Lari. How can Kuma's people be said to be shark-people if they will have nothing to do with sharks ?

Shark-flesh to his people is taboo, Sah ! It is the sacred fish of his first ancestor. If his people were to kill a shark, or eat its flesh after someone else had killed it, they would lose their hair ; their teeth would all decay and fall out ; they would get a wasting sickness and die.

Do you think those words are true words, Lari ?

I do not know, Sah. We know one another and the sacred things of one another, but we do not speak of those things for one another because we do not know—we do not know——

Do not know what, Lari ?

We do not know—well, Sah—if you ask Kuma he may tell you a lot of things about sharks known only to the shark-people. Shall we slack the mainsail a little, Sah ?

Yes, you may ! The wind is drawing a bit astern, but it is holding well. We shall see the smoke of our village fires at daybreak if

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we can carry this wind right through the night.

Kuma, come here! Sit down, boy, and let us talk. I was asking Lari about that little canoe we saw this morning right away out on the edge of the sea. He told me it was an out-rigger canoe, and had in it two men fishing for sharks. Tell me all you can about shark-fishing. About the kind of nets they use, Sah?

Yes, and about anything else that has to do with sharks and shark-fishing.

You have seen the nets, Sah, and know that they are very long. Their width reaches from the finger-tips of my right hand to the finger-tips of my left hand when my arms are thrown back, so, in straight line with my body.

Yes, I know all about that, but where do your people get the twine of which they make their shark-nets?

They make it, Sah.

Tell me where they get the fibre of which it is made and how they make it. Tell me, in light-giving words, that the darkness of my thought-things may pass away.

I will speak, Sah, of these things as they are known to me. In the swamp country known to our people grow certain palms which have a very strong fibre. We call these palms "lilia" (*pandanus*). They do not grow as do many palms on one stem, but have many stems. We cut away one or two of the many stems and leave the others that the palm may continue to grow yet more stems. The

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cut stems we strip into narrow lengths, tie them in bundles of the size my hand can easily grasp, place them under water so weighted down that the running water cannot carry them away. They remain under water two nights and one day; on the second day we take them out of the water, take strip by strip and place it on a log, scrape it with an oyster shell until each strip becomes a little bundle of fine fibres. We then wash the fibres and dry them in the sun until they are bleached very white.

That is very interesting, Kuma! You have told me where you get the fibre for the twine used in your shark-nets and how you prepare it before it is made into twine, but tell me how you make the twine?

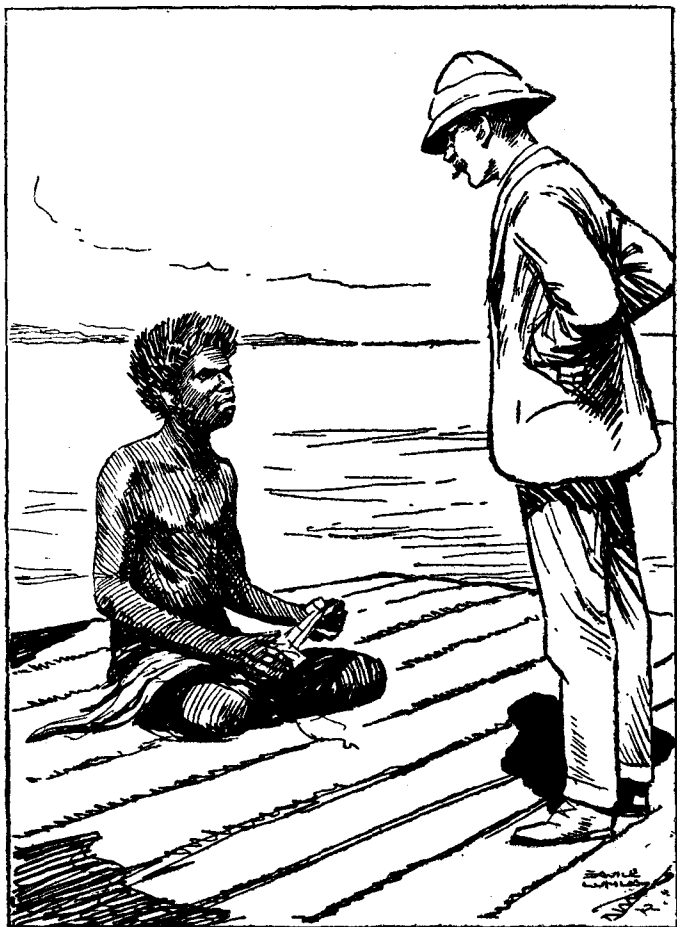
How we make the fibre into twine, Sah! That is very easy! We place the fibre near where we sit. Our fingers and thumbs know how much fibre is needed for the size strand we want, and pick up with the finger and thumb of the left hand the right quantity, throw it across the right thigh, like this, and with the palm of the right hand pressing lightly on the fibre we twist it forward and back until the right twist has been given to it and the fibre has become twine.

It seems quite easy work, Kuma, as you describe it.

Yes, Sah, it is so easy, that we do not ask ourselves how we do it.

And the net-making, is that easy, too?





**"How we make the fibre into twine, Sah!"**

*(See page 187)*

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So easy, Sah, that our women can do it as well as the men.

You said just now, Kuma, that the fibre was white before you made it into twine, but all the cord made by your people that I have seen has been anything but white. How did it get its colour ?

The colour ! Yes, Sah, the colour comes from our hands and our thighs.

You mean that you do not bathe often enough to keep your bodies clean ?

That may be so, Sah ! We swim in the sea a good deal, and, sometimes, when it rains heavily, and we think we will for the fun of it, we stand under the eaves of a house and let the rain-water fall on us. The salt water does not clean our bodies very much ; we do not stand under the eaves every day for the rain-water to fall on us. It may be thou speakest truly, Sah, our twine is not white because our bodies are not clean. May we speak about something else, Sah ?

Yes ; tell me about the wooden floats the shark-fishers fasten to their nets. How they carve and mark them so evenly ?

That, too, Sah, is very easily done. They go into the bush and cut from trees small branches not larger than my wrist. The branches of any tree will not do. They must be cut from a tree whose wood is very white after its bark is stripped. The wood must be very light, too, so as to float easily. Having got as many branches as they need for floats,

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they bring them back to the village, strip off their bark, carve one end of them in the likeness of a shark's head, just like a shark's head, with eyes and teeth! You've seen a shark's head, Sah

Yes, I've seen a shark's head, Kuma. But, listen, boy, you have not told me how the markings in black and white are done.

Oh, those are done by covering parts of the floats with palm fronds. One man does his one way, another man does his another way, but they both make the markings they want by holding the floats over the fire until the parts not covered with fronds are seared and blackened. When the fronds are taken off, the wood they have covered is quite white. That is very easy work, Sah!

Lari tells me that the shark-fishers do not catch sharks merely because they desire to eat their flesh. They desire their teeth as much as their flesh.

That is so, Sah! Before we had glass bottles our people used sharks' teeth for a lot of things. The men used them to shave the heads of their wives. The medicine-men used them to bleed the heads of their patients when they had headache. They were used as drills to make small holes in pearl-shells and other things.

You speak truly, Kuma, about the shark's-teeth drills. I have seen them, but how did the medicine-men use them to bleed their patients?



**A Papuan cure for headache**

*(See page 142)*

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

Oh, that's a good custom, Sah? The medicine-man makes a tiny bow just like our big bows are made. Then he makes a tiny arrow, points it with a shark's tooth, poises it on the tiny bowstring, keeps it straight and in place on the string and the bow with the forefinger of his left hand. His patient lies in front of him and he pulls the bowstring, the arrow slips forward, punctures the patient's forehead, and this he does again and again all over the forehead until the blood streams down over the patient's face, his headache has gone and he is better. Yes, Sah, that's a good custom!

That will do now, Kuma. The sun is setting and before darkness comes let us have evening prayers.

Just a word, boys, before we bow our heads in prayer.

I want to remind you of God's goodness to us through all the days and nights of this journey. He was with us in our going west to the cannibals; He cared for us during our stay with them; He is with us now and will be with us through the hours of the coming darkness-time.

More than once during this journey I have asked myself, why are we down here in cannibal-land? Now that we are here, what good can we do these cannibals?

Each time I have asked those questions, one answer only has come to me. Listen, it is in these words:—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." That has been our work down

## Homeward Bound

there in the west, boys, down there in cannibal-land. We have been there to prepare the way of the Lord. To cut a track, to make a road, a straight highway, along which Jesus and His workers may go in coming days to carry Light and Life to the peoples of cannibal-land.

That has been our work this journey. We have been feeling our way through the dense darkness of those wild tribes. As we have gone along from village to village we have trod on, broken down, some of the darkness-things about their lives, and have let in a little light where there was nothing but darkness, darkness, darkness. You know, boys, something of that darkness! You will never forget it, if you live to be very old men. God forbid that you ever should! As long as you remember it, the people who live in it will appeal to you, call to you, to bring to them the Light.

Well, now that we are homeward-bound, and with the coming of the morning star we shall be near enough to our kin to see the smoke of our village fires at daybreak, don't let us forget that the work we have been doing in the west will ever be our job, yours and mine, to prepare the way of the Lord until He has a highway into the hearts of all our peoples, the peoples of the coast and the peoples of the bush, the peoples of the swamp of cannibal-land and the peoples of the forest and the hills.

Let us pray.

Our Father God, we thank Thee that we

## By Canoe to Cannibal-land

can come to Thee when we are glad as when we are sad. We are both to-night, and Thou knowest why.

We are glad that we are homeward-bound to our kin and to our friends. We are sad that we seem to have done so little for Thee whilst we have been journeying by river and sea.

We come to Thee because Thou dost understand us. Thou knowest all our secret thoughts. Forgive us if we have failed Thee during this journey and bless our poorest, frailest efforts, as Thou canst bless them and use them for Thy glory, and for Jesu's sake. Amen.



Papuan Image.