I was much impressed on touching land. Ned Land tried the soil with his feet, as if to take possession of it. However, it was only two months before that we had become, according to Captain Nemo, “passengers on board the Nautilus,” but, in reality, prisoners of its commander.

In a few minutes we were within musket-shot of the coast. The whole horizon was hidden behind a beautiful curtain of forests. Enormous trees, the trunks of which attained a height of 200 feet, were tied to each other by garlands of bindweed, real natural hammocks, which a light breeze rocked. They were mimosas, figs, hibiscus, and palm trees, mingled together in profusion; and under the shelter of their verdant vault grew orchids, leguminous plants, and ferns.

But, without noticing all these beautiful specimens of Papuan flora, the Canadian abandoned the agreeable for the useful. He discovered a coco-tree, beat down some of the fruit, broke them, and we drunk the milk and ate the nut with a satisfaction that protested against the ordinary food on the Nautilus.

“Excellent!” said Ned Land.

“Exquisite!” replied Conseil.

“And I do not think,” said the Canadian, “that he would object to our introducing a cargo of coconuts on board.”

“I do not think he would, but he would not taste them.”

“So much the worse for him,” said Conseil.

“And so much the better for us,” replied Ned Land. “There will be more for us.”

“One word only, Master Land,” I said to the harpooner, who was beginning to ravage another coconut tree. “Coconuts are good things, but before filling the canoe with them it would be wise to reconnoiter and see if the island does not produce some substance not less useful. Fresh vegetables would be welcome on board the Nautilus.”
“Master is right,” replied Conseil; “and I propose to reserve three places in our vessel, one for fruits, the other for vegetables, and the third for the venison, of which I have not yet seen the smallest specimen.”

“Conseil, we must not despair,” said the Canadian.

“Let us continue,” I returned, “and lie in wait. Although the island seems uninhabited, it might still contain some individuals that would be less hard than we on the nature of game.”

“Ho! Ho!” said Ned Land, moving his jaws significantly.

“Well, Ned!” said Conseil.

“My word!” returned the Canadian, “I begin to understand the charms of anthropophagy.”*

“Ned! Ned! What are you saying? You, a man-eater? I should not feel safe with you, especially as I share your cabin. I might perhaps wake one day to find myself half devoured.”

“Friend Conseil, I like you much, but not enough to eat you unnecessarily.”

“I would not trust you,” replied Conseil. “But enough. We must absolutely bring down some game to satisfy this cannibal, or else one of these fine mornings, master will find only pieces of his servant to serve him.”

While we were talking thus, we were penetrating the somber arches of the forest, and for two hours we surveyed it in all directions.

Chance rewarded our search for eatable vegetables, and one of the most useful products of the tropical zones furnished us with precious food that we missed on board. I would speak of the breadfruit tree, very abundant in the island of Gilboa; and I remarked chiefly the variety destitute of seeds, which bears in Malaya the name of “rina.”

Ned Land knew these fruits well. He had already eaten many during his numerous voyages, and he knew how to prepare the eatable substance. Moreover, the sight of them excited him, and he could contain himself no longer.

* cannibalism
“Master,” he said, “I shall die if I do not taste a little of this breadfruit pie.”

“Taste it, friend Ned—taste it as you want. We are here to make experiments—make them.”

“It won’t take long,” said the Canadian.

And, provided with a lentil, he lighted a fire of dead wood that crackled joyously. During this time, Conseil and I chose the best fruits of the breadfruit. Some had not then attained a sufficient degree of maturity; and their thick skin covered a white but rather fibrous pulp. Others, the greater number yellow and gelatinous, waited only to be picked.

These fruits enclosed no kernel. Conseil brought a dozen to Ned Land, who placed them on a coal fire, after having cut them in thick slices, and while doing this repeating:

“You will see, master, how good this bread is. More so when one has been deprived of it so long. It is not even bread,” added he, “but a delicate pastry. You have eaten none, master?”

“No, Ned.”

“Very well, prepare yourself for a juicy thing. If you do not come for more, I am no longer the king of harpooners.”

After some minutes, the part of the fruits that was exposed to the fire was completely roasted. The interior looked like a white pasty, a sort of soft crumb, the flavor of which was like that of an artichoke.

It must be confessed this bread was excellent, and I ate of it with great relish.

“Unfortunately,” I said, “this pasta won’t stay fresh, so it seems pointless to make a supply for on board.”

“By thunder, sir!” Ned Land exclaimed. “There you go, talking like a naturalist, but meantime I’ll be acting like a baker! Conseil, harvest some of this fruit to take with us when we go back.”

“And how will you prepare it?” I asked the Canadian.

“I’ll make a fermented batter from its pulp that’ll keep indefinitely without spoiling. When I want some, I’ll just cook it in the
galley on board—it’ll have a slightly tart flavor, but you’ll find it excellent.”

“So, Mr. Ned, I see that this bread is all we need—”

“Not quite, professor,” the Canadian replied. “We need some fruit to go with it, or at least some vegetables.”

“Then let’s look for fruit and vegetables.”

When our breadfruit harvesting was done, we took to the trail to complete this “dry-land dinner.”

We didn’t search in vain, and near noontime we had an ample supply of bananas. This delicious produce from the Torrid Zones ripens all year round, and Malaysians, who give them the name “pisang,” eat them without bothering to cook them. In addition to bananas, we gathered some enormous jackfruit with a very tangy flavor, some tasty mangoes, and some pineapples of unbelievable size. But this foraging took up a good deal of our time, which, even so, we had no cause to regret.

Conseil kept Ned under observation. The harpooner walked in the lead, and during his stroll through this forest, he gathered with sure hands some excellent fruit that should have completed his provisions.

“So,” Conseil asked, “you have everything you need, Ned my friend?”

“Humph!” the Canadian put in.

“What! You’re complaining?”

“All this vegetation doesn’t make a meal,” Ned replied. “Just side dishes, dessert. But where’s the soup course? Where’s the roast?”

“Right,” I said. “Ned promised us cutlets, which seems highly questionable to me.”

“Sir,” the Canadian replied, “our hunting not only isn’t over, it hasn’t even started. Patience! We’re sure to end up bumping into some animal with either feathers or fur, if not in this locality, then in another.”

“And if not today, then tomorrow, because we mustn’t wander too far off,” Conseil added. “That’s why I propose that we return to the skiff.”
“We ought to be back before nightfall,” I said.
“What time is it now?” asked the Canadian.
“Two o’clock at least,” replied Conseil.
“How time flies on firm ground!” sighed Ned Land.
“Let us be off,” replied Conseil.

We returned through the forest, and completed our collection by a raid upon the cabbage-palms, that we gathered from the tops of the trees, little beans that I recognized as the “abrou” of the Malays, and yams of a superior quality.

We were loaded when we reached the boat. But Ned Land did not find his provisions sufficient. Fate, however, favored us. Just as we were pushing off, he perceived several Sago trees, a species of palm tree from twenty-five to thirty feet high. These trees, as valuable as the breadfruit, justly are reckoned among the most useful fruits of Malaya.

Ned Land well knew what to do with the Sago tree. Taking his hatchet, he chopped down several and stripped away their bark, revealing the fibers, which can be mashed into a flour. It can be dried and stored away, thus we could bake bread aboard the Nautilus.

At last, at five o’clock in the evening, loaded with our riches, we quitted the shore, and half an hour after we hailed the Nautilus. No one appeared on our arrival. The enormous iron-plated cylinder seemed deserted. The provisions embarked, I descended to my chamber, and after supper slept soundly.

The next day, 6th January, nothing new on board. Not a sound inside, not a sign of life. The boat rested along the edge, in the same place in which we had left it. We resolved to return to the island. Ned Land hoped to be more fortunate than on the day before with regard to the hunt, and wished to visit another part of the forest.

At dawn we set off. The boat, carried on by the waves that flowed to shore, reached the island in a few minutes.
We landed, and, thinking that it was better to give in to the Canadian, we followed Ned Land, whose long limbs threatened to distance us. He wound up the coast towards the west: then, fording some torrents, he gained the high plain that was bordered with admirable forests. Some kingfishers were rambling along the water-courses, but they would not let themselves be approached. Their circumspection proved to me that these birds knew what to expect from bipeds of our species, and I concluded that, if the island was not inhabited, at least human beings occasionally frequented it.

After crossing a rather large prairie, we arrived at the skirts of a little wood that was enlivened by the songs and flight of a large number of birds.

“There are only birds,” said Conseil.

“But they are eatable,” replied the harpooner.

“I do not agree with you, friend Ned, for I see only parrots there.”

“Friend Conseil,” said Ned, gravely, “the parrot is like pheasant to those who have nothing else.”

“And,” I added, “this bird, suitably prepared, is worth knife and fork.”

Indeed, under the thick foliage of this wood, a world of parrots were flying from branch to branch, only needing a careful education to speak the human language. For the moment, they were chattering with parrots of all colors, and grave cockatoos, who seemed to meditate upon some philosophical problem, whilst brilliant red lories passed like a piece of bunting carried away by the breeze, papuans, with the finest azure colors, and in all a variety of winged things most charming to behold, but few eatable.

However, a bird peculiar to these lands, and which has never passed the limits of the Arrow and Papuan islands, was wanting in this collection. But fortune reserved it for me before long.

After passing through a moderately thick copse, we found a plain obstructed with bushes. I saw then those magnificent birds, the disposition of whose long feathers obliges them to fly against
the wind. Their undulating flight, graceful aerial curves, and the shading of their colors, attracted and charmed one’s looks. I had no trouble in recognizing them.

“Birds of paradise!” I exclaimed.

The Malays, who carry on a great trade in these birds with the Chinese, have several means that we could not employ for taking them. Sometimes they put snares on the top of high trees that the birds of paradise prefer to frequent. Sometimes they catch them with a viscous birdlime that paralyses their movements. They even go so far as to poison the fountains that the birds generally drink from. But we were obliged to fire at them during flight, which gave us few chances to bring them down; and, indeed, we vainly exhausted one half our ammunition.

About eleven o’clock in the morning, the first range of mountains that form the center of the island was traversed, and we had killed nothing. Hunger drove us on. The hunters had relied on the products of the chase, and they were wrong. Happily Conseil, to his great surprise, made a double shot and secured breakfast. He brought down a white pigeon and a wood-pigeon, which, cleverly plucked and suspended from a skewer, was roasted before a red fire of dead wood. While these interesting birds were cooking, Ned prepared the fruit of the bread-tree. Then the wood-pigeons were devoured to the bones, and declared excellent. The nutmeg, with which they are in the habit of stuffing their crops, flavors their flesh and renders it delicious eating.

“Now, Ned, what do you miss now?”

“Some four-footed game, M. Aronnax. All these pigeons are only side-dishes and trifles; and until I have killed an animal with cutlets I shall not be content.”

“Nor I, Ned, if I do not catch a bird of paradise.”

“Let us continue hunting,” replied Conseil. “Let us go towards the sea. We have arrived at the first declivities of the mountains, and I think we had better regain the region of forests.”

That was sensible advice, and was followed out. After walking for one hour we had attained a forest of sago-trees. Some inoffen-
sive serpents glided away from us. The birds of paradise fled at our approach, and truly I despaired of getting near one when Conseil, who was walking in front, suddenly bent down, uttered a triumphal cry, and came back to me bringing a magnificent specimen.

“Ah! Bravo, Conseil!”
“Master is very good.”
“No, my boy; you have made an excellent stroke. Take one of these living birds, and carry it in your hand.”
“If master will examine it, he will see that I have not deserved great merit.”
“Why, Conseil?”
“Because this bird is as drunk as a quail.”
“Drunk!”
“Yes, sir; drunk with the nutmegs that it devoured under the nutmeg-tree, under which I found it. See, friend Ned, see the monstrous effects of intemperance!”
“By Jove!” exclaimed the Canadian, “Because I have drunk gin for two months, you must needs reproach me!”

However, I examined the curious bird. Conseil was right. The bird, drunk with the juice, was quite powerless. It could not fly; it could hardly walk.

This bird belonged to the most beautiful of the eight species that are found in Papua and in the neighboring islands. It was the “large emerald bird, the most rare kind.” It measured three feet in length. Its head was comparatively small, its eyes placed near the opening of the beak, and also small. But the shades of color were beautiful, having a yellow beak, brown feet and claws, nut-colored wings with purple tips, pale yellow at the back of the neck and head, and emerald color at the throat, chestnut on the breast and belly. Two horned, downy nets rose from below the tail, that prolonged the long light feathers of admirable fineness, and they completed the whole of this marvelous bird, that the natives have poetically named the “bird of the sun.”
But if my wishes were satisfied by the possession of the bird of paradise, the Canadian’s were not yet. Happily, about two o’clock, Ned Land brought down a magnificent hog; from the brood of those the natives call “bari-outang.” The animal came in time for us to procure real quadruped meat, and he was well received. Ned Land was very proud of his shot. The hog, hit by the electric ball, fell stone dead. The Canadian skinned and cleaned it properly, after having taken half a dozen cutlets, destined to furnish us with a grilled repast in the evening. Then the hunt was resumed, which was still more marked by Ned and Conseil’s exploits.

Indeed, the two friends, beating the bushes, roused a herd of kangaroos that fled and bounded along on their elastic paws. But these animals did not take to flight so rapidly but what the electric capsule could stop their course.

“Ah, Professor!” cried Ned Land, who was carried away by the delights of the chase, “What excellent game, and stewed, too! What a supply for the Nautilus! Two! Three! Five down! And to think that we shall eat that flesh, and that the idiots on board shall not have a crumb!”

I think that, in the excess of his joy, the Canadian, if he had not talked so much, would have killed them all. But he contented himself with a single dozen of these interesting marsupians. These animals were small. They were a species of those “kangaroo rabbits” that live habitually in the hollows of trees, and whose speed is extreme; but they are moderately fat, and furnish, at least, estimable food. We were very satisfied with the results of the hunt. Happy Ned proposed to return to this enchanting island the next day, for he wished to depopulate it of all the eatable quadrupeds. But he had reckoned without his host.

At six o’clock in the evening we had regained the shore; our boat was moored to the usual place. The Nautilus, like a long rock, emerged from the waves two miles from the beach. Ned Land, without waiting, occupied himself about the important dinner business. He understood all about cooking well. The “bari-out-
ang,” grilled on the coals, soon scented the air with a delicious odor.

Indeed, the dinner was excellent. Two wood-pigeons completed this extraordinary menu. The sago pasty, the breadfruit, some mangoes, half a dozen pineapples, and the liquor fermented from some coconuts, overjoyed us. I even think that my worthy companions’ ideas had not all the plainness desirable.

“Suppose we do not return to the *Nautilus* this evening?” said Conseil.

“Suppose we never return?” added Ned Land.

Just then a stone fell at our feet and cut short the harpooner’s proposition.
CHAPTER XXI

Captain Nemo’s Thunderbolt

We looked at the edge of the forest without rising, my hand stopping in the action of putting it to my mouth, Ned Land’s completing its office.

“Stones do not fall from the sky,” remarked Conseil, “or they would merit the name aerolites.”

A second stone, carefully aimed, that made a savory pigeon’s leg fall from Conseil’s hand, gave still more weight to his observation. We all three arose, shouldered our guns, and were ready to reply to any attack.

“Are they apes?” cried Ned Land.

“Very nearly—they are savages.”

“To the boat!” I said, hurrying to the sea.

It was indeed necessary to beat a retreat, for about twenty natives armed with bows and slings appeared on the skirts of a copse that masked the horizon to the right, hardly a hundred steps from us.

Our boat was moored about sixty feet from us. The savages approached us, not running, but making hostile demonstrations. Stones and arrows fell thickly.

Ned Land had not wished to leave his provisions; and, in spite of his imminent danger, his pig on one side and kangaroos on the other, he went tolerably fast. In two minutes we were on the shore. To load the boat with provisions and arms, to push it out to sea, and ship the oars, was the work of an instant. We had not gone two cable-lengths, when a hundred savages, howling and gesticulating, entered the water up to their waists. I watched to see if their apparition would attract some men from the Nautilus on to the platform. But no. The enormous machine, lying off, was absolutely deserted.

Twenty minutes later we were on board. The panels were open. After making the boat fast, we entered into the interior of the Nautilus.

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I descended to the drawing room, from whence I heard some chords. Captain Nemo was there, bending over his organ, and plunged in a musical ecstasy.

“Captain!”

He did not hear me.

“Captain!” I said, touching his hand.

He shuddered, and, turning round, said, “Ah! It is you, Professor? Well, have you had a good hunt, have you botanized successfully?”

“Yes Captain; but we have unfortunately brought a troop of bipeds, whose vicinity troubles me.”

“What bipeds?”

“Savages.”

“Savages!” he echoed, ironically. “So you are astonished, Professor, at having set foot on a strange land and finding savages? Savages! Where are there not any? Besides, are they worse than others, these whom you call savages?”

“But Captain——”

“How many have you counted?”

“A hundred at least.”

“M. Aronnax,” replied Captain Nemo, placing his fingers on the organ stops, “when all the natives of Papua are assembled on this shore, the Nautilus will have nothing to fear from their attacks.”

The Captain’s fingers were then running over the keys of the instrument, and I remarked that he touched only the black keys, which gave his melodies an essentially Scotch character. Soon he had forgotten my presence, and had plunged into a reverie that I did not disturb. I went up again on to the platform: night had already fallen; for, in this low latitude, the sun sets rapidly and without twilight. I could only see the island indistinctly; but the numerous fires, lighted on the beach, showed that the natives did not think of leaving it. I was alone for several hours, sometimes thinking of the natives—but without any dread of them, for the imperturbable confidence of the Captain was catching—some-
times forgetting them to admire the splendors of the night in the tropics. My remembrances went to France in the train of those zodiacal stars that would shine in some hours’ time. The moon shone in the midst of the constellations of the zenith.

The night slipped away without any mischance, the islanders frightened no doubt at the sight of a monster aground in the bay. The panels were open, and would have offered an easy access to the interior of the *Nautilus*.

At six o’clock in the morning of the 8th January I went up on to the platform. The dawn was breaking. The island soon showed itself through the dissipating fogs, first the shore, then the summits.

The natives were there, more numerous than on the day before—five or six hundred perhaps—some of them, profiting by the low water, had come on to the coral, at less than two cable-lengths from the *Nautilus*. I distinguished them easily; they were true Papuans, with athletic figures, men of good race, large high foreheads, large, but not broad and flat, and white teeth. Their woolly hair, with a reddish tinge, showed off on their black shining bodies like those of the Nubians. From the lobes of their ears, cut and distended, hung chaplets of bones. Most of these savages were naked. Amongst them, I remarked some women, dressed from the hips to knees in quite a crinoline of herbs, that sustained a vegetable waistband. Some chiefs had ornamented their necks with a crescent and collars of glass beads, red and white; nearly all were armed with bows, arrows, and shields and carried on their shoulders a sort of net containing those round stones which they cast from their slings with great skill. One of these chiefs, rather near to the *Nautilus*, examined it attentively. He was, perhaps, a “mado” of high rank, for he was draped in a mat of banana-leaves, notched round the edges, and set off with brilliant colors.

I could easily have knocked down this native, who was within a short length; but I thought that it was better to wait for real hostile demonstrations. Between Europeans and savages, it is proper for the Europeans to parry sharply, not to attack.
During low water the natives roamed about near the *Nautilus*, but were not troublesome; I heard them frequently repeat the word “Assai,” and by their gestures I understood that they invited me to go on land, an invitation that I declined.

So that, on that day, the boat did not push off, to the great displeasure of Master Land, who could not complete his provisions.

This adroit Canadian employed his time in preparing the vegetables and meat that he had brought off the island. As for the savages, they returned to the shore about eleven o’clock in the morning, as soon as the coral tops began to disappear under the rising tide; but I saw their numbers had increased considerably on the shore. Probably they came from the neighboring islands, or very likely from Papua. However, I had not seen a single native canoe. Having nothing better to do, I thought of dragging these beautiful limpid waters, under which I saw a profusion of shells, zoophytes, and marine plants. Moreover, it was the last day that the *Nautilus* would pass in these parts, if it float in open sea the next day, according to Captain Nemo’s promise.

I therefore called Conseil, who brought me a little light drag, very like those for the oyster fishery. Now to work! For two hours we fished unceasingly, but without bringing up any rarities. The drag was filled with midas-ears, harps, melames, and particularly the most beautiful hammers I have ever seen. We also brought up some sea-slugs, pearl-oysters, and a dozen little turtles that were reserved for the pantry on board.

But just when I expected it least, I put my hand on a wonder, I might say a natural deformity, very rarely met with. Conseil was just dragging, and his net came up filled with divers ordinary shells, when, all at once, he saw me plunge my arm quickly into the net, to draw out a shell, and heard me utter a cry.

“What is the matter, sir?” he asked in surprise. “Has master been bitten?”

“No, my boy; but I would willingly have given a finger for my discovery.”

“What discovery?”
“This shell,” I said, holding up the object of my triumph.
“It is simply an olive porphyry, genus olive, order of the pec-
tinibranchidae, class of gastropods, sub-class mollusca.”
“Yes, Conseil; but, instead of being rolled from right to left,
this olive turns from left to right.”
“Is it possible?”
“Yes, my boy; it is a left shell.”
Shells are all right-handed, with rare exceptions; and, when by
chance their spiral is left, amateurs are ready to pay their weight in

gold.
Conseil and I were absorbed in the contemplation of our treas-
ure, and I was promising myself to enrich the museum with it,
when a stone unfortunately thrown by a native struck against, and
broke, the precious object in Conseil’s hand. I uttered a cry of
despair! Conseil took up his gun, and aimed at a savage who was
poising his sling at ten yards from him. I would have stopped him,
but his blow took effect and broke the bracelet of amulets which
encircled the arm of the savage.
“Conseil!” cried I. “Conseil!”
“Well, sir! Do you not see that the cannibal has commenced
the attack?”
“A shell is not worth the life of a man,” said I.
“Ah! The scoundrel!” cried Conseil; “I would rather he had
broken my shoulder!”
Conseil was in earnest, but I was not of his opinion. However,
the situation had changed some minutes before, and we had not
perceived. A score of canoes surrounded the Nautilus. These
canoes, scooped out of the trunk of a tree, long, narrow, well
adapted for speed, were balanced by means of a long bamboo pole,
which floated on the water. They were managed by skilful, half-
naked paddlers, and I watched their advance with some
uneasiness. It was evident that these Papuans had already had deal-
ings with the Europeans and knew their ships. But this long iron
cylinder anchored in the bay, without masts or chimneys, what
could they think of it? Nothing good, for at first they kept at a
respectful distance. However, seeing it motionless, by degrees they 
took courage, and sought to familiarize themselves with it. Now 
this familiarity was precisely what it was necessary to avoid. Our 
arms, which were noiseless, could only produce a moderate effect 
on the savages, who have little respect for aught but blustering 
things. The thunderbolt without the reverberations of thunder 
would frighten man but little, though the danger lies in the light-
ning, not in the noise.

At this moment the canoes approached the *Nautilus*, and a 
shower of arrows alighted on her.

I went down to the saloon, but found no one there. I ventured 
to knock at the door that opened into the Captain’s room. “Come 
in,” was the answer.

I entered, and found Captain Nemo deep in algebraical calcu-
lations of X and other quantities.

“I am disturbing you,” said I, for courtesy’s sake.

“That is true, M. Aronnax,” replied the Captain; “but I think 
you have serious reasons for wishing to see me?”

“Very grave ones; the natives are surrounding us in their 
canoes, and in a few minutes we shall certainly be attacked by 
many hundreds of savages.”

“Ah!” said Captain Nemo quietly, “They are come with their 
canoes?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, sir, we must close the hatches.”

“Exactly, and I came to say to you——”

“Nothing can be more simple,” said Captain Nemo. And, 
pressing an electric button, he transmitted an order to the ship’s 
crew.

“It is all done, sir,” said he, after some moments. “The pinnace 
is ready, and the hatches are closed. You do not fear, I imagine, that 
these gentlemen could stave in walls on which the balls of your 
frigate have had no effect?”

“No, Captain; but a danger still exists.”

“What is that, sir?”
“It is that tomorrow, at about this hour, we must open the hatches to renew the air of the Nautilus. Now, if, at this moment, the Papuans should occupy the platform, I do not see how you could prevent them from entering.”

“Then, sir, you suppose that they will board us?”

“I am certain of it.”

“Well, sir, let them come. I see no reason for hindering them. After all, these Papuans are poor creatures, and I am unwilling that my visit to the island should cost the life of a single one of these wretches.”

Upon that I was going away; But Captain Nemo detained me, and asked me to sit down by him. He questioned me with interest about our excursions on shore, and our hunting; and seemed not to understand the craving for meat that possessed the Canadian. Then the conversation turned on various subjects, and, without being more communicative, Captain Nemo showed himself more amiable.

Amongst other things, we happened to speak of the situation of the Nautilus, run aground in exactly the same spot in this strait where Dumont d’Urville was nearly lost. Apropos of this:

“This D’Urville was one of your great sailors,” said the Captain to me, “one of your most intelligent navigators. He is the Captain Cook of you Frenchmen. Unfortunate man of science, after having braved the icebergs of the South Pole, the coral reefs of Oceania, the cannibals of the Pacific, to perish miserably in a railway train! If this energetic man could have reflected during the last moments of his life, what must have been uppermost in his last thoughts, do you suppose?”

So speaking, Captain Nemo seemed moved, and his emotion gave me a better opinion of him. Then, chart in hand, we reviewed the travels of the French navigator, his voyages of circumnavigation, his double detention at the South Pole, which led to the discovery of Adelaide and Louis Philippe, and fixing the hydrographical bearings of the principal islands of Oceania.

“That which your D’Urville has done on the surface of the
“seas,” said Captain Nemo, “that have I done under them, and more easily, more completely than he. The Astrolabe and the Zelee, incessantly tossed about by the hurricane, could not be worth the Nautilus, quiet repository of labor that she is, truly motionless in the midst of the waters.

“Tomorrow,” added the Captain, rising, “tomorrow, at twenty minutes to three p.m., the Nautilus shall float, and leave the Strait of Torres uninjured.”

Having curtly pronounced these words, Captain Nemo bowed slightly. This was to dismiss me, and I went back to my room.

There I found Conseil, who wished to know the result of my interview with the Captain.

“My boy,” said I, “when I feigned to believe that his Nautilus was threatened by the natives of Papua, the Captain answered me very sarcastically. I have but one thing to say to you: Have confidence in him, and go to sleep in peace.”

“Have you no need of my services, sir?”

“No, my friend. What is Ned Land doing?”

“If you will excuse me, sir,” answered Conseil, “friend Ned is busy making a kangaroo-pie which will be a marvel.”

I remained alone and went to bed, but slept indifferently. I heard the noise of the savages, who stamped on the platform, uttering deafening cries. The night passed thus, without disturbing the ordinary repose of the crew. The presence of these cannibals affected them no more than the soldiers of a masked battery care for the ants that crawl over its front.

At six in the morning I rose. The hatches had not been opened. The inner air was not renewed, but the reservoirs, filled ready for any emergency, were now resorted to, and discharged several cubic feet of oxygen into the exhausted atmosphere of the Nautilus.

I worked in my room till noon, without having seen Captain Nemo, even for an instant. On board no preparations for departure were visible.
I waited still some time, then went into the large saloon. The clock marked half-past two. In ten minutes it would be high-tide: and, if Captain Nemo had not made a rash promise, the *Nautilus* would be immediately detached. If not, many months would pass ere she could leave her bed of coral.

However, some warning vibrations began to be felt in the vessel. I heard the keel grating against the rough calcareous bottom of the coral reef.

At five-and-twenty minutes to three, Captain Nemo appeared in the saloon.

“We are going to start,” said he.

“Ah!” replied I.

“I have given the order to open the hatches.”

“And the Papuans?”

“The Papuans?” answered Captain Nemo, slightly shrugging his shoulders.

“Will they not come inside the *Nautilus*?”

“How?”

“Only by leaping over the hatches you have opened.”

“M. Aronnax,” quietly answered Captain Nemo, “they will not enter the hatches of the *Nautilus* in that way, even if they were open.”

I looked at the Captain.

“You do not understand?” said he.

“Hardly.”

“Well, come and you will see.”

I directed my steps towards the central staircase. There Ned Land and Conseil were slyly watching some of the ship’s crew, who were opening the hatches, while cries of rage and fearful vociferations resounded outside.

The port lids were pulled down outside. Twenty horrible faces appeared. But the first native who placed his hand on the stair-rail, struck from behind by some invisible force, I know not what, fled, uttering the most fearful cries and making the wildest contortions.
Ten of his companions followed him. They met with the same fate.

Conseil was in ecstasy. Ned Land, carried away by his violent instincts, rushed on to the staircase. But the moment he seized the rail with both hands, he, in his turn, was overthrown.

“I am struck by a thunderbolt,” cried he, with an oath.

This explained all. It was no rail; but a metallic cable charged with electricity from the deck communicating with the platform. Whoever touched it felt a powerful shock—and this shock would have been mortal if Captain Nemo had discharged into the conductor the whole force of the current. It might truly be said that between his assailants and himself he had stretched a network of electricity which none could pass with impunity.

Meanwhile, the exasperated Papuans had beaten a retreat paralyzed with terror. As for us, half laughing, we consoled and rubbed the unfortunate Ned Land, who swore like one possessed.

But at this moment the Nautilus, raised by the last waves of the tide, quitted her coral bed exactly at the fortieth minute fixed by the Captain. Her screw swept the waters slowly and majestically. Her speed increased gradually, and, sailing on the surface of the ocean, she quitted safe and sound the dangerous passes of the Straits of Torres.
CHAPTER XXII
“Aegri Somnia”

The following day 10th January, the *Nautilus* continued her course between two seas, but with such remarkable speed that I could not estimate it at less than thirty-five miles an hour. The rapidity of her screw was such that I could neither follow nor count its revolutions. When I reflected that this marvelous electric agent, after having afforded motion, heat, and light to the *Nautilus*, still protected her from outward attack, and transformed her into an ark of safety which no profane hand might touch without being thunderstricken, my admiration was unbounded, and from the structure it extended to the engineer who had called it into existence.

Our course was directed to the west, and on the 11th of January we doubled Cape Wessel, situation in 135° long. and 10° S. lat., which forms the east point of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The reefs were still numerous, but more equalized, and marked on the chart with extreme precision. The *Nautilus* easily avoided the breakers of Money to port and the Victoria reefs to starboard, placed at 130° long. and on the 10th parallel, which we strictly followed.

On the 13th of January, Captain Nemo arrived in the Sea of Timor, and recognized the island of that name in 122° long.

From this point the direction of the *Nautilus* inclined towards the south-west. Her head was set for the Indian Ocean. Where would the fancy of Captain Nemo carry us next? Would he return to the coast of Asia or would he approach again the shores of Europe? Improbable conjectures both, to a man who fled from inhabited continents. Then would he descend to the south? Was he going to double the Cape of Good Hope, then Cape Horn, and finally go as far as the Antarctic pole? Would he come back at last to the Pacific, where his *Nautilus* could sail free and independently? Time would show.
After having skirted the sands of Cartier, of Hibernia, Seringapatam, and Scott, last efforts of the solid against the liquid element, on the 14th of January we lost sight of land altogether. The speed of the Nautilus was considerably abated, and with irregular course she sometimes swam in the bosom of the waters, sometimes floated on their surface.

During this period of the voyage, Captain Nemo made some interesting experiments on the varied temperature of the sea, in different beds. Under ordinary conditions these observations are made by means of rather complicated instruments, and with somewhat doubtful results, by means of thermometrical sounding-leads, the glasses often breaking under the pressure of the water, or an apparatus grounded on the variations of the resistance of metals to the electric currents. Results so obtained could not be correctly calculated. On the contrary, Captain Nemo went himself to test the temperature in the depths of the sea, and his thermometer, placed in communication with the different sheets of water, gave him the required degree immediately and accurately.

It was thus that, either by overloading her reservoirs or by descending obliquely by means of her inclined planes, the Nautilus successively attained the depth of three, four, five, seven, nine, and ten thousand yards, and the definite result of this experience was that the sea preserved an average temperature of four degrees and a half at a depth of five thousand fathoms under all latitudes.

On the 16th of January, the Nautilus seemed becalmed only a few yards beneath the surface of the waves. Her electric apparatus remained inactive and her motionless screw left her to drift at the mercy of the currents. I supposed that the crew was occupied with interior repairs, rendered necessary by the violence of the mechanical movements of the machine.

My companions and I then witnessed a curious spectacle. The hatches of the saloon were open, and, as the beacon light of the Nautilus was not in action, a dim obscurity reigned in the midst of the waters. I observed the state of the sea, under these conditions, and the largest fish appeared to me no more than scarcely
defined shadows, when the *Nautilus* found herself suddenly transported into full light. I thought at first that the beacon had been lighted, and was casting its electric radiance into the liquid mass. I was mistaken, and after a rapid survey perceived my error.

The *Nautilus* floated in the midst of a phosphorescent bed which, in this obscurity, became quite dazzling. It was produced by myriads of luminous animalculae, whose brilliancy was increased as they glided over the metallic hull of the vessel. I was surprised by lightning in the midst of these luminous sheets, as though they had been rivulets of lead melted in an ardent furnace or metallic masses brought to a white heat, so that, by force of contrast, certain portions of light appeared to cast a shade in the midst of the general ignition, from which all shade seemed banished. No; this was not the calm irradiation of our ordinary lightning. There was unusual life and vigor: this was truly living light!

In reality, it was an infinite agglomeration of colored infusoria, of veritable globules of jelly, provided with a threadlike tentacle, and of which as many as twenty-five thousand have been counted in less than two cubic half-inches of water.

During several hours the *Nautilus* floated in these brilliant waves, and our admiration increased as we watched the marine monsters disporting themselves like salamanders. I saw there in the midst of this fire that burns not the swift and elegant porpoise (the indefatigable clown of the ocean), and some swordfish ten feet long, those prophetic heralds of the hurricane whose formidable sword would now and then strike the glass of the saloon. Then appeared the smaller fish, the balista, the leaping mackerel, wolf-thorn-tails, and a hundred others which striped the luminous atmosphere as they swam. This dazzling spectacle was enchanting! Perhaps some atmospheric condition increased the intensity of this phenomenon. Perhaps some storm agitated the surface of the waves. But at this depth of some yards, the *Nautilus* was unmoved by its fury and reposed peacefully in still water.

So we progressed, incessantly charmed by some new marvel. The days passed rapidly away, and I took no account of them.
Ned, according to habit, tried to vary the diet on board. Like snails, we were fixed to our shells, and I declare it is easy to lead a snail’s life.

Thus this life seemed easy and natural, and we thought no longer of the life we led on land; but something happened to recall us to the strangeness of our situation.

On the 18th of January, the *Nautilus* was in 105° long. and 15° S. lat. The weather was threatening, the sea rough and rolling. There was a strong east wind. The barometer, which had been going down for some days, foreboded a coming storm. I went up on to the platform just as the second lieutenant was taking the measure of the horary angles, and waited, according to habit till the daily phrase was said. But on this day it was exchanged for another phrase not less incomprehensible. Almost directly, I saw Captain Nemo appear with a glass, looking towards the horizon.

For some minutes he was immovable, without taking his eye off the point of observation. Then he lowered his glass and exchanged a few words with his lieutenant. The latter seemed to be a victim to some emotion that he tried in vain to repress. Captain Nemo, having more command over himself, was cool. He seemed, too, to be making some objections to which the lieutenant replied by formal assurances. At least I concluded so by the difference of their tones and gestures. For myself, I had looked carefully in the direction indicated without seeing anything. The sky and water were lost in the clear line of the horizon.

However, Captain Nemo walked from one end of the platform to the other, without looking at me, perhaps without seeing me. His step was firm, but less regular than usual. He stopped sometimes, crossed his arms, and observed the sea. What could he be looking for on that immense expanse?

The *Nautilus* was then some hundreds of miles from the nearest coast.

The lieutenant had taken up the glass and examined the horizon steadfastly, going and coming, stamping his foot and showing more nervous agitation than his superior officer. Besides, this mys-
tery must necessarily be solved, and before long; for, upon an order from Captain Nemo, the engine, increasing its propelling power, made the screw turn more rapidly.

Just then the lieutenant drew the Captain’s attention again. The latter stopped walking and directed his glass towards the place indicated. He looked long. I felt very much puzzled, and descended to the drawing room, and took out an excellent telescope that I generally used. Then, leaning on the cage of the watch-light that jutted out from the front of the platform, set myself to look over all the line of the sky and sea.

But my eye was no sooner applied to the glass than it was quickly snatched out of my hands.

I turned round. Captain Nemo was before me, but I did not know him. His face was transfigured. His eyes flashed sullenly; his teeth were set; his stiff body, clenched fists, and head shrunk between his shoulders, betrayed the violent agitation that pervaded his whole frame. He did not move. My glass, fallen from his hands, had rolled at his feet.

Had I unwittingly provoked this fit of anger? Did this incomprehensible person imagine that I had discovered some forbidden secret? No; I was not the object of this hatred, for he was not looking at me; his eye was steadily fixed upon the impenetrable point of the horizon. At last Captain Nemo recovered himself. His agitation subsided. He addressed some words in a foreign language to his lieutenant, then turned to me. “M. Aronnax,” he said, in rather an imperious tone, “I require you to keep one of the conditions that bind you to me.”

“What is it, Captain?”

“You must be confined, with your companions, until I think fit to release you.”

“You are the master,” I replied, looking steadily at him. “But may I ask you one question?”

“None, sir.”

There was no resisting this imperious command, it would have been useless. I went down to the cabin occupied by Ned
Land and Conseil, and told them the Captain’s determination. You may judge how this communication was received by the Canadian.

But there was not time for altercation. Four of the crew waited at the door, and conducted us to that cell where we had passed our first night on board the *Nautilus*.

Ned Land would have remonstrated, but the door was shut upon him.

“Will master tell me what this means?” asked Conseil.

I told my companions what had passed. They were as much astonished as I, and equally at a loss how to account for it.

Meanwhile, I was absorbed in my own reflections, and could think of nothing but the strange fear depicted in the Captain’s countenance. I was utterly at a loss to account for it, when my cogitations were disturbed by these words from Ned Land:

“Hallo! Breakfast is ready.”

And indeed the table was laid. Evidently Captain Nemo had given this order at the same time that he had hastened the speed of the *Nautilus*.

“Will master permit me to make a recommendation?” asked Conseil.

“Yes, my boy.”

“Well, it is that master breakfasts. It is prudent, for we do not know what may happen.”

“You are right, Conseil.”

“Unfortunately,” said Ned Land, “they have only given us the ship’s fare.”

“Friend Ned,” asked Conseil, “what would you have said if the breakfast had been entirely forgotten?”

This argument cut short the harpooner’s recriminations.

We sat down to table. The meal was eaten in silence.

Just then the luminous globe that lighted the cell went out, and left us in total darkness. Ned Land was soon asleep, and what astonished me was that Conseil went off into a heavy slumber. I was thinking what could have caused his irresistible drowsiness,
when I felt my brain becoming stupefied. In spite of my efforts to keep my eyes open, they would close. A painful suspicion seized me. Evidently soporific substances had been mixed with the food we had just taken. Imprisonment was not enough to conceal Captain Nemo’s projects from us, sleep was more necessary. I then heard the panels shut. The undulations of the sea, which caused a slight rolling motion, ceased. Had the Nautilus quitted the surface of the ocean? Had it gone back to the motionless bed of water? I tried to resist sleep. It was impossible. My breathing grew weak. I felt a mortal cold freeze my stiffened and half-paralyzed limbs. My eye lids, like leaden caps, fell over my eyes. I could not raise them; a morbid sleep, full of hallucinations, bereft me of my being. Then the visions disappeared, and left me in complete insensibility.
CHAPTER XXIII

The Coral Kingdom

The next day I woke with my head singularly clear. To my great surprise, I was in my own room. My companions, no doubt, had been reinstated in their cabin, without having perceived it any more than I. Of what had passed during the night they were as ignorant as I was, and to penetrate this mystery I only reckoned upon the chances of the future.

I then thought of quitting my room. Was I free again or a prisoner? Quite free. I opened the door, went to the half-deck, went up the central stairs. The panels, shut the evening before, were open. I went on to the platform.

Ned Land and Conseil waited there for me. I questioned them; they knew nothing. Lost in a heavy sleep in which they had been totally unconscious, they had been astonished at finding themselves in their cabin.

As for the Nautilus, it seemed quiet and mysterious as ever. It floated on the surface of the waves at a moderate pace. Nothing seemed changed on board.

The second lieutenant then came on to the platform, and gave the usual order below.

As for Captain Nemo, he did not appear.

Of the people on board, I only saw the impassive steward, who served me with his usual dumb regularity.

About two o’clock, I was in the drawing room, busied in arranging my notes, when the Captain opened the door and appeared. I bowed. He made a slight inclination in return, without speaking. I resumed my work, hoping that he would perhaps give me some explanation of the events of the preceding night. He made none. I looked at him. He seemed fatigued; his heavy eyes had not been refreshed by sleep; his face looked very sorrowful. He walked to and fro, sat down and got up again, took a chance book, put it down, consulted his instruments without taking his habit-
ual notes, and seemed restless and uneasy. At last, he came up to me, and said:

“Are you a doctor, M. Aronnax?”

I so little expected such a question that I stared some time at him without answering.

“Are you a doctor?” he repeated. “Several of your colleagues have studied medicine.”

“Well,” said I, “I am a doctor and resident surgeon to the hospital. I practiced several years before entering the museum.”

“Very well, sir.”

My answer had evidently satisfied the Captain. But, not knowing what he would say next, I waited for other questions, reserving my answers according to circumstances.

“M. Aronnax, will you consent to prescribe for one of my men?” he asked.

“Is he ill?”

“Yes.”

“I am ready to follow you.”

“Come, then.”

I own my heart beat, I do not know why. I saw certain connection between the illness of one of the crew and the events of the day before; and this mystery interested me at least as much as the sick man.

Captain Nemo conducted me to the poop of the Nautilus, and took me into a cabin situated near the sailors’ quarters.

There, on a bed, lay a man about forty years of age, with a resolute expression of countenance, a true type of an Anglo-Saxon.

I leant over him. He was not only ill, he was wounded. His head, swathed in bandages covered with blood, lay on a pillow. I undid the bandages, and the wounded man looked at me with his large eyes and gave no sign of pain as I did it. It was a horrible wound. The skull, shattered by some deadly weapon, left the brain exposed, which was much injured. Clots of blood had formed in the bruised and broken mass, in color like the dregs of wine.
There was both contusion and suffusion of the brain. His breathing was slow, and some spasmodic movements of the muscles agitated his face. I felt his pulse. It was intermittent. The extremities of the body were growing cold already, and I saw death must inevitably ensue. After dressing the unfortunate man’s wounds, I readjusted the bandages on his head, and turned to Captain Nemo.

“What caused this wound?” I asked.

“What does it signify?” he replied, evasively. “A shock has broken one of the levers of the engine, which struck myself. But your opinion as to his state?”

I hesitated before giving it.

“You may speak,” said the Captain. “This man does not understand French.”

I gave a last look at the wounded man.

“He will be dead in two hours.”

“Can nothing save him?”

“Nothing.”

Captain Nemo’s hand contracted, and some tears glistened in his eyes, which I thought incapable of shedding any.

For some moments I still watched the dying man, whose life ebbed slowly. His pallor increased under the electric light that was shed over his death-bed. I looked at his intelligent forehead, furrowed with premature wrinkles, produced probably by misfortune and sorrow. I tried to learn the secret of his life from the last words that escaped his lips.

“You can go now, M. Aronnax,” said the Captain.

I left him in the dying man’s cabin, and returned to my room much affected by this scene. During the whole day, I was haunted by uncomfortable suspicions, and at night I slept badly, and between my broken dreams I fancied I heard distant sighs like the notes of a funeral psalm. Were they the prayers of the dead, murmured in that language that I could not understand?

The next morning I went on to the bridge. Captain Nemo was there before me. As soon as he perceived me he came to me.
“Professor, will it be convenient to you to make a submarine excursion today?”

“With my companions?” I asked.

“If they like.”

“We obey your orders, Captain.”

“Will you be so good then as to put on your cork jackets?”

It was not a question of dead or dying. I rejoined Ned Land and Conseil, and told them of Captain Nemo’s proposition. Conseil hastened to accept it, and this time the Canadian seemed quite willing to follow our example.

It was eight o’clock in the morning. At half-past eight we were equipped for this new excursion, and provided with two contrivances for light and breathing. The double door was open; and, accompanied by Captain Nemo, who was followed by a dozen of the crew, we set foot, at a depth of about thirty feet, on the solid bottom on which the Nautilus rested.

A slight declivity ended in an uneven bottom, at fifteen fathoms depth. This bottom differed entirely from the one I had visited on my first excursion under the waters of the Pacific Ocean. Here, there was no fine sand, no submarine prairies, no sea-forest. I immediately recognized that marvelous region in which, on that day, the Captain did the honors to us. It was the coral kingdom.

The light produced a thousand charming varieties, playing in the midst of the branches that were so vividly colored. I seemed to see the membraneous and cylindrical tubes tremble beneath the undulation of the waters. I was tempted to gather their fresh petals, ornamented with delicate tentacles, some just blown, the others budding, while a small fish, swimming swiftly, touched them slightly, like flights of birds. But if my hand approached these living flowers, these animated, sensitive plants, the whole colony took alarm. The white petals re-entered their red cases, the flowers faded as I looked, and the bush changed into a block of stony knobs.

Chance had thrown me just by the most precious specimens of the zoophyte. This coral was more valuable than that found in
the Mediterranean, on the coasts of France, Italy and Barbary. Its tints justified the poetical names of “Flower of Blood,” and “Froth of Blood,” that trade has given to its most beautiful productions. Coral is sold for £20 per ounce; and in this place the watery beds would make the fortunes of a company of coral-divers. This precious matter, often confused with other polypi, formed then the inextricable plots called “macciota,” and on which I noticed several beautiful specimens of pink coral.

But soon the bushes contract, and the arborisations increase. Real petrified thickets, long joints of fantastic architecture, were disclosed before us. Captain Nemo placed himself under a dark gallery, where by a slight declivity we reached a depth of a hundred yards. The light from our lamps produced sometimes magical effects, following the rough outlines of the natural arches and pendants disposed like lusters, that were tipped with points of fire.

At last, after walking two hours, we had attained a depth of about three hundred yards, that is to say, the extreme limit on which coral begins to form. But there was no isolated bush, nor modest brushwood, at the bottom of lofty trees. It was an immense forest of large mineral vegetations, enormous petrified trees, united by garlands of elegant sea-bindweed, all adorned with clouds and reflections. We passed freely under their high branches, lost in the shade of the waves.

Captain Nemo had stopped. I and my companions halted, and, turning round, I saw his men were forming a semi-circle round their chief. Watching attentively, I observed that four of them carried on their shoulders an object of an oblong shape.

We occupied, in this place, the center of a vast glade surrounded by the lofty foliage of the submarine forest. Our lamps threw over this place a sort of clear twilight that singularly elongated the shadows on the ground. At the end of the glade the darkness increased, and was only relieved by little sparks reflected by the points of coral.

Ned Land and Conseil were near me. We watched, and I thought I was going to witness a strange scene. On observing the
ground, I saw that it was raised in certain places by slight excrescences encrusted with limy deposits, and disposed with a regularity that betrayed the hand of man.

In the midst of the glade, on a pedestal of rocks roughly piled up, stood a cross of coral that extended its long arms that one might have thought were made of petrified blood. Upon a sign from Captain Nemo one of the men advanced; and at some feet from the cross he began to dig a hole with a pickaxe that he took from his belt. I understood all! This glade was a cemetery, this hole a tomb, this oblong object the body of the man who had died in the night! The Captain and his men had come to bury their companion in this general resting-place, at the bottom of this inaccessible ocean!

The grave was being dug slowly; the fish fled on all sides while their retreat was being thus disturbed; I heard the strokes of the pickaxe, which sparkled when it hit upon some flint lost at the bottom of the waters. The hole was soon large and deep enough to receive the body. Then the bearers approached; the body, enveloped in a tissue of white linen, was lowered into the damp grave. Captain Nemo, with his arms crossed on his breast, and all the friends of him who had loved them, knelt in prayer.

The grave was then filled in with the rubbish taken from the ground, which formed a slight mound. When this was done, Captain Nemo and his men rose; then, approaching the grave, they knelt again, and all extended their hands in sign of a last adieu. Then the funeral procession returned to the Nautilus, passing under the arches of the forest, in the midst of thickets, along the coral bushes, and still on the ascent. At last the light of the ship appeared, and its luminous track guided us to the Nautilus. At one o’clock we had returned.

As soon as I had changed my clothes I went up on to the platform, and, a prey to conflicting emotions, I sat down near the binnacle. Captain Nemo joined me. I rose and said to him:

“So, as I said he would, this man died in the night?”

“Yes, M. Aronnax.”
“And he rests now, near his companions, in the coral cemetery?”

“Yes, forgotten by all else, but not by us. We dug the grave, and the polypi undertake to seal our dead for eternity.” And, burying his face quickly in his hands, he tried in vain to suppress a sob. Then he added: “Our peaceful cemetery is there, some hundred feet below the surface of the waves.”

“Your dead sleep quietly, at least, Captain, out of the reach of sharks.”

“Yes, sir, of sharks and men,” gravely replied the Captain.
PART TWO

CHAPTER I

The Indian Ocean

We now come to the second part of our journey under the sea. The first ended with the moving scene in the coral cemetery which left such a deep impression on my mind. Thus, in the midst of this great sea, Captain Nemo's life was passing, even to his grave, which he had prepared in one of its deepest abysses. There, not one of the ocean's monsters could trouble the last sleep of the crew of the Nautilus, of those friends riveted to each other in death as in life. “Nor any man, either,” had added the Captain. Still the same fierce, implacable defiance towards human society!

I could no longer content myself with the theory which satisfied Conseil.

That worthy fellow persisted in seeing in the Commander of the Nautilus one of those unknown servants who return mankind contempt for indifference. For him, he was a misunderstood genius who, tired of earth’s deceptions, had taken refuge in this inaccessible medium, where he might follow his instincts freely. To my mind, this explains but one side of Captain Nemo’s character. Indeed, the mystery of that last night during which we had been chained in prison, the sleep, and the precautions so violently taken by the Captain of snatching from my eyes the glass I had raised to sweep the horizon, the mortal wound of the man, due to an unaccountable shock of the Nautilus, all put me on a new track. No; Captain Nemo was not satisfied with shunning man. His formidable apparatus not only suited his instinct of freedom, but perhaps also the design of some terrible retaliation.

At this moment nothing is clear to me; I catch but a glimpse of light amidst all the darkness, and I must confine myself to writing as events shall dictate.
That day, the 24th of January, 1868, at noon, the second officer came to take the altitude of the sun. I mounted the platform, lit a cigar, and watched the operation. It seemed to me that the man did not understand French; for several times I made remarks in a loud voice, which must have drawn from him some involuntary sign of attention, if he had understood them; but he remained undisturbed and dumb.

As he was taking observations with the sextant, one of the sailors of the *Nautilus* (the strong man who had accompanied us on our first submarine excursion to the Island of Crespo) came to clean the glasses of the lantern. I examined the fittings of the apparatus, the strength of which was increased a hundredfold by lenticular rings, placed similar to those in a lighthouse, and which projected their brilliance in a horizontal plane. The electric lamp was combined in such a way as to give its most powerful light. Indeed, it was produced in vacuo, which insured both its steadiness and its intensity. This vacuum economized the graphite points between which the luminous arc was developed—an important point of economy for Captain Nemo, who could not easily have replaced them; and under these conditions their waste was imperceptible. When the *Nautilus* was ready to continue its submarine journey, I went down to the saloon. The panel was closed, and the course marked direct west.

We were furrowing the waters of the Indian Ocean, a vast liquid plain, with a surface of 1,200,000,000 of acres, and whose waters are so clear and transparent that any one leaning over them would turn giddy. The *Nautilus* usually floated between fifty and a hundred fathoms deep. We went on so for some days. To anyone but myself, who had a great love for the sea, the hours would have seemed long and monotonous; but the daily walks on the platform, when I steeped myself in the reviving air of the ocean, the sight of the rich waters through the windows of the saloon, the books in the library, the compiling of my memoirs, took up all my time, and left me not a moment of boredom or weariness.
For some days we saw a great number of aquatic birds, sea-
mews or gulls. Some were cleverly killed and, prepared in a certain
way, made very acceptable water-game. Amongst large-winged
birds, carried a long distance from all lands and resting upon the
waves from the fatigue of their flight, I saw some magnificent alba-
trosses, uttering discordant cries like the braying of an ass, and
birds belonging to the family of the long-wings.

As to the fish, they always provoked our admiration when we
surprised the secrets of their aquatic life through the open panels.
I saw many kinds which I never before had a chance of observing.

I shall notice chiefly ostracions peculiar to the Red Sea, the
Indian Ocean, and that part which washes the coast of tropical
America. These fishes, like the tortoise, the armadillo, the sea-
hedgehog, and the Crustacea, are protected by a breastplate which
is neither chalky nor stony, but real bone. In some it takes the form
of a solid triangle, in others of a solid quadrangle. Amongst the tri-
angular I saw some an inch and a half in length, with wholesome
flesh and a delicious flavor; they are brown at the tail, and yellow
at the fins, and I recommend their introduction into fresh water,
to which a certain number of sea-fish easily accustom themselves.
I would also mention quadrangular ostracions, having on the back
four large tubercles; some dotted over with white spots on the
lower part of the body, and which may be tamed like birds; trigons
provided with spikes formed by the lengthening of their bony
shell, and which, from their strange gruntings, are called “seapigs”;
also dromedaries with large humps in the shape of a cone, whose
flesh is very tough and leathery.

I now borrow from the daily notes of Master Conseil. “Certain
fish of the genus petrodon peculiar to those seas, with red backs
and white chests, which are distinguished by three rows of longi-
tudinal filaments; and some electrical, seven inches long, decked
in the liveliest colors. Then, as specimens of other kinds, some
ovoides, resembling an egg of a dark brown color, marked with
white bands, and without tails; diodons, real sea-porcupines, fur-
nished with spikes, and capable of swelling in such a way as to look
like cushions bristling with darts; hippocampi, common to every ocean; some pegasi with lengthened snouts, which their pectoral fins, being much elongated and formed in the shape of wings, allow, if not to fly, at least to shoot into the air; pigeon spatulae, with tails covered with many rings of shell; macrognathi with long jaws, an excellent fish, nine inches long, and bright with most agreeable colors; pale-colored calliomores, with rugged heads; and plenty of chaetodons, with long and tubular muzzles, which kill insects by shooting them, as from an air-gun, with a single drop of water. These we may call the flycatchers of the seas.

“In the eighty-ninth genus of fishes, classed by Lacepede, belonging to the second lower class of bony, characterized by operculae and bronchial membranes, I remarked the scorpaena, the head of which is furnished with spikes, and which has but one dorsal fin; these creatures are covered, or not, with little shells, according to the sub-class to which they belong. The second sub-class gives us specimens of didactyles fourteen or fifteen inches in length, with yellow rays, and heads of a most fantastic appearance. As to the first sub-class, it gives several specimens of that singular looking fish appropriately called a ‘seafrog,’ with large head, sometimes pierced with holes, sometimes swollen with protuberances, bristling with spikes, and covered with tubercles; it has irregular and hideous horns; its body and tail are covered with callosities; its sting makes a dangerous wound; it is both repugnant and horrible to look at.”

From the 21st to the 23rd of January the Nautilus went at the rate of two hundred and fifty leagues in twenty-four hours, being five hundred and forty miles, or twenty-two miles an hour. If we recognized so many different varieties of fish, it was because, attracted by the electric light, they tried to follow us; the greater part, however, were soon distanced by our speed, though some kept their place in the waters of the Nautilus for a time. The morning of the 24th, in 12° 5' S. lat., and 94° 33' long., we observed Keeling Island, a coral formation, planted with magnificent cocos, and which had been visited by Mr. Darwin and Captain Fitzroy.
The *Nautilus* skirted the shores of this desert island for a little distance. Its nets brought up numerous specimens of polypi and curious shells of mollusca. Some precious productions of the species of delphinulae enriched the treasures of Captain Nemo, to which I added an astraea punctifera, a kind of parasite polypus often found fixed to a shell.

Soon Keeling Island disappeared from the horizon, and our course was directed to the north-west in the direction of the Indian Peninsula.

From Keeling Island our course was slower and more variable, often taking us into great depths. Several times they made use of the inclined planes, which certain internal levers placed obliquely to the waterline. In that way we went about two miles, but without ever obtaining the greatest depths of the Indian Sea, which soundings of seven thousand fathoms have never reached. As to the temperature of the lower strata, the thermometer invariably indicated 4° above zero. I only observed that in the upper regions the water was always colder in the high levels than at the surface of the sea.

On the 25th of January the ocean was entirely deserted; the *Nautilus* passed the day on the surface, beating the waves with its powerful screw and making them rebound to a great height. Who under such circumstances would not have taken it for a gigantic cetacean? Three parts of this day I spent on the platform. I watched the sea. Nothing on the horizon, till about four o’clock a steamer running west on our counter. Her masts were visible for an instant, but she could not see the *Nautilus*, being too low in the water. I fancied this steamboat belonged to the P.O. Company, which runs from Ceylon to Sydney, touching at King George’s Point and Melbourne.

At five o’clock in the evening, before that fleeting twilight which binds night to day in tropical zones, Conseil and I were astonished by a curious spectacle.

It was a shoal of argonauts traveling along on the surface of the ocean. We could count several hundreds. They belonged to the tubercle kind which are peculiar to the Indian seas.
These graceful molluscs moved backwards by means of their locomotive tube, through which they propelled the water already drawn in. Of their eight tentacles, six were elongated, and stretched out floating on the water, whilst the other two, rolled up flat, were spread to the wing like a light sail. I saw their spiral-shaped and fluted shells, which Cuvier justly compares to an elegant skiff. A boat indeed! It bears the creature which secretes it without its adhering to it.

For nearly an hour the Nautilus floated in the midst of this shoal of molluscs. Then I know not what sudden fright they took. But as if at a signal every sail was furled, the arms folded, the body drawn in, the shells turned over, changing their center of gravity, and the whole fleet disappeared under the waves. Never did the ships of a squadron maneuver with more unity.

At that moment night fell suddenly, and the reeds, scarcely raised by the breeze, lay peaceably under the sides of the Nautilus.

The next day, 26th of January, we cut the equator at the eighty-second meridian and entered the northern hemisphere. During the day a formidable troop of sharks accompanied us, terrible creatures, which multiply in these seas and make them very dangerous. They were “cestracio philippi” sharks, with brown backs and whitish bellies, armed with eleven rows of teeth—eyed sharks—their throat being marked with a large black spot surrounded with white like an eye. There were also some Isabella sharks, with rounded snouts marked with dark spots. These powerful creatures often hurled themselves at the windows of the saloon with such violence as to make us feel very insecure. At such times Ned Land was no longer master of himself. He wanted to go to the surface and harpoon the monsters, particularly certain smooth-hound sharks, whose mouth is studded with teeth like a mosaic; and large tiger-sharks nearly six yards long, the last named of which seemed to excite him more particularly. But the Nautilus, accelerating her speed, easily left the most rapid of them behind.

The 27th of January, at the entrance of the vast Bay of Bengal, we met repeatedly a forbidding spectacle, dead bodies floating on
the surface of the water. They were the dead of the Indian villages, carried by the Ganges to the level of the sea, and which the vultures, the only undertakers of the country, had not been able to devour. But the sharks did not fail to help them at their funeral work.

About seven o’clock in the evening, the Nautilus, half-immersed, was sailing in a sea of milk. At first sight the ocean seemed lactified. Was it the effect of the lunar rays? No; for the moon, scarcely two days old, was still lying hidden under the horizon in the rays of the sun. The whole sky, though lit by the sidereal rays, seemed black by contrast with the whiteness of the waters.

Conseil could not believe his eyes, and questioned me as to the cause of this strange phenomenon. Happily I was able to answer him.

“It is called a milk sea,” I explained. “A large extent of white wavelets often to be seen on the coasts of Amboyna, and in these parts of the sea.”

“But, sir,” said Conseil, “can you tell me what causes such an effect? for I suppose the water is not really turned into milk.”

“No, my boy; and the whiteness which surprises you is caused only by the presence of myriads of infusoria, a sort of luminous little worm, gelatinous and without color, of the thickness of a hair, and whose length is not more than seven-thousandths of an inch. These insects adhere to one another sometimes for several leagues.”

“Several leagues!” exclaimed Conseil.

“Yes, my boy; and you need not try to compute the number of these infusoria. You will not be able, for, if I am not mistaken, ships have floated on these milk seas for more than forty miles.”

Towards midnight the sea suddenly resumed its usual color; but behind us, even to the limits of the horizon, the sky reflected the whitened waves, and for a long time seemed impregnated with the vague glimmerings of an aurora borealis.
CHAPTER II

A Novel Proposal of Captain Nemo’s

On the 28th of February, when at noon the Nautilus came to the surface of the sea, in 9° 4’ N. lat., there was land in sight about eight miles to westward. The first thing I noticed was a range of mountains about two thousand feet high, the shapes of which were most capricious. On taking the bearings, I knew that we were nearing the island of Ceylon, the pearl which hangs from the lobe of the Indian Peninsula.

Captain Nemo and his second appeared at this moment. The Captain glanced at the map. Then turning to me, said:

“The Island of Ceylon, noted for its pearl-fisheries. Would you like to visit one of them, M. Aronnax?”

“Certainly, Captain.”

“Well, the thing is easy. Though, if we see the fisheries, we shall not see the fishermen. The annual exportation has not yet begun. Never mind, I will give orders to make for the Gulf of Manaar, where we shall arrive in the night.”

The Captain said something to his second, who immediately went out. Soon the Nautilus returned to her native element, and the manometer showed that she was about thirty feet deep.

“Well, sir,” said Captain Nemo, “you and your companions shall visit the Bank of Manaar, and if by chance some fisherman should be there, we shall see him at work.”

“Agreed, Captain!”

“By the bye, M. Aronnax you are not afraid of sharks?”

“Sharks!” exclaimed I.

This question seemed a very hard one.

“Well?” continued Captain Nemo.

“I admit, Captain, that I am not yet very familiar with that kind of fish.”

“We are accustomed to them,” replied Captain Nemo, “and in time you will be too. However, we shall be armed, and on the road
we may be able to hunt some of the tribe. It is interesting. So, till tomorrow, sir, and early.”

This said in a careless tone, Captain Nemo left the saloon. Now, if you were invited to hunt the bear in the mountains of Switzerland, what would you say?

“Very well! Tomorrow we will go and hunt the bear.” If you were asked to hunt the lion in the plains of Atlas, or the tiger in the Indian jungles, what would you say?

“Ha, ha! it seems we are going to hunt the tiger or the lion!” But when you are invited to hunt the shark in its natural element, you would perhaps reflect before accepting the invitation. As for myself, I passed my hand over my forehead, on which stood large drops of cold perspiration. “Let us reflect,” said I, “and take our time. Hunting otters in submarine forests, as we did in the Island of Crespo, will pass; but going up and down at the bottom of the sea, where one is almost certain to meet sharks, is quite another thing! I know well that in certain countries, particularly in the Andaman Islands, the negroes never hesitate to attack them with a dagger in one hand and a running noose in the other; but I also know that few who affront those creatures ever return alive. However, I am not a negro, and if I were I think a little hesitation in this case would not be ill-timed.”

At this moment Conseil and the Canadian entered, quite composed, and even joyous. They knew not what awaited them.

“Faith, sir,” said Ned Land, “your Captain Nemo—the devil take him!—has just made us a very pleasant offer.”

“Ah!” said I, “You know?”

“If agreeable to you, sir,” interrupted Conseil, “the commander of the Nautilus has invited us to visit the magnificent Ceylon fisheries tomorrow, in your company; he did it kindly, and behaved like a real gentleman.”

“He said nothing more?”

“Nothing more, sir, except that he had already spoken to you of this little walk.”
“Sir,” said Conseil, “would you give us some details of the pearl fishery?”

“As to the fishing itself,” I asked, “or the incidents, which?”

“On the fishing,” replied the Canadian; “before entering upon the ground, it is as well to know something about it.”

“Very well; sit down, my friends, and I will teach you.”

Ned and Conseil seated themselves on an ottoman, and the first thing the Canadian asked was:

“Sir, what is a pearl?”

“My worthy Ned,” I answered, “to the poet, a pearl is a tear of the sea; to the Orientals, it is a drop of dew solidified; to the ladies, it is a jewel of an oblong shape, of a brilliancy of mother-of-pearl substance, which they wear on their fingers, their necks, or their ears; for the chemist it is a mixture of phosphate and carbonate of lime, with a little gelatin; and lastly, for naturalists, it is simply a morbid secretion of the organ that produces the mother-of-pearl amongst certain bivalves.”

“Branch of molluscs,” said Conseil.

“Precisely so, my learned Conseil; and, amongst these testacea the earshell, the tridacnae, the turbots, in a word, all those which secrete mother-of-pearl, that is, the blue, bluish, violet, or white substance which lines the interior of their shells, are capable of producing pearls.”

“Mussels too?” asked the Canadian.

“Yes, mussels of certain waters in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Saxony, Bohemia, and France.”

“Good! For the future I shall pay attention,” replied the Canadian.

“But,” I continued, “the particular mollusk which secretes the pearl is the pearl-oyster, the meleagrina margaritiferct, that precious pintadine. The pearl is nothing but a nacreous formation, deposited in a globular form, either adhering to the oyster shell, or buried in the folds of the creature. On the shell it is fast; in the flesh it is loose; but always has for a kernel a small hard substance, may be a barren egg, may be a grain of sand, around which the
pearly matter deposits itself year after year successively, and by thin concentric layers.”

“Are many pearls found in the same oyster?” asked Conseil.

“Yes, my boy. Some are a perfect casket. One oyster has been mentioned, though I allow myself to doubt it, as having contained no less than a hundred and fifty sharks.”

“A hundred and fifty sharks!” exclaimed Ned Land.

“Did I say sharks?” said I hurriedly. “I meant to say a hundred and fifty pearls. Sharks would not be sense.”

“Certainly not,” said Conseil; “but will you tell us now by what means they extract these pearls?”

“They proceed in various ways. When they adhere to the shell, the fishermen often pull them off with pincers; but the most common way is to lay the oysters on mats of the seaweed which covers the banks. Thus they die in the open air; and at the end of ten days they are in a forward state of decomposition. They are then plunged into large reservoirs of sea-water; then they are opened and washed.”

“The price of these pearls varies according to their size?” asked Conseil.

“Not only according to their size,” I answered, “but also according to their shape, their water (that is, their color), and their luster: that is, that bright and diapered sparkle which makes them so charming to the eye. The most beautiful are called virgin pearls, or paragons. They are formed alone in the tissue of the mollusk, are white, often opaque, and sometimes have the transparency of an opal; they are generally round or oval. The round are made into bracelets, the oval into pendants, and, being more precious, are sold singly. Those adhering to the shell of the oyster are more irregular in shape, and are sold by weight. Lastly, in a lower order are classed those small pearls known under the name of seed-pearls; they are sold by measure, and are especially used in embroidery for church ornaments.”

“But,” said Conseil, “is this pearl-fishery dangerous?”
“No,” I answered, quickly; “particularly if certain precautions are taken.”

“What does one risk in such a calling?” said Ned Land, “the swallowing of some mouthfuls of sea-water?”

“As you say, Ned. By the bye,” said I, trying to take Captain Nemo’s careless tone, “are you afraid of sharks, brave Ned?”

“I!” replied the Canadian; “A harpooner by profession? It is my trade to make light of them.”

“But,” said I, “it is not a question of fishing for them with an iron-swivel, hoisting them into the vessel, cutting off their tails with a blow of a chopper, ripping them up, and throwing their heart into the sea!”

“Then, it is a question of——”

“Precisely.”

“In the water?”

“In the water.”

“Faith, with a good harpoon! You know, sir, these sharks are ill-fashioned beasts. They turn on their bellies to seize you, and in that time——”

Ned Land had a way of saying “seize” which made my blood run cold.

“Well, and you, Conseil, what do you think of sharks?”

“Me!” said Conseil. “I will be frank, sir.”

“So much the better,” thought I.

“If you, sir, mean to face the sharks, I do not see why your faithful servant should not face them with you.”
CHAPTER III
A Pearl of Ten Millions

The next morning at four o’clock I was awakened by the steward whom Captain Nemo had placed at my service. I rose hurriedly, dressed, and went into the saloon.

Captain Nemo was awaiting me.

“M. Aronnax,” said he, “are you ready to start?”

“I am ready.”

“Then please to follow me.”

“And my companions, Captain?”

“They have been told and are waiting.”

“Are we not to put on our diver’s dresses?” asked I.

“No yet. I have not allowed the Nautilus to come too near this coast, and we are some distance from the Manaar Bank; but the boat is ready, and will take us to the exact point of disembarking, which will save us a long way. It carries our diving apparatus, which we will put on when we begin our submarine journey.”

Captain Nemo conducted me to the central staircase, which led on the platform. Ned and Conseil were already there, delighted at the idea of the “pleasure party” which was preparing. Five sailors from the Nautilus, with their oars, waited in the boat, which had been made fast against the side.

The night was still dark. Layers of clouds covered the sky, allowing but few stars to be seen. I looked on the side where the land lay, and saw nothing but a dark line enclosing three parts of the horizon, from south-west to north west. The Nautilus, having returned during the night up the western coast of Ceylon, was now west of the bay, or rather gulf, formed by the mainland and the Island of Manaar. There, under the dark waters, stretched the pintadine bank, an inexhaustible field of pearls, the length of which is more than twenty miles.

Captain Nemo, Ned Land, Conseil, and I took our places in the stern of the boat. The master went to the tiller; his four com-
panions leaned on their oars, the painter was cast off, and we sheered off.

The boat went towards the south; the oarsmen did not hurry. I noticed that their strokes, strong in the water, only followed each other every ten seconds, according to the method generally adopted in the navy. Whilst the craft was running by its own velocity, the liquid drops struck the dark depths of the waves crisply like spats of melted lead. A little billow, spreading wide, gave a slight roll to the boat, and some samphire reeds flapped before it.

We were silent. What was Captain Nemo thinking of? Perhaps of the land he was approaching, and which he found too near to him, contrary to the Canadian’s opinion, who thought it too far off. As to Conseil, he was merely there from curiosity.

About half-past five the first tints on the horizon showed the upper line of coast more distinctly. Flat enough in the east, it rose a little to the south. Five miles still lay between us, and it was indistinct owing to the mist on the water. At six o’clock it became suddenly daylight, with that rapidity peculiar to tropical regions, which know neither dawn nor twilight. The solar rays pierced the curtain of clouds, piled up on the eastern horizon, and the radiant orb rose rapidly. I saw land distinctly, with a few trees scattered here and there. The boat neared Manaar Island, which was rounded to the south. Captain Nemo rose from his seat and watched the sea.

At a sign from him the anchor was dropped, but the chain scarcely ran, for it was little more than a yard deep, and this spot was one of the highest points of the bank of pintadines.

“Here we are, M. Aronnax,” said Captain Nemo. “You see that enclosed bay? Here, in a month will be assembled the numerous fishing boats of the exporters, and these are the waters their divers will ransack so boldly. Happily, this bay is well situated for that kind of fishing. It is sheltered from the strongest winds; the sea is never very rough here, which makes it favorable for the diver’s work. We will now put on our dresses, and begin our walk.”
I did not answer, and, while watching the suspected waves, began with the help of the sailors to put on my heavy sea-dress. Captain Nemo and my companions were also dressing. None of the Nautilus men were to accompany us on this new excursion.

Soon we were enveloped to the throat in india-rubber clothing; the air apparatus fixed to our backs by braces. As to the Ruhmkorff apparatus, there was no necessity for it. Before putting my head into the copper cap, I had asked the question of the Captain.

“They would be useless,” he replied. “We are going to no great depth, and the solar rays will be enough to light our walk. Besides, it would not be prudent to carry the electric light in these waters; its brilliancy might attract some of the dangerous inhabitants of the coast most inopportune.”

As Captain Nemo pronounced these words, I turned to Conseil and Ned Land. But my two friends had already encased their heads in the metal cap, and they could neither hear nor answer.

One last question remained to ask of Captain Nemo.

“And our arms?” asked I; “our guns?”

“Guns! What for? Do not mountaineers attack the bear with a dagger in their hand, and is not steel surer than lead? Here is a strong blade; put it in your belt, and we start.”

I looked at my companions; they were armed like us, and, more than that, Ned Land was brandishing an enormous harpoon, which he had placed in the boat before leaving the Nautilus.

Then, following the Captain’s example, I allowed myself to be dressed in the heavy copper helmet, and our reservoirs of air were at once in activity. An instant after we were landed, one after the other, in about two yards of water upon an even sand. Captain Nemo made a sign with his hand, and we followed him by a gentle declivity till we disappeared under the waves.

Over our feet, like coveys of snipe in a bog, rose shoals of fish, of the genus monoptera, which have no other fins but their tail. I recognized the Javanese, a real serpent two and a half feet long, of
a livid color underneath, and which might easily be mistaken for a conger eel if it were not for the golden stripes on its side. In the genus stromateus, whose bodies are very flat and oval, I saw some of the most brilliant colors, carrying their dorsal fin like a scythe; an excellent eating fish, which, dried and pickled, is known by the name of Karawade; then some tranquebars, belonging to the genus apsiphoroides, whose body is covered with a shell cuirass of eight longitudinal plates.

The heightening sun lit the mass of waters more and more. The soil changed by degrees. To the fine sand succeeded a perfect causeway of boulders, covered with a carpet of molluscs and zoophytes. Amongst the specimens of these branches I noticed some placenae, with thin unequal shells, a kind of ostracion peculiar to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean; some orange lucinæ with rounded shells; rockfish three feet and a half long, which raised themselves under the waves like hands ready to seize one. There were also some panopyres, slightly luminous; and lastly, some oculines, like magnificent fans, forming one of the richest vegetations of these seas.

In the midst of these living plants, and under the arbors of the hydrophytes, were layers of clumsy articulates, particularly some raninae, whose carapace formed a slightly rounded triangle; and some horrible looking parthenopes.

At about seven o’clock we found ourselves at last surveying the oyster-banks on which the pearl-oysters are reproduced by millions.

Captain Nemo pointed with his hand to the enormous heap of oysters; and I could well understand that this mine was inexhaustible, for Nature’s creative power is far beyond man’s instinct of destruction. Ned Land, faithful to his instinct, hastened to fill a net which he carried by his side with some of the finest specimens. But we could not stop. We must follow the Captain, who seemed to guide himself by paths known only to himself. The ground was sensibly rising, and sometimes, on holding up my arm, it was above the surface of the sea. Then the level of the bank would sink
capriciously. Often we rounded high rocks scarped into pyramids. In their dark fractures huge crustacea, perched upon their high claws like some war-machine, watched us with fixed eyes, and under our feet crawled various kinds of annelides.

At this moment there opened before us a large grotto dug in a picturesque heap of rocks and carpeted with all the thick warp of the submarine flora. At first it seemed very dark to me. The solar rays seemed to be extinguished by successive gradations, until its vague transparency became nothing more than drowned light. Captain Nemo entered; we followed. My eyes soon accustomed themselves to this relative state of darkness. I could distinguish the arches springing capriciously from natural pillars, standing broad upon their granite base, like the heavy columns of Tuscan architecture. Why had our incomprehensible guide led us to the bottom of this submarine crypt? I was soon to know. After descending a rather sharp declivity, our feet trod the bottom of a kind of circular pit. There Captain Nemo stopped, and with his hand indicated an object I had not yet perceived. It was an oyster of extraordinary dimensions, a gigantic tridacne, a goblet which could have contained a whole lake of holy-water, a basin the breadth of which was more than two yards and a half, and consequently larger than that ornamenting the saloon of the Nautilus. I approached this extraordinary mollusk. It adhered by its filaments to a table of granite, and there, isolated, it developed itself in the calm waters of the grotto. I estimated the weight of this tridacne at 600 lb. Such an oyster would contain 30 lb. of meat; and one must have the stomach of a Gargantua to demolish some dozens of them.

Captain Nemo was evidently acquainted with the existence of this bivalve, and seemed to have a particular motive in verifying the actual state of this tridacne. The shells were a little open; the Captain came near and put his dagger between to prevent them from closing; then with his hand he raised the membrane with its fringed edges, which formed a cloak for the creature. There, between the folded plaits, I saw a loose pearl, whose size equaled that of a coconut. Its globular shape, perfect clearness, and
admirable luster made it altogether a jewel of inestimable value. Carried away by my curiosity, I stretched out my hand to seize it, weigh it, and touch it; but the Captain stopped me, made a sign of refusal, and quickly withdrew his dagger, and the two shells closed suddenly. I then understood Captain Nemo’s intention. In leaving this pearl hidden in the mantle of the tridacne he was allowing it to grow slowly. Each year the secretions of the mollusk would add new concentric circles. I estimated its value at £500,000 at least.

After ten minutes Captain Nemo stopped suddenly. I thought he had halted previously to returning. No; by a gesture he bade us crouch beside him in a deep fracture of the rock, his hand pointed to one part of the liquid mass, which I watched attentively.

About five yards from me a shadow appeared, and sank to the ground. The disquieting idea of sharks shot through my mind, but I was mistaken; and once again it was not a monster of the ocean that we had anything to do with.

It was a man, a living man, an Indian, a fisherman, a poor devil who, I suppose, had come to glean before the harvest. I could see the bottom of his canoe anchored some feet above his head. He dived and went up successively. A stone held between his feet, cut in the shape of a sugar loaf, whilst a rope fastened him to his boat, helped him to descend more rapidly. This was all his apparatus. Reaching the bottom, about five yards deep, he went on his knees and filled his bag with oysters picked up at random. Then he went up, emptied it, pulled up his stone, and began the operation once more, which lasted thirty seconds.

The diver did not see us. The shadow of the rock hid us from sight. And how should this poor Indian ever dream that men, beings like himself, should be there under the water watching his movements and losing no detail of the fishing? Several times he went up in this way, and dived again. He did not carry away more than ten at each plunge, for he was obliged to pull them from the bank to which they adhered by means of their strong byssus. And how many of those oysters for which he risked his life had no pearl
in them! I watched him closely; his maneuvers were regular; and for the space of half an hour no danger appeared to threaten him.

I was beginning to accustom myself to the sight of this interesting fishing, when suddenly, as the Indian was on the ground, I saw him make a gesture of terror, rise, and make a spring to return to the surface of the sea.

I understood his dread. A gigantic shadow appeared just above the unfortunate diver. It was a shark of enormous size advancing diagonally, his eyes on fire, and his jaws open. I was mute with horror and unable to move.

The voracious creature shot towards the Indian, who threw himself on one side to avoid the shark's fins; but not its tail, for it struck his chest and stretched him on the ground.

This scene lasted but a few seconds: the shark returned, and, turning on his back, prepared himself for cutting the Indian in two, when I saw Captain Nemo rise suddenly, and then, dagger in hand, walk straight to the monster, ready to fight face to face with him. The very moment the shark was going to snap the unhappy fisherman in two, he perceived his new adversary, and, turning over, made straight towards him.

I can still see Captain Nemo's position. Holding himself well together, he waited for the shark with admirable coolness; and, when it rushed at him, threw himself on one side with wonderful quickness, avoiding the shock, and burying his dagger deep into its side. But it was not all over. A terrible combat ensued.

The shark had seemed to roar, if I might say so. The blood rushed in torrents from its wound. The sea was dyed red, and through the opaque liquid I could distinguish nothing more. Nothing more until the moment when, like lightning, I saw the undaunted Captain hanging on to one of the creature's fins, struggling, as it were, hand to hand with the monster, and dealing successive blows at his enemy, yet still unable to give a decisive one.

The shark's struggles agitated the water with such fury that the rocking threatened to upset me.
I wanted to go to the Captain’s assistance, but, nailed to the spot with horror, I could not stir.

I saw the haggard eye; I saw the different phases of the fight. The Captain fell to the earth, upset by the enormous mass which leant upon him. The shark’s jaws opened wide, like a pair of factory shears, and it would have been all over with the Captain; but, quick as thought, harpoon in hand, Ned Land rushed towards the shark and struck it with its sharp point.

The waves were impregnated with a mass of blood. They rocked under the shark’s movements, which beat them with indescribable fury. Ned Land had not missed his aim. It was the monster’s death-rattle. Struck to the heart, it struggled in dreadful convulsions, the shock of which overthrew Conseil.

But Ned Land had disentangled the Captain, who, getting up without any wound, went straight to the Indian, quickly cut the cord which held him to his stone, took him in his arms, and, with a sharp blow of his heel, mounted to the surface.

We all three followed in a few seconds, saved by a miracle, and reached the fisherman’s boat.

Captain Nemo’s first care was to recall the unfortunate man to life again. I did not think he could succeed. I hoped so, for the poor creature’s immersion was not long; but the blow from the shark’s tail might have been his death-blow.

Happily, with the Captain’s and Conseil’s sharp friction, I saw consciousness return by degrees. He opened his eyes. What was his surprise, his terror even, at seeing four great copper heads leaning over him! And, above all, what must he have thought when Captain Nemo, drawing from the pocket of his dress a bag of pearls, placed it in his hand! This munificent charity from the man of the waters to the poor Cingalese was accepted with a trembling hand. His wondering eyes showed that he knew not to what superhuman beings he owed both fortune and life.

At a sign from the Captain we regained the bank, and, following the road already traversed, came in about half an hour to the anchor which held the canoe of the Nautilus to the earth.
Once on board, we each, with the help of the sailors, got rid of the heavy copper helmet.

Captain Nemo’s first word was to the Canadian.

“Thank you, Master Land,” said he.

“It was in revenge, Captain,” replied Ned Land. “I owed you that.”

A ghastly smile passed across the Captain’s lips, and that was all.

“To the Nautilus,” said he.

The boat flew over the waves. Some minutes after we met the shark’s dead body floating. By the black marking of the extremity of its fins, I recognized the terrible melanopteron of the Indian Seas, of the species of shark so properly called. It was more than twenty-five feet long; its enormous mouth occupied one-third of its body. It was an adult, as was known by its six rows of teeth placed in an isosceles triangle in the upper jaw.

Whilst I was contemplating this inert mass, a dozen of these voracious beasts appeared round the boat; and, without noticing us, threw themselves upon the dead body and fought with one another for the pieces.

At half-past eight we were again on board the Nautilus. There I reflected on the incidents which had taken place in our excursion to the Manaar Bank.

Two conclusions I must inevitably draw from it—one bearing upon the unparalleled courage of Captain Nemo, the other upon his devotion to a human being, a representative of that race from which he fled beneath the sea. Whatever he might say, this strange man had not yet succeeded in entirely crushing his heart.

When I made this observation to him, he answered in a slightly moved tone:

“That Indian, sir, is an inhabitant of an oppressed country; and I am still, and shall be, to my last breath, one of them!”
In the course of the day of the 29th of January, the island of Ceylon disappeared under the horizon, and the *Nautilus*, at a speed of twenty miles an hour, slid into the labyrinth of canals which separate the Maldives from the Laccadives. It coasted even the Island of Kiltan, a land originally coraline, discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1499, and one of the nineteen principal islands of the Laccadive Archipelago, situated between 10° and 14° 30' N. lat., and 69° 50' 72" E. long.

We had made 16,220 miles, or 7,500 (French) leagues from our starting-point in the Japanese Seas.

The next day (30th January), when the *Nautilus* went to the surface of the ocean there was no land in sight. Its course was N.N.E., in the direction of the Sea of Oman, between Arabia and the Indian Peninsula, which serves as an outlet to the Persian Gulf. It was evidently a block without any possible egress. Where was Captain Nemo taking us to? I could not say. This, however, did not satisfy the Canadian, who that day came to me asking where we were going.

“*We are going where our Captain’s fancy takes us, Master Ned.***”

“His fancy cannot take us far, then,” said the Canadian. “The Persian Gulf has no outlet: and, if we do go in, it will not be long before we are out again.”

“Very well, then, we will come out again, Master Land; and if, after the Persian Gulf, the *Nautilus* would like to visit the Red Sea, the Straits of Bab-el-mandeb are there to give us entrance.”

“I need not tell you, sir,” said Ned Land, “that the Red Sea is as much closed as the Gulf, as the Isthmus of Suez is not yet cut; and, if it was, a boat as mysterious as ours would not risk itself in a canal cut with sluices. And again, the Red Sea is not the road to take us back to Europe.”
“But I never said we were going back to Europe.”
“What do you suppose, then?”
“I suppose that, after visiting the curious coasts of Arabia and Egypt, the *Nautilus* will go down the Indian Ocean again, perhaps cross the Channel of Mozambique, perhaps off the Mascarenes, so as to gain the Cape of Good Hope.”
“And once at the Cape of Good Hope?” asked the Canadian, with peculiar emphasis.
“Well, we shall penetrate into that Atlantic which we do not yet know. Ah! Friend Ned, you are getting tired of this journey under the sea; you are surfeited with the incessantly varying spectacle of submarine wonders. For my part, I shall be sorry to see the end of a voyage which it is given to so few men to make.”

For four days, till the 3rd of February, the *Nautilus* scoured the Sea of Oman, at various speeds and at various depths. It seemed to go at random, as if hesitating as to which road it should follow, but we never passed the Tropic of Cancer.

In quitting this sea we sighted Muscat for an instant, one of the most important towns of the country of Oman. I admired its strange aspect, surrounded by black rocks upon which its white houses and forts stood in relief. I saw the rounded domes of its mosques, the elegant points of its minarets, its fresh and verdant terraces. But it was only a vision! The *Nautilus* soon sank under the waves of that part of the sea.

We passed along the Arabian coast of Mahrah and Hadramaut, for a distance of six miles, its undulating line of mountains being occasionally relieved by some ancient ruin. The 5th of February we at last entered the Gulf of Aden, a perfect funnel introduced into the neck of Bab-el-mandeb, through which the Indian waters entered the Red Sea.

The 6th of February, the *Nautilus* floated in sight of Aden, perched upon a promontory which a narrow isthmus joins to the mainland, a kind of inaccessible Gibraltar, the fortifications of which were rebuilt by the English after taking possession in 1839.
I caught a glimpse of the octagon minarets of this town, which was at one time the richest commercial magazine on the coast.

I certainly thought that Captain Nemo, arrived at this point, would back out again; but I was mistaken, for he did no such thing, much to my surprise.

The next day, the 7th of February, we entered the Straits of Bab-el-mandeb, the name of which, in the Arab tongue, means The Gate of Tears.

To twenty miles in breadth, it is only thirty-two in length. And for the Nautilus, starting at full speed, the crossing was scarcely the work of an hour. But I saw nothing, not even the Island of Perim, with which the British Government has fortified the position of Aden. There were too many English or French steamers of the line of Suez to Bombay, Calcutta to Melbourne, and from Bourbon to the Mauritius, furrowing this narrow passage, for the Nautilus to venture to show itself. So it remained prudently below. At last about noon, we were in the waters of the Red Sea.

I would not even seek to understand the caprice which had decided Captain Nemo upon entering the gulf. But I quite approved of the Nautilus entering it. Its speed was lessened: sometimes it kept on the surface, sometimes it dived to avoid a vessel, and thus I was able to observe the upper and lower parts of this curious sea.

The 8th of February, from the first dawn of day, Mocha came in sight, now a ruined town, whose walls would fall at a gunshot, yet which shelters here and there some verdant date-trees; once an important city, containing six public markets, and twenty-six mosques, and whose walls, defended by fourteen forts, formed a girdle of two miles in circumference.

The Nautilus then approached the African shore, where the depth of the sea was greater. There, between two waters clear as crystal, through the open panels we were allowed to contemplate the beautiful bushes of brilliant coral and large blocks of rock clothed with a splendid fur of green variety of sites and landscapes.
along these sandbanks and algae and fuci. What an indescribable spectacle, and what variety of sites and landscapes along these sandbanks and volcanic islands which bound the Libyan coast! But where these shrubs appeared in all their beauty was on the eastern coast, which the *Nautilus* soon gained. It was on the coast of Tehama, for there not only did this display of zoophytes flourish beneath the level of the sea, but they also formed picturesque interlacings which unfolded themselves about sixty feet above the surface, more capricious but less highly colored than those whose freshness was kept up by the vital power of the waters.

What charming hours I passed thus at the window of the saloon! What new specimens of submarine flora and fauna did I admire under the brightness of our electric lantern!

The 9th of February the *Nautilus* floated in the broadest part of the Red Sea, which is comprised between Souakin, on the west coast, and Komfidah, on the east coast, with a diameter of ninety miles.

That day at noon, after the bearings were taken, Captain Nemo mounted the platform, where I happened to be, and I was determined not to let him go down again without at least pressing him regarding his ulterior projects. As soon as he saw me he approached and graciously offered me a cigar.

“Well, sir, does this Red Sea please you? Have you sufficiently observed the wonders it covers, its fishes, its zoophytes, its parterres of sponges, and its forests of coral? Did you catch a glimpse of the towns on its borders?”

“Yes, Captain Nemo,” I replied; “and the *Nautilus* is wonderfully fitted for such a study. Ah! It is an intelligent boat!”

“Yes, sir, intelligent and invulnerable. It fears neither the terrible tempests of the Red Sea, nor its currents, nor its sandbanks.”

“Certainly,” said I, “this sea is quoted as one of the worst, and in the time of the ancients, if I am not mistaken, its reputation was detestable.”

“Detestable, M. Aronnax. The Greek and Latin historians do not speak favorably of it, and Strabo says it is very dangerous dur-
ing the Etesian winds and in the rainy season. The Arabian Edrisi portrays it under the name of the Gulf of Colzoum, and relates that vessels perished there in great numbers on the sandbanks and that no one would risk sailing in the night. It is, he pretends, a sea subject to fearful hurricanes, strewn with inhospitable islands, and ‘which offers nothing good either on its surface or in its depths.’”

“One may see,” I replied, “that these historians never sailed on board the Nautilus.”

“Just so,” replied the Captain, smiling; “and in that respect moderns are not more advanced than the ancients. It required many ages to find out the mechanical power of steam. Who knows if, in another hundred years, we may not see a second Nautilus? Progress is slow, M. Aronnax.”

“It is true,” I answered; “your boat is at least a century before its time, perhaps an era. What a misfortune that the secret of such an invention should die with its inventor!”

Captain Nemo did not reply. After some minutes’ silence he continued:

“You were speaking of the opinions of ancient historians upon the dangerous navigation of the Red Sea.”

“It is true,” said I; “but were not their fears exaggerated?”

“Yes and no, M. Aronnax,” replied Captain Nemo, who seemed to know the Red Sea by heart. “That which is no longer dangerous for a modern vessel, well rigged, strongly built, and master of its own course, thanks to obedient steam, offered all sorts of perils to the ships of the ancients. Picture to yourself those first navigators venturing in ships made of planks sewn with the cords of the palm tree, saturated with the grease of the seadog, and covered with powdered resin! They had not even instruments wherewith to take their bearings, and they went by guess amongst currents of which they scarcely knew anything. Under such conditions shipwrecks were, and must have been, numerous. But in our time, steamers running between Suez and the South Seas have nothing more to fear from the fury of this gulf, in spite of contrary trade-winds. The captain and passengers do not prepare for their
departure by offering propitiatory sacrifices; and, on their return, they no longer go ornamented with wreaths and gilt fillets to thank the gods in the neighboring temple.”

“I agree with you,” said I; “and steam seems to have killed all gratitude in the hearts of sailors. But, Captain, since you seem to have especially studied this sea, can you tell me the origin of its name?”

“There exist several explanations on the subject, M. Aronnax. Would you like to know the opinion of a chronicler of the fourteenth century?”

“Willingly.”

“This fanciful writer pretends that its name was given to it after the passage of the Israelites, when Pharaoh perished in the waves which closed at the voice of Moses.”

“A poet’s explanation, Captain Nemo,” I replied; “but I cannot content myself with that. I ask you for your personal opinion.”

“Here it is, M. Aronnax. According to my idea, we must see in this appellation of the Red Sea a translation of the Hebrew word ‘Edom’; and if the ancients gave it that name, it was on account of the particular color of its waters.”

“But up to this time I have seen nothing but transparent waves and without any particular color.”

“Very likely; but as we advance to the bottom of the gulf, you will see this singular appearance. I remember seeing the Bay of Tor entirely red, like a sea of blood.”

“And you attribute this color to the presence of a microscopic seaweed?”

“Yes.”

“So, Captain Nemo, it is not the first time you have overrun the Red Sea on board the Nautilus?”

“No, sir.”

“As you spoke a while ago of the passage of the Israelites and of the catastrophe to the Egyptians, I will ask whether you have met with the traces under the water of this great historical fact?”

“No, sir; and for a good reason.”
“What is it?”

“It is that the spot where Moses and his people passed is now so blocked up with sand that the camels can barely bathe their legs there. You can well understand that there would not be water enough for my *Nautilus*.”

“And the spot?” I asked.

“The spot is situated a little above the Isthmus of Suez, in the arm which formerly made a deep estuary, when the Red Sea extended to the Salt Lakes. Now, whether this passage were miraculous or not, the Israelites, nevertheless, crossed there to reach the Promised Land, and Pharaoh’s army perished precisely on that spot; and I think that excavations made in the middle of the sand would bring to light a large number of arms and instruments of Egyptian origin.”

“That is evident,” I replied; “and for the sake of archaeologists let us hope that these excavations will be made sooner or later, when new towns are established on the isthmus, after the construction of the Suez Canal; a canal, however, very useless to a vessel like the *Nautilus*.”

“Very likely; but useful to the whole world,” said Captain Nemo. “The ancients well understood the utility of a communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean for their commercial affairs: but they did not think of digging a canal direct, and took the Nile as an intermediate. Very probably the canal which united the Nile to the Red Sea was begun by Sesostris, if we may believe tradition. One thing is certain, that in the year 615 before Jesus Christ, Necos undertook the works of an alimentary canal to the waters of the Nile across the plain of Egypt, looking towards Arabia. It took four days to go up this canal, and it was so wide that two triremes could go abreast. It was carried on by Darius, the son of Hystaspes, and probably finished by Ptolemy II. Strabo saw it navigated: but its decline from the point of departure, near Bubastes, to the Red Sea was so slight that it was only navigable for a few months in the year. This canal answered all commercial purposes to the age of Antonius, when it was aban-
doned and blocked up with sand. Restored by order of the Caliph Omar, it was definitely destroyed in 761 or 762 by Caliph Al-Mansor, who wished to prevent the arrival of provisions to Mohammed-ben-Abdallah, who had revolted against him. During the expedition into Egypt, your General Bonaparte discovered traces of the works in the Desert of Suez; and, surprised by the tide, he nearly perished before regaining Hadjaroth, at the very place where Moses had encamped three thousand years before him.”

“Well, Captain, what the ancients dared not undertake, this junction between the two seas, which will shorten the road from Cadiz to India, M. Lesseps has succeeded in doing; and before long he will have changed Africa into an immense island.”

“Yes, M. Aronnax; you have the right to be proud of your countryman. Such a man brings more honor to a nation than great captains. He began, like so many others, with disgust and rebuffs; but he has triumphed, for he has the genius of will. And it is sad to think that a work like that, which ought to have been an international work and which would have sufficed to make a reign illustrious, should have succeeded by the energy of one man. All honor to M. Lesseps!”

“Yes! Honor to the great citizen,” I replied, surprised by the manner in which Captain Nemo had just spoken.

“Unfortunately,” he continued, “I cannot take you through the Suez Canal; but you will be able to see the long jetty of Port Said after tomorrow, when we shall be in the Mediterranean.”

“The Mediterranean!” I exclaimed.

“Yes, sir; does that astonish you?”

“What astonishes me is to think that we shall be there the day after tomorrow.”

“Indeed?”

“Yes, Captain, although by this time I ought to have accustomed myself to be surprised at nothing since I have been on board your boat.”
“But the cause of this surprise?”

“Well! It is the fearful speed you will have to put on the Nautilus, if the day after tomorrow she is to be in the Mediterranean, having made the round of Africa, and doubled the Cape of Good Hope!”

“Who told you that she would make the round of Africa and double the Cape of Good Hope, sir?”

“Well, unless the Nautilus sails on dry land, and passes above the isthmus——”

“Or beneath it, M. Aronnax.”

“Beneath it?”

“Certainly,” replied Captain Nemo quietly. “A long time ago Nature made under this tongue of land what man has this day made on its surface.”

“What! Such a passage exists?”

“Yes; a subterranean passage, which I have named the Arabian Tunnel. It takes us beneath Suez and opens into the Gulf of Pelusium.”

“But this isthmus is composed of nothing but quick sands?”

“To a certain depth. But at fifty-five yards only there is a solid layer of rock.”

“Did you discover this passage by chance?” I asked more and more surprised.

“Chance and reasoning, sir; and by reasoning even more than by chance. Not only does this passage exist, but I have profited by it several times. Without that I should not have ventured this day into the impassable Red Sea. I noticed that in the Red Sea and in the Mediterranean there existed a certain number of fishes of a kind perfectly identical. Certain of the fact, I asked myself was it possible that there was no communication between the two seas? If there was, the subterranean current must necessarily run from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, from the sole cause of difference of level. I caught a large number of fishes in the neighborhood of Suez. I passed a copper ring through their tails, and threw them back into the sea. Some months later, on the coast
of Syria, I caught some of my fish ornamented with the ring. Thus the communication between the two was proved. I then sought for it with my *Nautilus*; I discovered it, ventured into it, and before long, sir, you too will have passed through my Arabian tunnel!"
CHAPTER V

The Arabian Tunnel

That same evening, in 21° 30’ N. lat., the Nautilus floated on the surface of the sea, approaching the Arabian coast. I saw Djeddah, the most important counting-house of Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and India. I distinguished clearly enough its buildings, the vessels anchored at the quays, and those whose draught of water obliged them to anchor in the roads. The sun, rather low on the horizon, struck full on the houses of the town, bringing out their whiteness. Outside, some wooden cabins, and some made of reeds, showed the quarter inhabited by the Bedouins. Soon Djeddah was shut out from view by the shadows of night, and the Nautilus found herself under water slightly phosphorescent.

The next day, the 10th of February, we sighted several ships running to windward. The Nautilus returned to its submarine navigation; but at noon, when her bearings were taken, the sea being deserted, she rose again to her waterline.

Accompanied by Ned and Conseil, I seated myself on the platform. The coast on the eastern side looked like a mass faintly printed upon a damp fog.

We were leaning on the sides of the pinnace, talking of one thing and another, when Ned Land, stretching out his hand towards a spot on the sea, said:

“Do you see anything there, sir?”

“No, Ned,” I replied; “but I have not your eyes, you know.”

“Look well,” said Ned, “there, on the starboard beam, about the height of the lantern! Do you not see a mass which seems to move?”

“Certainly,” said I, after close attention; “I see something like a long black body on the top of the water.”

And certainly before long the black object was not more than a mile from us. It looked like a great sandbank deposited in the open sea. It was a gigantic dugong!*
Ned Land looked eagerly. His eyes shone with covetousness at the sight of the animal. His hand seemed ready to harpoon it. One would have thought he was awaiting the moment to throw himself into the sea and attack it in its element.

At this instant Captain Nemo appeared on the platform. He saw the dugong, understood the Canadian’s attitude, and, addressing him, said:
“If you held a harpoon just now, Master Land, would it not burn your hand?”
“Just so, sir.”
“And you would not be sorry to go back, for one day, to your trade of a fisherman and to add this cetacean to the list of those you have already killed?”
“I should not, sir.”
“Well, you can try.”
“Thank you, sir,” said Ned Land, his eyes flaming.
“Only,” continued the Captain, “I advise you for your own sake not to miss the creature.”
“Is the dugong dangerous to attack?” I asked, in spite of the Canadian’s shrug of the shoulders.
“Yes,” replied the Captain; “sometimes the animal turns upon its assailants and overturns their boat. But for Master Land this danger is not to be feared. His eye is prompt, his arm sure.”

At this moment seven men of the crew, mute and immovable as ever, mounted the platform. One carried a harpoon and a line similar to those employed in catching whales. The pinnace was lifted from the bridge, pulled from its socket, and let down into the sea. Six oarsmen took their seats, and the coxswain went to the tiller. Ned, Conseil, and I went to the back of the boat.
“You are not coming, Captain?” I asked.
“No, sir; but I wish you good sport.”

The boat put off, and, lifted by the six rowers, drew rapidly towards the dugong, which floated about two miles from the Nautilus.
Arrived some cables-length from the cetacean, the speed slackened, and the oars dipped noiselessly into the quiet waters. Ned Land, harpoon in hand, stood in the fore part of the boat. The harpoon used for striking the whale is generally attached to a very long cord which runs out rapidly as the wounded creature draws it after him. But here the cord was not more than ten fathoms long, and the extremity was attached to a small barrel which, by floating, was to show the course the dugong took under the water.

I stood and carefully watched the Canadian’s adversary. This dugong, which also bears the name of the halicore, closely resembles the manatee; its oblong body terminated in a lengthened tail, and its lateral fins in perfect fingers. Its difference from the manatee consisted in its upper jaw, which was armed with two long and pointed teeth which formed on each side diverging tusks.

This dugong which Ned Land was preparing to attack was of colossal dimensions; it was more than seven yards long. It did not move, and seemed to be sleeping on the waves, which circumstance made it easier to capture.

The boat approached within six yards of the animal. The oars rested on the rowlocks. I half rose. Ned Land, his body thrown a little back, brandished the harpoon in his experienced hand.

Suddenly a hissing noise was heard, and the dugong disappeared. The harpoon, although thrown with great force; had apparently only struck the water.

“Curse it!” exclaimed the Canadian furiously; “I have missed it!”

“No,” said I; “the creature is wounded—look at the blood; but your weapon has not stuck in his body.”

“My harpoon! My harpoon!” cried Ned Land.

The sailors rowed on, and the coxswain made for the floating barrel. The harpoon regained, we followed in pursuit of the animal.

The latter came now and then to the surface to breathe. Its wound had not weakened it, for it shot onwards with great rapidity.
The boat, rowed by strong arms, flew on its track. Several times it approached within some few yards, and the Canadian was ready to strike, but the dugong made off with a sudden plunge, and it was impossible to reach it.

Imagine the passion which excited impatient Ned Land! He hurled at the unfortunate creature the most energetic expletives in the English tongue. For my part, I was only vexed to see the dugong escape all our attacks.

We pursued it without relaxation for an hour, and I began to think it would prove difficult to capture, when the animal, possessed with the perverse idea of vengeance of which he had cause to repent, turned upon the pinnace and assailed us in its turn.

This maneuver did not escape the Canadian.

“Look out!” he cried.

The coxswain said some words in his outlandish tongue, doubtless warning the men to keep on their guard.

The dugong came within twenty feet of the boat, stopped, sniffed the air briskly with its large nostrils (not pierced at the extremity, but in the upper part of its muzzle). Then, taking a spring, he threw himself upon us.

The pinnace could not avoid the shock, and half upset, shipped at least two tons of water, which had to be emptied; but, thanks to the coxswain, we caught it sideways, not full front, so we were not quite overturned. While Ned Land, clinging to the bows, belabored the gigantic animal with blows from his harpoon, the creature’s teeth were buried in the gunwale, and it lifted the whole thing out of the water, as a lion does a roebuck. We were upset over one another, and I know not how the adventure would have ended, if the Canadian, still enraged with the beast, had not struck it to the heart.

I heard its teeth grind on the iron plate, and the dugong disappeared, carrying the harpoon with him. But the barrel soon returned to the surface, and shortly after the body of the animal, turned on its back. The boat came up with it, took it in tow, and made straight for the Nautilus.
It required tackle of enormous strength to hoist the dugong on to the platform. It weighed 10,000 lb.

The next day, 11th February, the larder of the Nautilus was enriched by some more delicate game. A flight of sea-swallows rested on the Nautilus. It was a species of the Sterna nilotica, peculiar to Egypt; its beak is black, head grey and pointed, the eye surrounded by white spots, the back, wings, and tail of a greyish color, the belly and throat white, and claws red. They also took some dozen of Nile ducks, a wild bird of high flavor, its throat and upper part of the head white with black spots.

About five o’clock in the evening we sighted to the north the Cape of Ras-Mohammed. This cape forms the extremity of Arabia Petraea, comprised between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Acabah.

The Nautilus penetrated into the Straits of Jubal, which leads to the Gulf of Suez. I distinctly saw a high mountain, towering between the two gulfs of Ras-Mohammed. It was Mount Horeb, that Sinai at the top of which Moses saw God face to face.

At six o’clock the Nautilus, sometimes floating, sometimes immersed, passed some distance from Tor, situated at the end of the bay, the waters of which seemed tinted with red, an observation already made by Captain Nemo. Then night fell in the midst of a heavy silence, sometimes broken by the cries of the pelican and other night-birds, and the noise of the waves breaking upon the shore, chafing against the rocks, or the panting of some far-off steamer beating the waters of the Gulf with its noisy paddles.

From eight to nine o’clock the Nautilus remained some fathoms under the water. According to my calculation we must have been very near Suez. Through the panel of the saloon I saw the bottom of the rocks brilliantly lit up by our electric lamp. We seemed to be leaving the Straits behind us more and more.

At a quarter-past nine, the vessel having returned to the surface, I mounted the platform. Most impatient to pass through Captain Nemo’s tunnel, I could not stay in one place, so came to breathe the fresh night air.
Soon in the shadow I saw a pale light, half discolored by the fog, shining about a mile from us.

“A floating lighthouse!” said someone near me.

I turned, and saw the Captain.

“It is the floating light of Suez,” he continued. “It will not be long before we gain the entrance of the tunnel.”

“The entrance cannot be easy?”

“No, sir; for that reason I am accustomed to go into the steersman’s cage and myself direct our course. And now, if you will go down, M. Aronnax, the Nautilus is going under the waves, and will not return to the surface until we have passed through the Arabian Tunnel.”

Captain Nemo led me towards the central staircase; half way down he opened a door, traversed the upper deck, and landed in the pilot’s cage, which it may be remembered rose at the extremity of the platform. It was a cabin measuring six feet square, very much like that occupied by the pilot on the steamboats of the Mississippi or Hudson. In the midst worked a wheel, placed vertically, and caught to the tiller-rope, which ran to the back of the Nautilus. Four light-ports with lenticular glasses, let in a groove in the partition of the cabin, allowed the man at the wheel to see in all directions.

This cabin was dark; but soon my eyes accustomed themselves to the obscurity, and I perceived the pilot, a strong man, with his hands resting on the spokes of the wheel. Outside, the sea appeared vividly lit up by the lantern, which shed its rays from the back of the cabin to the other extremity of the platform.

“Now,” said Captain Nemo, “let us try to make our passage.”

Electric wires connected the pilot’s cage with the machinery room, and from there the Captain could communicate simultaneously to his Nautilus the direction and the speed. He pressed a metal knob, and at once the speed of the screw diminished.

I looked in silence at the high straight wall we were running by at this moment, the immovable base of a massive sandy coast. We followed it thus for an hour only some few yards off.
Captain Nemo did not take his eye from the knob, suspended by its two concentric circles in the cabin. At a simple gesture, the pilot modified the course of the Nautilus every instant.

I had placed myself at the port-scuttle, and saw some magnificent substructures of coral, zoophytes, seaweed, and fucus, agitating their enormous claws, which stretched out from the fissures of the rock.

At a quarter-past ten, the Captain himself took the helm. A large gallery, black and deep, opened before us. The Nautilus went boldly into it. A strange roaring was heard round its sides. It was the waters of the Red Sea, which the incline of the tunnel precipitated violently towards the Mediterranean. The Nautilus went with the torrent, rapid as an arrow, in spite of the efforts of the machinery, which, in order to offer more effective resistance, beat the waves with reversed screw.

On the walls of the narrow passage I could see nothing but brilliant rays, straight lines, furrows of fire, traced by the great speed, under the brilliant electric light. My heart beat fast.

At thirty-five minutes past ten, Captain Nemo quitted the helm, and, turning to me, said:

“The Mediterranean!”

In less than twenty minutes, the Nautilus, carried along by the torrent, had passed through the Isthmus of Suez.
CHAPTER VI
The Grecian Archipelago

The next day, the 12th of February, at the dawn of day, the Nautilus rose to the surface. I hastened on to the platform. Three miles to the south the dim outline of Pelusium was to be seen. A torrent had carried us from one sea to another. About seven o’clock Ned and Conseil joined me.

“Well, Sir Naturalist,” said the Canadian, in a slightly jovial tone, “and the Mediterranean?”

“We are floating on its surface, friend Ned.”

“What!” said Conseil, “This very night.”

“Yes, this very night; in a few minutes we have passed this impassable isthmus.”

“I do not believe it,” replied the Canadian.

“Then you are wrong, Master Land,” I continued; “this low coast which rounds off to the south is the Egyptian coast. And you who have such good eyes, Ned, you can see the jetty of Port Said stretching into the sea.”

The Canadian looked attentively.

“Certainly you are right, sir, and your Captain is a first-rate man. We are in the Mediterranean. Good! Now, if you please, let us talk of our own little affair, but so that no one hears us.”

I saw what the Canadian wanted, and, in any case, I thought it better to let him talk, as he wished it; so we all three went and sat down near the lantern, where we were less exposed to the spray of the blades.

“Now, Ned, we listen; what have you to tell us?”

“What I have to tell you is very simple. We are in Europe; and before Captain Nemo’s caprices drag us once more to the bottom of the Polar Seas, or lead us into Oceania, I ask to leave the Nautilus.”

I wished in no way to shackle the liberty of my companions, but I certainly felt no desire to leave Captain Nemo.
Thanks to him, and thanks to his apparatus, I was each day nearer the completion of my submarine studies; and I was rewriting my book of submarine depths in its very element. Should I ever again have such an opportunity of observing the wonders of the ocean? No, certainly not! And I could not bring myself to the idea of abandoning the Nautilus before the cycle of investigation was accomplished.

“Friend Ned, answer me frankly, are you tired of being on board? Are you sorry that destiny has thrown us into Captain Nemo’s hands?”

The Canadian remained some moments without answering. Then, crossing his arms, he said:

“Frankly, I do not regret this journey under the seas. I shall be glad to have made it; but, now that it is made, let us have done with it. That is my idea.”

“It will come to an end, Ned.”

“Where and when?”

“Where I do not know—when I cannot say; or, rather, I suppose it will end when these seas have nothing more to teach us.”

“Then what do you hope for?” demanded the Canadian.

“That circumstances may occur as well six months hence as now by which we may and ought to profit.”

“Oh!” said Ned Land, “And where shall we be in six months, if you please, Sir Naturalist?”

“Perhaps in China; you know the Nautilus is a rapid traveler. It goes through water as swallows through the air, or as an express on the land. It does not fear frequented seas; who can say that it may not beat the coasts of France, England, or America, on which flight may be attempted as advantageously as here.”

“M. Aronnax,” replied the Canadian, “your arguments are rotten at the foundation. You speak in the future, ‘We shall be there! We shall be here!’ I speak in the present, ‘We are here, and we must profit by it.’”

Ned Land’s logic pressed me hard, and I felt myself beaten on that ground. I knew not what argument would now tell in my favor.
“Sir,” continued Ned, “let us suppose an impossibility: if Captain Nemo should this day offer you your liberty; would you accept it?”

“I do not know,” I answered.

“And if,” he added, “the offer made you this day was never to be renewed, would you accept it?”

“Friend Ned, this is my answer. Your reasoning is against me. We must not rely on Captain Nemo’s good-will. Common prudence forbids him to set us at liberty. On the other side, prudence bids us profit by the first opportunity to leave the Nautilus.”

“Well, M. Aronnax, that is wisely said.”

“Only one observation—just one. The occasion must be serious, and our first attempt must succeed; if it fails, we shall never find another, and Captain Nemo will never forgive us.”

“All that is true,” replied the Canadian. “But your observation applies equally to all attempts at flight, whether in two years’ time, or in two days’. But the question is still this: If a favorable opportunity presents itself, it must be seized.”

“Agreed! And now, Ned, will you tell me what you mean by a favorable opportunity?”

“It will be that which, on a dark night, will bring the Nautilus a short distance from some European coast.”

“And you will try and save yourself by swimming?”

“Yes, if we were near enough to the bank, and if the vessel was floating at the time. Not if the bank was far away, and the boat was under the water.”

“And in that case?”

“In that case, I should seek to make myself master of the pinnace. I know how it is worked. We must get inside, and the bolts once drawn, we shall come to the surface of the water, without even the pilot, who is in the bows, perceiving our flight.”

“Well, Ned, watch for the opportunity; but do not forget that a hitch will ruin us.”

“I will not forget, sir.”
“And now, Ned, would you like to know what I think of your project?”

“Certainly, M. Aronnax.”

“Well, I think—I do not say I hope—I think that this favorable opportunity will never present itself.”

“Why not?”

“Because Captain Nemo cannot hide from himself that we have not given up all hope of regaining our liberty, and he will be on his guard, above all, in the seas and in the sight of European coasts.”

“We shall see,” replied Ned Land, shaking his head determinedly.

“And now, Ned Land,” I added, “let us stop here. Not another word on the subject. The day that you are ready, come and let us know, and we will follow you. I rely entirely upon you.”

Thus ended a conversation which, at no very distant time, led to such grave results. I must say here that facts seemed to confirm my foresight, to the Canadian’s great despair. Did Captain Nemo distrust us in these frequented seas? or did he only wish to hide himself from the numerous vessels, of all nations, which ploughed the Mediterranean? I could not tell; but we were oftener between waters and far from the coast. Or, if the Nautilus did emerge, nothing was to be seen but the pilot’s cage; and sometimes it went to great depths, for, between the Grecian Archipelago and Asia Minor we could not touch the bottom by more than a thousand fathoms.

Thus I only knew we were near the Island of Carpathos, one of the Sporades, by Captain Nemo reciting these lines from Virgil:

“Est Carpathio Neptuni gurgite vates,
Caeruleus Proteus,”

as he pointed to a spot on the planisphere.

It was indeed the ancient abode of Proteus, the old shepherd of Neptune’s flocks, now the Island of Scarpanto, situated between
Rhodes and Crete. I saw nothing but the granite base through the glass panels of the saloon.

The next day, the 14th of February, I resolved to employ some hours in studying the fishes of the Archipelago; but for some reason or other the panels remained hermetically sealed. Upon taking the course of the *Nautilus*, I found that we were going towards Candia, the ancient Isle of Crete. At the time I embarked on the *Abraham Lincoln*, the whole of this island had risen in insurrection against the despotism of the Turks. But how the insurgents had fared since that time I was absolutely ignorant, and it was not Captain Nemo, deprived of all land communications, who could tell me.

I made no allusion to this event when that night I found myself alone with him in the saloon. Besides, he seemed to be taciturn and preoccupied. Then, contrary to his custom, he ordered both panels to be opened, and, going from one to the other, observed the mass of waters attentively. To what end I could not guess; so, on my side, I employed my time in studying the fish passing before my eyes.

In the midst of the waters a man appeared, a diver, carrying at his belt a leathern purse. It was not a body abandoned to the waves; it was a living man, swimming with a strong hand, disappearing occasionally to take breath at the surface.

I turned towards Captain Nemo, and in an agitated voice exclaimed:

“A man shipwrecked! He must be saved at any price!”

The Captain did not answer me, but came and leaned against the panel.

The man had approached, and, with his face flattened against the glass, was looking at us.

To my great amazement, Captain Nemo signed to him. The diver answered with his hand, mounted immediately to the surface of the water, and did not appear again.

“Do not be uncomfortable,” said Captain Nemo. “It is Nicholas of Cape Matapan, surnamed Pesca. He is well known in
all the Cyclades. A bold diver! Water is his element, and he lives more in it than on land, going continually from one island to another, even as far as Crete.”

“You know him, Captain?”

“Why not, M. Aronnax?”

Saying which, Captain Nemo went towards a piece of furniture standing near the left panel of the saloon. Near this piece of furniture, I saw a chest bound with iron, on the cover of which was a copper plate, bearing the cipher of the Nautilus with its device.

At that moment, the Captain, without noticing my presence, opened the piece of furniture, a sort of strong box, which held a great many ingots.

They were ingots of gold. From whence came this precious metal, which represented an enormous sum? Where did the Captain gather this gold from? and what was he going to do with it?

I did not say one word. I looked. Captain Nemo took the ingots one by one, and arranged them methodically in the chest, which he filled entirely. I estimated the contents at more than 4,000 lb. weight of gold, that is to say, nearly £200,000.

The chest was securely fastened, and the Captain wrote an address on the lid, in characters which must have belonged to Modern Greece.

This done, Captain Nemo pressed a knob, the wire of which communicated with the quarters of the crew. Four men appeared, and, not without some trouble, pushed the chest out of the saloon. Then I heard them hoisting it up the iron staircase by means of pulleys.

At that moment, Captain Nemo turned to me.

“And you were saying, sir?” said he.

“I was saying nothing, Captain.”

“Then, sir, if you will allow me, I will wish you good night.”

Whereupon he turned and left the saloon.

I returned to my room much troubled, as one may believe. I vainly tried to sleep—I sought the connecting link between the
apparition of the diver and the chest filled with gold. Soon, I felt by certain movements of pitching and tossing that the Nautilus was leaving the depths and returning to the surface.

Then I heard steps upon the platform; and I knew they were unfastening the pinnace and launching it upon the waves. For one instant it struck the side of the Nautilus, then all noise ceased.

Two hours after, the same noise, the same going and coming was renewed; the boat was hoisted on board, replaced in its socket, and the Nautilus again plunged under the waves.

So these millions had been transported to their address. To what point of the continent? Who was Captain Nemo’s correspondent?

The next day I related to Conseil and the Canadian the events of the night, which had excited my curiosity to the highest degree. My companions were not less surprised than myself.

“But where does he take his millions to?” asked Ned Land.

To that there was no possible answer. I returned to the saloon after having breakfast and set to work. Till five o’clock in the evening I employed myself in arranging my notes. At that moment—(ought I to attribute it to some peculiar idiosyncrasy)—I felt so great a heat that I was obliged to take off my coat.

It was strange, for we were under low latitudes; and even then the Nautilus, submerged as it was, ought to experience no change of temperature. I looked at the manometer; it showed a depth of sixty feet, to which atmospheric heat could never attain.

I continued my work, but the temperature rose to such a pitch as to be intolerable.

“Could there be fire on board?” I asked myself.

I was leaving the saloon, when Captain Nemo entered; he approached the thermometer, consulted it, and, turning to me, said:

“Forty-two degrees.”

“I have noticed it, Captain,” I replied; “and if it gets much hotter we cannot bear it.”

“Oh, sir, it will not get better if we do not wish it.”
“You can reduce it as you please, then?”
“No; but I can go farther from the stove which produces it.”
“It is outward, then!”
“Certainly; we are floating in a current of boiling water.”
“Is it possible!” I exclaimed.
“Look.”
The panels opened, and I saw the sea entirely white all round. A sulphurous smoke was curling amid the waves, which boiled like water in a copper. I placed my hand on one of the panes of glass, but the heat was so great that I quickly took it off again.
“Where are we?” I asked.
“Near the Island of Santorin, sir,” replied the Captain. “I wished to give you a sight of the curious spectacle of a submarine eruption.”
“I thought,” said I, “that the formation of these new islands was ended.”
“Nothing is ever ended in the volcanic parts of the sea,” replied Captain Nemo; “and the globe is always being worked by subterranean fires. Already, in the nineteenth year of our era, according to Cassiodorus and Pliny, a new island, Theia (the divine), appeared in the very place where these islets have recently been formed. Then they sank under the waves, to rise again in the year 69, when they again subsided. Since that time to our days the Plutonian work has been suspended. But on the 3rd of February, 1866, a new island, which they named George Island, emerged from the midst of the sulphurous vapor near Nea Kamenni, and settled again the 6th of the same month. Seven days after, the 13th of February, the Island of Aphroessa appeared, leaving between Nea Kamenni and itself a canal ten yards broad. I was in these seas when the phenomenon occurred, and I was able therefore to observe all the different phases. The Island of Aphroessa, of round form, measured 300 feet in diameter, and 30 feet in height. It was composed of black and vitreous lava, mixed with fragments of feldspar. And lastly, on the 10th of March, a smaller island, called Reka, showed itself near Nea Kamenni, and since then these three..."
have joined together, forming but one and the same island.”

“And the canal in which we are at this moment?” I asked.

“Here it is,” replied Captain Nemo, showing me a map of the Archipelago. “You see, I have marked the new islands.”

I returned to the glass. The *Nautilus* was no longer moving, the heat was becoming unbearable. The sea, which till now had been white, was red, owing to the presence of salts of iron. In spite of the ship’s being hermetically sealed, an insupportable smell of sulphur filled the saloon, and the brilliancy of the electricity was entirely extinguished by bright scarlet flames. I was in a bath, I was choking, I was broiled.

“We can remain no longer in this boiling water,” said I to the Captain.

“It would not be prudent,” replied the impassive Captain Nemo.

An order was given; the *Nautilus* tacked about and left the furnace it could not brave with impunity. A quarter of an hour after we were breathing fresh air on the surface. The thought then struck me that, if Ned Land had chosen this part of the sea for our flight, we should never have come alive out of this sea of fire.

The next day, the 16th of February, we left the basin which, between Rhodes and Alexandria, is reckoned about 1,500 fathoms in depth, and the *Nautilus*, passing some distance from Cerigo, quitted the Grecian Archipelago after having doubled Cape Matapan.
CHAPTER VII

The Mediterranean in Forty-eight Hours

The Mediterranean, the blue sea par excellence, “the great sea” of the Hebrews, “the sea” of the Greeks, the “mare nostrum” of the Romans, bordered by orange-trees, aloes, cacti, and sea-pines; embalmed with the perfume of the myrtle, surrounded by rude mountains, saturated with pure and transparent air, but incessantly worked by underground fires; a perfect battlefield in which Neptune and Pluto still dispute the empire of the world!

It is upon these banks, and on these waters, says Michelet, that man is renewed in one of the most powerful climates of the globe. But, beautiful as it was, I could only take a rapid glance at the basin whose superficial area is two million of square yards. Even Captain Nemo’s knowledge was lost to me, for this puzzling person did not appear once during our passage at full speed. I estimated the course which the Nautilus took under the waves of the sea at about six hundred leagues, and it was accomplished in forty-eight hours. Starting on the morning of the 16th of February from the shores of Greece, we had crossed the Straits of Gibraltar by sunrise on the 18th.

It was plain to me that this Mediterranean, enclosed in the midst of those countries which he wished to avoid, was distasteful to Captain Nemo. Those waves and those breezes brought back too many remembrances, if not too many regrets. Here he had no longer that independence and that liberty of gait which he had when in the open seas, and his Nautilus felt itself cramped between the close shores of Africa and Europe.

Our speed was now twenty-five miles an hour. It may be well understood that Ned Land, to his great disgust, was obliged to renounce his intended flight. He could not launch the pinnace, going at the rate of twelve or thirteen yards every second. To quit the Nautilus under such conditions would be as bad as jumping from a train going at full speed—an imprudent thing, to say the
least of it. Besides, our vessel only mounted to the surface of the waves at night to renew its stock of air; it was steered entirely by the compass and the log.

I saw no more of the interior of this Mediterranean than a traveler by express train perceives of the landscape which flies before his eyes; that is to say, the distant horizon, and not the nearer objects which pass like a flash of lightning.

We were then passing between Sicily and the coast of Tunis. In the narrow space between Cape Bon and the Straits of Messina the bottom of the sea rose almost suddenly. There was a perfect bank, on which there was not more than nine fathoms of water, whilst on either side the depth was ninety fathoms.

The Nautilus had to maneuver very carefully so as not to strike against this submarine barrier.

I showed Conseil, on the map of the Mediterranean, the spot occupied by this reef.

“But if you please, sir,” observed Conseil, “it is like a real isthmus joining Europe to Africa.”

“Yes, my boy, it forms a perfect bar to the Straits of Lybia, and the soundings of Smith have proved that in former times the continents between Cape Boco and Cape Furina were joined.”

“I can well believe it,” said Conseil.

“I will add,” I continued, “that a similar barrier exists between Gibraltar and Ceuta, which in geological times formed the entire Mediterranean.”

“What if some volcanic burst should one day raise these two barriers above the waves?”

“It is not probable, Conseil.”

“Well, but allow me to finish, please, sir; if this phenomenon should take place, it will be troublesome for M. Lesseps, who has taken so much pains to pierce the isthmus.”

“I agree with you; but I repeat, Conseil, this phenomenon will never happen. The violence of subterranean force is ever diminishing. Volcanoes, so plentiful in the first days of the world, are being extinguished by degrees; the internal heat is weakened, the tem-
perature of the lower strata of the globe is lowered by a perceptible quantity every century to the detriment of our globe, for its heat is its life.”

“But the sun?”

“The sun is not sufficient, Conseil. Can it give heat to a dead body?”

“Not that I know of.”

“Well, my friend, this earth will one day be that cold corpse; it will become uninhabitable and uninhabited like the moon, which has long since lost all its vital heat.”

“In how many centuries?”

“In some hundreds of thousands of years, my boy.”

“Then,” said Conseil, “we shall have time to finish our journey—that is, if Ned Land does not interfere with it.”

And Conseil, reassured, returned to the study of the bank, which the *Nautilus* was skirting at a moderate speed.

During the night of the 16th and 17th February we had entered the second Mediterranean basin, the greatest depth of which was 1,450 fathoms. The *Nautilus*, by the action of its crew, slid down the inclined planes and buried itself in the lowest depths of the sea.

On the 18th of February, about three o’clock in the morning, we were at the entrance of the Straits of Gibraltar. There once existed two currents: an upper one, long since recognized, which conveys the waters of the ocean into the basin of the Mediterranean; and a lower counter-current, which reasoning has now shown to exist. Indeed, the volume of water in the Mediterranean, incessantly added to by the waves of the Atlantic and by rivers falling into it, would each year raise the level of this sea, for its evaporation is not sufficient to restore the equilibrium. As it is not so, we must necessarily admit the existence of an under-current, which empties into the basin of the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar the surplus waters of the Mediterranean. A fact indeed; and it was this counter-current by which the *Nautilus* profited. It advanced rapidly by the narrow
pass. For one instant I caught a glimpse of the beautiful ruins of
the temple of Hercules, buried in the ground, according to Pliny,
and with the low island which supports it; and a few minutes later
we were floating on the Atlantic.
CHAPTER VIII

Vigo Bay

The Atlantic! A vast sheet of water whose superficial area covers twenty-five millions of square miles, the length of which is nine thousand miles, with a mean breadth of two thousand seven hundred—an ocean whose parallel winding shores embrace an immense circumference, watered by the largest rivers of the world, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Amazon, the Plata, the Orinoco, the Niger, the Senegal, the Elbe, the Loire, and the Rhine, which carry water from the most civilized, as well as from the most savage, countries! Magnificent field of water, incessantly ploughed by vessels of every nation, sheltered by the flags of every nation, and which terminates in those two terrible points so dreaded by mariners, Cape Horn and the Cape of Tempests.

The *Nautilus* was piercing the water with its sharp spur, after having accomplished nearly ten thousand leagues in three months and a half, a distance greater than the great circle of the earth. Where were we going now, and what was reserved for the future? The *Nautilus*, leaving the Straits of Gibraltar, had gone far out. It returned to the surface of the waves, and our daily walks on the platform were restored to us.

I mounted at once, accompanied by Ned Land and Conseil. At a distance of about twelve miles, Cape St. Vincent was dimly to be seen, forming the south-western point of the Spanish peninsula. A strong southerly gale was blowing. The sea was swollen and billowy; it made the *Nautilus* rock violently. It was almost impossible to keep one’s foot on the platform, which the heavy rolls of the sea beat over every instant. So we descended after inhaling some mouthfuls of fresh air.

I returned to my room, Conseil to his cabin; but the Canadian, with a preoccupied air, followed me. Our rapid passage across the Mediterranean had not allowed him to put his project into execution, and he could not help showing his disappoint-
When the door of my room was shut, he sat down and looked at me silently.

“Friend Ned,” said I, “I understand you; but you cannot reproach yourself. To have attempted to leave the *Nautilus* under the circumstances would have been folly.”

Ned Land did not answer; his compressed lips and frowning brow showed with him the violent possession this fixed idea had taken of his mind.

“Let us see,” I continued; “we need not despair yet. We are going up the coast of Portugal again; France and England are not far off, where we can easily find refuge. Now if the *Nautilus*, on leaving the Straits of Gibraltar, had gone to the south, if it had carried us towards regions where there were no continents, I should share your uneasiness. But we know now that Captain Nemo does not fly from civilized seas, and in some days I think you can act with security.”

Ned Land still looked at me fixedly; at length his fixed lips parted, and he said, “It is for tonight.”

I drew myself up suddenly. I was, I admit, little prepared for this communication. I wanted to answer the Canadian, but words would not come.

“We agreed to wait for an opportunity,” continued Ned Land, “and the opportunity has arrived. This night we shall be but a few miles from the Spanish coast. It is cloudy. The wind blows freely. I have your word, M. Aronnax, and I rely upon you.”

As I was silent, the Canadian approached me.

“Tonight, at nine o’clock,” said he. “I have warned Conseil. At that moment Captain Nemo will be shut up in his room, probably in bed. Neither the engineers nor the ship’s crew can see us. Conseil and I will gain the central staircase, and you, M. Aronnax, will remain in the library, two steps from us, waiting my signal. The oars, the mast, and the sail are in the canoe. I have even succeeded in getting some provisions. I have procured an English wrench, to unfasten the bolts which attach it to the shell of the *Nautilus*. So all is ready, till tonight.”
“The sea is bad.”

“That I allow,” replied the Canadian; “but we must risk that. Liberty is worth paying for; besides, the boat is strong, and a few miles with a fair wind to carry us is no great thing. Who knows but by tomorrow we may be a hundred leagues away? Let circumstances only favor us, and by ten or eleven o’clock we shall have landed on some spot of terra firma, alive or dead. But adieu now till tonight.”

With these words the Canadian withdrew, leaving me almost dumb. I had imagined that, the chance gone, I should have time to reflect and discuss the matter. My obstinate companion had given me no time; and, after all, what could I have said to him? Ned Land was perfectly right. There was almost the opportunity to profit by. Could I retract my word, and take upon myself the responsibility of compromising the future of my companions? Tomorrow Captain Nemo might take us far from all land.

At that moment a rather loud hissing noise told me that the reservoirs were filling, and that the *Nautilus* was sinking under the waves of the Atlantic.

A sad day I passed, between the desire of regaining my liberty of action and of abandoning the wonderful *Nautilus*, and leaving my submarine studies incomplete.

What dreadful hours I passed thus! Sometimes seeing myself and companions safely landed, sometimes wishing, in spite of my reason, that some unforeseen circumstance, would prevent the realization of Ned Land’s project.

Twice I went to the saloon. I wished to consult the compass. I wished to see if the direction the *Nautilus* was taking was bringing us nearer or taking us farther from the coast. But no; the *Nautilus* kept in Portuguese waters.

I must therefore take my part and prepare for flight. My luggage was not heavy; my notes, nothing more.

As to Captain Nemo, I asked myself what he would think of our escape; what trouble, what wrong it might cause him and what he might do in case of its discovery or failure. Certainly I had no
cause to complain of him; on the contrary, never was hospitality freer than his. In leaving him I could not be taxed with ingratitude. No oath bound us to him. It was on the strength of circumstances he relied, and not upon our word, to fix us forever.

I had not seen the Captain since our visit to the Island of Santorin. Would chance bring me to his presence before our departure? I wished it, and I feared it at the same time. I listened if I could hear him walking the room contiguous to mine. No sound reached my ear. I felt an unbearable uneasiness. This day of waiting seemed eternal. Hours struck too slowly to keep pace with my impatience.

My dinner was served in my room as usual. I ate but little; I was too preoccupied. I left the table at seven o’clock. A hundred and twenty minutes (I counted them) still separated me from the moment in which I was to join Ned Land. My agitation redoubled. My pulse beat violently. I could not remain quiet. I went and came, hoping to calm my troubled spirit by constant movement. The idea of failure in our bold enterprise was the least painful of my anxieties; but the thought of seeing our project discovered before leaving the Nautilus, of being brought before Captain Nemo, irritated, or (what was worse) saddened, at my desertion, made my heart beat.

I wanted to see the saloon for the last time. I descended the stairs and arrived in the museum, where I had passed so many useful and agreeable hours. I looked at all its riches, all its treasures, like a man on the eve of an eternal exile, who was leaving never to return.

These wonders of Nature, these masterpieces of art, amongst which for so many days my life had been concentrated, I was going to abandon them forever! I should like to have taken a last look through the windows of the saloon into the waters of the Atlantic: but the panels were hermetically closed, and a cloak of steel separated me from that ocean which I had not yet explored.

In passing through the saloon, I came near the door let into the angle which opened into the Captain’s room. To my great sur-
prise, this door was ajar. I drew back involuntarily. If Captain Nemo should be in his room, he could see me. But, hearing no sound, I drew nearer. The room was deserted. I pushed open the door and took some steps forward. Still the same monklike severity of aspect.

Suddenly the clock struck eight. The first beat of the hammer on the bell awoke me from my dreams. I trembled as if an invisible eye had plunged into my most secret thoughts, and I hurried from the room.

There my eye fell upon the compass. Our course was still north. The log indicated moderate speed, the manometer a depth of about sixty feet.

I returned to my room, clothed myself warmly—sea boots, an otterskin cap, a great coat of byssus, lined with sealskin; I was ready, I was waiting. The vibration of the screw alone broke the deep silence which reigned on board. I listened attentively. Would no loud voice suddenly inform me that Ned Land had been surprised in his projected flight. A mortal dread hung over me, and I vainly tried to regain my accustomed coolness.

At a few minutes to nine, I put my ear to the Captain’s door. No noise. I left my room and returned to the saloon, which was half in obscurity, but deserted.

I opened the door communicating with the library. The same insufficient light, the same solitude. I placed myself near the door leading to the central staircase, and there waited for Ned Land’s signal.

At that moment the trembling of the screw sensibly diminished, then it stopped entirely. The silence was now only disturbed by the beatings of my own heart. Suddenly a slight shock was felt; and I knew that the Nautilus had stopped at the bottom of the ocean. My uneasiness increased. The Canadian’s signal did not come. I felt inclined to join Ned Land and beg of him to put off his attempt. I felt that we were not sailing under our usual conditions.
At this moment the door of the large saloon opened, and Captain Nemo appeared. He saw me, and without further preamble began in an amiable tone of voice:

“Ah, sir! I have been looking for you. Do you know the history of Spain?”

Now, one might know the history of one’s own country by heart; but in the condition I was at the time, with troubled mind and head quite lost, I could not have said a word of it.

“Well,” continued Captain Nemo, “you heard my question! Do you know the history of Spain?”

“Very slightly,” I answered.

“Well, here are learned men having to learn,” said the Captain. “Come, sit down, and I will tell you a curious episode in this history. Sir, listen well,” said he; “this history will interest you on one side, for it will answer a question which doubtless you have not been able to solve.”

“I listen, Captain,” said I, not knowing what my interlocutor was driving at, and asking myself if this incident was bearing on our projected flight.

“Sir, if you have no objection, we will go back to 1702. You cannot be ignorant that your king, Louis XIV, thinking that the gesture of a potentate was sufficient to bring the Pyrenees under his yoke, had imposed the Duke of Anjou, his grandson, on the Spaniards. This prince reigned more or less badly under the name of Philip V, and had a strong party against him abroad. Indeed, the preceding year, the royal houses of Holland, Austria, and England had concluded a treaty of alliance at the Hague, with the intention of plucking the crown of Spain from the head of Philip V, and placing it on that of an archduke to whom they prematurely gave the title of Charles III.

“Spain must resist this coalition; but she was almost entirely unprovided with either soldiers or sailors. However, money would not fail them, provided that their galleons, laden with gold and silver from America, once entered their ports. And about the end of 1702 they expected a rich convoy which France was escorting with
a fleet of twenty-three vessels, commanded by Admiral Chateau-Renaud, for the ships of the coalition were already beating the Atlantic. This convoy was to go to Cadiz, but the Admiral, hearing that an English fleet was cruising in those waters, resolved to make for a French port.

“The Spanish commanders of the convoy objected to this decision. They wanted to be taken to a Spanish port, and, if not to Cadiz, into Vigo Bay, situated on the northwest coast of Spain, and which was not blocked.

“Admiral Chateau-Renaud had the rashness to obey this injunction, and the galleons entered Vigo Bay.

“Un fortunately, it formed an open road which could not be defended in any way. They must therefore hasten to unload the galleons before the arrival of the combined fleet; and time would not have failed them had not a miserable question of rivalry suddenly arisen.

“You are following the chain of events?” asked Captain Nemo.

“Perfectly,” said I, not knowing the end proposed by this historical lesson.

“I will continue. This is what passed. The merchants of Cadiz had a privilege by which they had the right of receiving all merchandise coming from the West Indies. Now, to disembark these ingots at the port of Vigo was depriving them of their rights. They complained at Madrid, and obtained the consent of the weak-minded Philip that the convoy, without discharging its cargo, should remain sequestered in the roads of Vigo until the enemy had disappeared.

“But whilst coming to this decision, on the 22nd of October, 1702, the English vessels arrived in Vigo Bay, when Admiral Chateau-Renaud, in spite of inferior forces, fought bravely. But, seeing that the treasure must fall into the enemy’s hands, he burnt and scuttled every galleon, which went to the bottom with their immense riches.”

Captain Nemo stopped. I admit I could not see yet why this history should interest me.
“Well?” I asked.

“Well, M. Aronnax,” replied Captain Nemo, “we are in that Vigo Bay; and it rests with yourself whether you will penetrate its mysteries.”

The Captain rose, telling me to follow him. I had had time to recover. I obeyed. The saloon was dark, but through the transparent glass the waves were sparkling. I looked.

For half a mile around the Nautilus, the waters seemed bathed in electric light. The sandy bottom was clean and bright. Some of the ship’s crew in their diving-dresses were clearing away half-rotten barrels and empty cases from the midst of the blackened wrecks. From these cases and from these barrels escaped ingots of gold and silver, cascades of piastres and jewels. The sand was heaped up with them. Laden with their precious booty, the men returned to the Nautilus, disposed of their burden, and went back to this inexhaustible fishery of gold and silver.

I understood now. This was the scene of the battle of the 22nd of October, 1702. Here on this very spot the galleons laden for the Spanish Government had sunk. Here Captain Nemo came, according to his wants, to pack up those millions with which he burdened the Nautilus. It was for him and him alone America had given up her precious metals. He was heir direct, without anyone to share, in those treasures torn from the Incas and from the conquered of Ferdinand Cortez.

“Did you know, sir,” he asked, smiling, “that the sea contained such riches?”

“I knew,” I answered, “that they value money held in suspension in these waters at two millions.”

“Doubtless; but to extract this money the expense would be greater than the profit. Here, on the contrary, I have but to pick up what man has lost—and not only in Vigo Bay, but in a thousand other ports where shipwrecks have happened, and which are marked on my submarine map. Can you understand now the source of the millions I am worth?”
“I understand, Captain. But allow me to tell you that in exploring Vigo Bay you have only been beforehand with a rival society.”

“And which?”

“A society which has received from the Spanish Government the privilege of seeking those buried galleons. The shareholders are led on by the allurement of an enormous bounty, for they value these rich shipwrecks at five hundred millions.”

“Five hundred millions they were,” answered Captain Nemo, “but they are so no longer.”

“Just so,” said I; “and a warning to those shareholders would be an act of charity. But who knows if it would be well received? What gamblers usually regret above all is less the loss of their money than of their foolish hopes. After all, I pity them less than the thousands of unfortunates to whom so much riches well-distributed would have been profitable, whilst for them they will be forever barren.”

I had no sooner expressed this regret than I felt that it must have wounded Captain Nemo.

“Barren!” he exclaimed, with animation. “Do you think then, sir, that these riches are lost because I gather them? Is it for myself alone, according to your idea, that I take the trouble to collect these treasures? Who told you that I did not make a good use of it? Do you think I am ignorant that there are suffering beings and oppressed races on this earth, miserable creatures to console, victims to avenge? Do you not understand?”

Captain Nemo stopped at these last words, regretting perhaps that he had spoken so much. But I had guessed that, whatever the motive which had forced him to seek independence under the sea, it had left him still a man, that his heart still beat for the sufferings of humanity, and that his immense charity was for oppressed races as well as individuals. And I then understood for whom those millions were destined which were forwarded by Captain Nemo when the Nautilus was cruising in the waters of Crete.