

中文导读英文版

凡尔纳科幻小说系列

Two Year's Holiday

两年假期

[法] 儒勒·凡尔纳 原著

王勋 纪飞 等 编译

清华大学出版社



(中 文 导 读 英 文 版)

凡尔纳科幻小说系列

Two Year's Holiday

两年假期

[法] 儒勒·凡尔纳 原著

王勋 纪飞 等 编译

清华大学出版社

北京

内 容 简 介

Two Year's Holiday, 中文译名为《两年假期》, 这是一部充满传奇与冒险的著作, 它由法国著名作家、“现代科幻小说之父”儒勒·凡尔纳编著。

故事讲述的是, 在一年的学习结束时, 来自新西兰某寄宿学校的一群学生将要开始一次为期几天的航海旅行。然而, 当孩子们半夜惊醒时发现, 他们的船已经漂流在浩瀚的海面上, 原来在出发前夜游船的缆绳断裂了。海面风浪大作, 而船上既没有船长, 也没有水手, 危险、恐惧、绝望和孤独笼罩着整个游船。船随海浪漂流停靠在一座荒无人烟的小岛上, 虽然身处艰难境地, 但孩子们还是凭着热情、理性和勇气, 最终摆脱了困境回到自己的家人身边。故事情节跌宕起伏, 而一路有关自然风光的介绍也同样引人入胜。

该书至今已译成世界上多种文字。书中所展现的神奇故事伴随了一代又一代人的美丽童年、少年直至成年。无论作为语言学习的课本, 还是作为通俗的文学和科学读本, 本书对当代中国的青少年都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况, 进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平, 在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。

本书封面贴有清华大学出版社防伪标签, 无标签者不得销售。

版权所有, 侵权必究。侵权举报电话: 010-62782989 13701121933

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

两年假期=Two Year's Holiday: 中文导读英文版/(法)凡尔纳(Verne, J.), 原著;
王勋等编译. —北京: 清华大学出版社, 2009.4

(凡尔纳科幻小说系列)

ISBN 978-7-302-19564-1

I. 两… II. ①凡… ②王… III. ①英语—语言读物 ②科学幻想小说—法国—近代 IV. H319.4: I

责任编辑: 李 晔

插图绘制: 王 轲

责任校对: 焦丽丽

责任印制: 李红英

出版发行: 清华大学出版社

地 址: 北京清华大学学研大厦 A 座

<http://www.tup.com.cn>

邮 编: 100084

社 总 机: 010-62770175

邮 购: 010-62786544

投稿与读者服务: 010-62776969, c-service@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

质 量 反 馈: 010-62772015, zhiliang@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

印 刷 者: 清华大学印刷厂

装 订 者: 三河市李旗庄少明装订厂

经 销: 全国新华书店

开 本: 170×260 印 张: 19.75 字 数: 334 千字

版 次: 2009 年 4 月第 1 版 印 次: 2009 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

印 数: 1~5000

定 价: 33.00 元

本书如存在文字不清、漏印、缺页、倒页、脱页等印装质量问题, 请与清华大学出版社出版部联系调换。联系电话: (010)62770177 转 3103 产品编号: 031494-01



儒勒·凡尔纳（Jules Verne, 1828—1905），法国著名作家，现代科幻小说的奠基人，被誉为“科幻小说之父”。凡尔纳一生共创作了六十多部充满神奇与浪漫的科幻小说，其代表作有《气球上的五星期》、《地心游记》、《从地球到月球》、《海底两万里》、《八十天周游世界》、《格兰特船长的儿女》和《神秘岛》等，这些小说被译成世界上几十种文字，并多次被搬上银幕，在世界上广为流传。

儒勒·凡尔纳于 1828 年 2 月 8 日出生在法国西部海港南特。自幼热爱海洋，向往远航探险。他的父亲是一位事业成功的律师，并希望凡尔纳日后也以律师作为职业。18 岁时，他遵从父训到首都巴黎攻读法律。可是他对法律毫无兴趣，却爱上了文学和戏剧。1863 年，他发表第一部科幻小说《气球上的五星期》，之后又出版了使他获得巨大声誉的科幻三部曲：《格兰特船长的儿女》、《海底两万里》和《神秘岛》。凡尔纳的科幻小说是真实性与大胆幻想的结合：奇幻的故事情节、鲜明的人物形象、丰富而奇妙的想象，浓郁的浪漫主义风格和生活情趣，使之产生了巨大的艺术魅力，赢得了全球各种肤色人们，特别是青少年读者的喜爱。他的作品中所表现的自然科学方面的许多预言和假设，在他去世之后得以印证和实现，至今仍然启发人们的想象力和创造力。总的说来，凡尔纳的小说有两大特点。第一，他的作品是丰富的幻想和科学知识的结合。虽然凡尔纳笔下的幻想极为奇特、大胆，但其中有着坚实的科学基础，这些作品既是科学精神的幻想曲，也是富有幻想色彩的科学预言，他的许多科幻猜想最后变成了现实。例如，他不仅在小说《从地球到月球》中用大炮将探月飞行器送上太空，甚至还将发射场安排在了美国佛罗里达州，这正是“阿波罗登月计划”的发射场，他在小说《海底两万里》中虚构了“鹦鹉螺号”潜水艇，在该小说出版 10 年后，第一艘真正的潜水艇才下水；在《征服者罗比尔》中有一个类似直升飞机的飞行器，数十年后，人类才将这一设想变成了现实。



此外，他的小说中还出现了电视、霓虹灯、导弹、坦克和太空飞船等科学技术应用概念，而这些后来都变成了现实。第二，他的作品中的主人公是一些鲜明、生动而富有进取心和正义感的人物，他们或是地理发现者、探险家、科学家、发明家，他们具有超人的智慧、坚强的毅力和执着不懈的精神；或是反对民族歧视、民族压迫的战士，反对社会不公的抗争者，追求自由的旅行家，在他们身上具有反压迫、反强权、反传统的战斗精神，他们热爱自由、热爱平等，维护人的尊严。凡尔纳所塑造的这些人物形象，他们远大的理想、坚强的性格、优秀的品质和高尚的情操已赢得了亿万读者的喜爱和尊敬，并一直成为人们向往的偶像和学习的榜样。

1900年，儒勒·凡尔纳的第一部中译本小说《八十天周游世界》（当时的中文译名是《八十日环游记》）被介绍给中国的读者，直至新中国成立之前，陆续又有梁启超、鲁迅等文化名人将凡尔纳的作品翻译出版。20世纪50年代后期，凡尔纳的科幻小说又开始为国内翻译界和出版界所关注，并在新中国读者面前重新显示了科幻小说旺盛的生命力。20世纪80年代，凡尔纳的作品再次受到读者的青睐，国内许多出版社相继翻译出版了凡尔纳的科幻小说，一时形成了“凡尔纳热”。

目前，国内已出版的凡尔纳小说的形式主要有两种：一种是中文翻译版，另一种是中英文对照版。而其中的中英文对照读本比较受读者的欢迎，这主要是得益于中国人热衷于学习英文的大环境。而从英文学习的角度上来看，直接使用纯英文的学习资料更有利于英语学习。考虑到对英文内容背景的了解有助于英文阅读，使用中文导读应该是一种比较好的方式，也可以说是该类型书的第三种版本形式。采用中文导读而非中英文对照的方式进行编排，这样有利于国内读者摆脱对英文阅读依赖中文注释的习惯。基于以上原因，我们决定编译凡尔纳系列科幻小说中的经典，其中包括《气球上的五星期》、《地心游记》、《从地球到月球》、《环游月球》、《海底两万里》、《八十天周游世界》、《格兰特船长的儿女》、《神秘岛》、《沙皇的信使》、《隐身新娘》、《无名之家》、《征服者罗比尔》、《大臣号幸存者》、《亚马逊漂流记》、《太阳系历险记》、《两年假期》和《测量子午线》等，并采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作风格。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。我们相信，这些经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的科学素养和人文修养是非常有帮



助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、左新杲、黄福成、冯洁、徐鑫、马启龙、王业伟、王旭敏、陈楠、王多多、邵舒丽、周丽萍、王晓旭、李永振、孟宪行、熊红华、胡国平、熊建国、徐平国、王小红等。限于我们的文学素养和英语水平，书中难免不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



第一章	风暴/Chapter 1	The Storm	1
第二章	失事船的残骸/Chapter 2	The Wreck	11
第三章	海中漂流/Chapter 3	Cast Adrift	21
第四章	岸上的第一天/Chapter 4	The First Day Ashore	29
第五章	从海角观看/Chapter 5	The View From the Cape	38
第六章	连续下雨/Chapter 6	A Spell of Rain	48
第七章	征途/Chapter 7	The Explorers	59
第八章	洞穴/Chapter 8	The Cave	69
第九章	弗朗可斯·包尹/Chapter 9	Francois Bauoin	77
第十章	筏子/Chapter 10	The Raft	87
第十一章	猎物/Chapter 11	A Capture	99
第十二章	殖民地/Chapter 12	The Colony	108
第十三章	冬季/Chapter 13	Winter Quarters	122
第十四章	北征/Chapter 14	A Journey Northwards	135
第十五章	太好了, 巴克斯特! /Chapter 15	Bravo, Baxter!	145
第十六章	捕猎海豹/Chapter 16	The Seal Hunt	157
第十七章	横渡大湖/Chapter 17	Across the Lake	170
第十八章	新的地方长官/Chapter 18	The New Governor	183
第十九章	冰面上的险情/Chapter 19	A Skating Adventure	194
第二十章	决裂/Chapter 20	Splitting up	206
第二十一章	海滩上的船/Chapter 21	The Boat on the Beach	214
第二十二章	入侵/Chapter 22	The Invasion	224
第二十三章	在一起/Chapter 23	All Together	237
第二十四章	风筝的尾巴/Chapter 24	A Tail of a Kite	246
第二十五章	敌人来了/Chapter 25	The Enemy in Sight	258
第二十六章	大胆逃脱/Chapter 26	A Daring Escape	267
第二十七章	棋逢对手/Chapter 27	Diamond Cut Diamond	278
第二十八章	战果/Chapter 28	The Fortune of War	288
第二十九章	再次出海/Chapter 29	Afloat Once More	297
第三十章	回家/Chapter 30	Home!	305

第一章 风 暴

Chapter 1 The Storm



斯鲁吉号船在一八六零年三月九号夜里十一点，出现在波涛汹涌的苍茫大海上。船尾站着一个十四岁和两个十三岁的孩子。十二岁的黑人见习水手在掌舵。船的颠簸把他们摔倒在甲板上，他们马上又爬了起来。

这时，通往纵帆船客厅的门被两个小孩打开了，传来了一阵狗叫，他们待在下面害怕极了，问出了什么事。十四岁的布里昂告诉他们没事，让他回到船舱去。这时，又一个孩子从楼梯口钻出来问是否需要帮忙。布里昂让他回去了。

现在这条船上有十四名寄宿学校的学生，最大的十四岁，还有一名十二岁的见习水手。斯鲁吉号船的前桅已经折断了，风帆也只剩下前桅帆。他们正在这无边无际的大海上顺风航行。

这时，前桅被扯裂了。在从欧洲到大洋洲的旅行中略知航海知识的布里昂成了船上的指挥。他和见习水手莫科冲向船艏，清理了前桅帆的碎片，处理了这个险情，使船沿着原来的航向继续前进。

比布里昂小三岁的弟弟雅克告诉哥哥，客厅进水了。布里昂下到客厅发现几个年龄小的孩子吓得挤在一起。在安慰了他们后，布里昂提着灯检查，发现水是从船头甲板的舱房顶上渗下来的，对船没有危险。他回到客厅，安慰了小伙伴后又来到甲板上。

一个小时后，前桅帆被撕成碎片飘走了。莫科提醒他们注意后浪，话音还没落，一股浪从后面打过来，布里昂、多尼范和戈登被抛到了楼梯口，而见习水手不见了。他们马上朝海里张望，准备救他。这时听到船艏传来

求救声，布里昂匍匐着爬到船艏，发现莫科被夹在舷墙与船艏的夹角中，一条绳索勒住了他的脖子，情况十分危急。布里昂用小刀割断了套在莫科脖子上的绳索，莫科恢复了说话的力气后对他表示了感谢。

四点半时，天已微亮，他们已能看到四分之一海里的范围。莫科在东方发现了陆地，布里昂确认在五六海里外的地方是有一片陆地。船向那个方向漂去，再过不到一个小时，他们就会漂到那里。

在这个时候，风刮得更猛烈了，斯鲁吉号飞速向海岸漂去。布里昂想，在船搁浅时最好让全体伙伴都在甲板上，于是他把大家都叫了上来。快六点时，游船到达岩礁的边缘，船尾触底了。又一个风浪打来，船又向前了五十尺，在离海岸四分之一海里处不动了。

*I*t was March 9th, 1860, and eleven at night. The sea and sky were as one, and the eye could pierce only a few fathoms into the gloom: Through raging seas, whose waves broke with a livid light, a tiny ship was driving under almost bare poles.

She was a schooner of a hundred tons. Her name was the Sleuth, but it would have been sought in vain on her stem, for some accident had torn it away.

In this latitude, at the beginning of March, the nights are short. The day would dawn about five. But would the dangers that threatened the schooner grow less when the sun illumined the sky? Was. not this vessel at the mercy of the waves? Undoubtedly; and only the calming of the billows and the lulling of the gale could save her from that most awful of shipwrecks foundering in the open sea far from any coast where the survivors might find safety.

In her stem were three boys, one about fourteen, the two others about thirteen years of age; these, with a young negro some twelve years old, were at the wheel, and with their united strength they strove to check the lurches which threatened every instant to throw the vessel broadside on. It was a difficult task, for the wheel seemed as though it would turn in spite of all they could do, and hurl them against the bulwarks. Just before midnight such a wave came thundering against the stern that it was a wonder the redder was not unshipped.

The boys were thrown backwards by the shock, but they recovered themselves almost immediately.

‘Has she still got steerage way, Briant?’ one of them asked.

‘Yes, Gordon,’ answered Briant, who had coolly resumed his place. ‘Hold on tight, Donagan,’ he continued, ‘and don’t worry. There are others besides ourselves to look after. You aren’t hurt, Moko?’

‘No, Massa Briant,’ answered the boy. ‘But we must keep the yacht before the wind, or we’ll be pooped.’

At this moment the door of the companion leading to the saloon was thrown open. Two little heads appeared above the level of the deck, and with them came the face of a dog, who gave a loud, ‘Whough! whough!’

‘Briant! Briant!’ shouted one of the youngsters. ‘What’s the matter?’

‘Nothing, Iverson, nothing!’ returned Briant. ‘Get down again with Dole, and look sharp!’

‘We’re awfully frightened down here,’ said the other boy, who was a little younger.

‘All of you?’ asked Donagan.

‘Yes, all of us!’ said Dole.

‘Well, get back again,’ Briant told them. ‘Shut up; get under the bed-clothes; shut your eyes; and nothing will hurt you. There’s no danger!’

‘Look out,’ exclaimed Moko. ‘Here’s another wave!’

A violent blow shook the vessel’s stem. Fortunately the wave did not come on board, for if the water had swept down the companion, she would have been swamped.

‘Get back, will you?’ shouted Gordon. ‘GO down, or I’ll come after you!’

‘Look here,’ Briant told them, rather more gently. ‘Go down. you young uns.’

The two heads disappeared, and at the same moment another boy appeared.

‘Do you want us, Briant?’

‘No, Baxter,’ said Briant. ‘You and Cross and Webb and Service and Wilcox stop with the kids; we four can manage.’

Baxter shut the door from within.

‘Yes, all of us,’ Dole had said.

But were there only boys on board this storm-driven schooner? Yes, only boys! And how many were there? Fifteen, counting Gordon, Briant, Donagan, and the negro. How did they come to be here? That you shall know shortly.

Was there no man on the yacht? Not a captain to command her? Not a sailor to give a hand in controlling her? Not a helmsman to steer in such a storm? No! Not one!

And more than that—there was nobody on board who knew her position! And on what ocean? The largest of all, the Pacific.

What, then, had happened? Had the schooner’s crew disappeared in some catastrophe? Had the Malay pirates carried them off and left On board only this batch of boys? A yacht of a hundred tons ought to have a captain, a mate, and five or six men, and of these all that had been left was the negro boy! Where did the schooner hail from? How long had she been at sea? Whither was she bound? The boys might have been able to answer these questions had they been asked them by any captain hailing the schooner on her course; but there was neither steamer nor sailingship in sight, and, if there had been, she would have had quite enough to do to look after herself without assisting this yacht that the sea was throwing about like a raft.

Briant and his friends did their utmost to keep her straight ahead.

‘What’s to be done?’ asked Donagan.

‘All we can to save ourselves, Heaven helping us,’ answered Briant, although now even the most energetic man might have despaired, for the storm was increasing in violence.

The gale was blowing in thunderclaps, as the sailors say, and the expression was only too accurate. The schooner had lost her mainmast, so that no trysail could be set under which she might have been more easily steered. The foremast still held, but the shrouds had stretched, and every minute it threatened to crash on to the deck. The fore-staysail had been split to ribbons, and kept up a constant cracking like rifle-fire. All that remained sound was the foresail, and this seemed as though it would go every moment, for the boys had not been strong enough to reef it. If it were to go, the schooner could not be kept before the wind, the waves would board her and she would go down.

Not an island had been sighted; and there could be no continent to the east. To run ashore would be terrible, but the boys did not fear its terrors so much as those of this interminable sea. A lee shore, with its shoals, its breakers, the terrible roaring waves beaten into surf by the rocks, would be at least firm ground, and not this raging ocean, which any minute might open under their feet. And so they looked ahead for some light to which they could steer.

But there was no light in that thick darkness!

Suddenly, about one o'clock, a fearful crash was heard above the roaring of the storm.

'There goes the foremast! exclaimed Donagan.

'No,' Moko corrected him, 'it's the foresail blown clean away!'

'We must clear it,' said Briant. 'You stay at the wheel, Gordon, with Donagan; you, Moko, come and help me.'

Briant was not quite ignorant of things nautical. On his voyage out from Europe he had learnt a little seamanship, and that was why his companions, who knew none whatever, had left the schooner in his and Moko's hands.

Briant and the negro rushed forward. At all costs the foresail must be cut adrift, for it had caught and was bellying out in such a way that the schooner was in danger of capsizing. If that happened she could never be righted, unless the mast were cut away and the wire shrouds broken, and how could the boys manage that?

Briant and Moko set to work with remarkable judgment. Their object was to keep as much sail on the schooner as possible, so as to steer her before the wind, as long as the storm lasted. They slacked off the halliards and let the sail down to within four of five feet of the deck: then they cut off the torn strips with their knives, secured the lower corners and made all snug. Twenty times, at least, they were in danger of being swept away by the waves.

Under her very small spread of canvas, the schooner could still be kept on her course, and though the wind had so little to take hold of, she was driven along at the speed of a torpedoboat. The faster she went, the better. Her safety depended on her outspeeding the waves, so that none could follow and board her.

Briant and Moko were making their way back to the wheel when the

companion door again opened and a boy's head again appeared. This time it was Jack, Briant's brother, and three years his junior.

'What do you want, Jack?' asked his brother.

'Come here! Come here!' said Jack. 'There's water in the saloon.'

Briant rushed down the companion—stairs. The saloon was confusedly lighted by a lamp, which the rolling swung backwards and forwards. Its light revealed a dozen boys on the couches. The youngest—there were some as young as eight—were huddling against each other in fear.

'There's no danger,' Briant assured them, wanting to give them confidence. 'We're all right. Don't be afraid.'

Then, holding a lighted lantern to the floor, he saw that some water was washing from side to side.

Where had this water come from? From a leak? That must be seen to at once.

Forward of the saloon was the day-saloon, then the dining-saloon, and then the crew's quarters.

Briant went through these in order, and found that the water came from the seas dashing over the bows and down the fore-companion, which had not been quite closed, and that it had been run aft by the pitching of the ship. There was no danger here.

He stopped to cheer up his companions as he went back through the saloon, and then returned to his place at the helm. The schooner was very strongly built, and had only just been re-coppered, so that she might withstand the waves for some time.

It was then about one. The darkness was deeper than ever, and the clouds still gathered; and more furiously than ever raged the storm. The yacht seemed to be rushing through a liquid mass that flowed above, beneath, and around her. The shrill cry of the petrel was heard. Did its appearance mean that land was near? No; for the petrel is often met with hundreds of miles at sea. And these stormbirds found themselves powerless to struggle against the aerial current and were swept along like the schooner.

An hour later there was another report from the bow. What remained of the foresail had been split to ribbons, and the strips flew off into space like huge

seagulls.

‘No sail left!’ exclaimed Donagan; ‘and we can’t possibly set another.’

‘Well, it doesn’t matter,’ said Briant. ‘We shan’t get along so fast, that is all!’

‘What an answer!’ snapped Donagan. ‘If that’s your style of seamanship —’

‘Look out for the wave astern!’ said Moko ‘Lash yourselves, or you’ll be swept overboard—’

The boy had not finished the sentence when several tons of water swept over the taffrail. Briant, Donagan, and Gordon were hurled against the companion, to which they managed to cling. But the negro had disappeared in the wave which swept the deck from stem to bow, carrying away the binnacle, the spare spars, and the three boats. The deck was cleared at one blow. But the water almost instantly flowed off, and the yacht was saved from sinking.

‘Moko! Moko!’ shouted Briant, as soon as he could speak.

‘See if he’s gone overboard,’ said Donagan.

‘No,’ Gordon learnt out to leeward. ‘No, I don’t see him, and I don’t hear him.’

‘We must save him! Throw him a buoy! Throw him a rope!’ said Briant.

‘And in a voice that rang clearly out in a few seconds’ calm, he again shouted—’Moko! Moko!’

‘Here! Help!’ called the negro.

‘He can’t be in the sea,’ said Gordon. ‘His voice is coming from the bow.’

‘I’ll save him,’ Briant declared.

And he crept forward along the heaving slippery deck, avoiding as best he might the blocks swinging from the loose ropes. The boy’s voice was heard again, and then all was silent. By a great effort Briant reached the fore-companion.

He shouted. There was no response.

Had Moko been swept away into the sea since he gave his last cry? If so, he must be far astern now, for the waves could not carry him along as fast as the schooner was going. And then he was lost.

No! A feeble cry reached Briant, who hurried to the windlass in whose frame the foot of the bowsprit was fitted. There he found the negro wedged in the very angle of the bow. A halliard was gradually tightening round his neck. It had saved him when the wave was carrying him away. Was it to strangle him now?

Briant opened his knife, and, with some difficulty, managed to cut the rope. Moko was dragged aft, and as soon as he had strength enough to speak, 'Thanks, Massa Bfiant,' he said, and he at once took his place at the wheel, where the four did their utmost to keep the vessel safe from the enormous waves that pursued her, for these now ran faster than she did, and could easily have boarded her. But what could be done? It was impossible to set the least scrap of sail.

About four, the horizon would grow grey in the east, whither the schooner was being borne. With daybreak the storm might lull. Perhaps land might be in sight, and the boys' fate be settled in a few minutes!

About half-past four a diffused light began to appear overhead. Unfortunately the mist limited the view to less than a quarter of a mile. The clouds swept by with terrible speed. The storm had lost nothing of its fury; and only a short distance away the sea was hidden by the veil of spray from the raging waves. The schooner, at one moment mounting the wavecrest, at the next hurled into the trough, would have been shattered to pieces had she touched the ground.

The boys looked out at the chaos of wild water; they felt that if the calm were long in coming their situation would be desperate. The schooner could not possibly float for another day, for the waves would assuredly sweep away the companion and swamp her.

But suddenly there came a cry from Moko of 'Land! Land!'

Through a rift in the mist the boy thought he had seen the outline of a coast to the eastward. Was he mistaken? Nothing is more difficult than to recognise the vague lineaments of land, so easily confounded with those of the clouds.

'Land!' exclaimed Briant.

'Yes,' replied Moko. 'Land! To the eastward. And he pointed towards a

part of the horizon now hidden by vapour.

‘Are you sure?’ asked Donagan.

‘Yes! —Yes! —Certain!’ said Moko. ‘If the mist opens again you look-there—a little to the right of the foremast —Look! Look!’

The mist began to open and rise from the sea. A few moments more, and the ocean reappeared for several miles ahead.

‘Yes! Land! It’s really land!’ shouted Briant.

‘And its very low,’ added Gordon, who had just caught sight of the coast.

There was no room for doubt. A land—continent, or island—lay some five or six miles ahead. In that direction, from which the storm would not allow her to deviate, the schooner would be driven on it in less than an hour. That she would be smashed, particularly if the breakers stopped her before she reached the shore, there was every reason to fear. But the boys did not give that a thought. In this land, which had offered itself so unexpectedly to their sight, they saw, they could only see, a means of safety.

And now the wind was blowing with still greater strength; the schooner, carried along like a feather, was hurled towards the coast, which stood out like a line of ink on the whitish waste of sky. In the background was a cliff, about two hundred feet high; in the foreground was a yellowish beach ending towards the right in a rounded mass which seemed to belong to a forest further inland.

Ah! If the schooner could reach the sandy beach without hitting a line of reefs, if the mouth of a river would only offer her a refuge, her passengers might escape safe and sound!

Leaving Donagan, Gordon, and Moko at the helm, Briant went forward and scrutinised the land which he was nearing so rapidly. But in vain did he look for some place where the yacht could be run ashore without risk. There was the mouth of no river or stream, not even a sandbank, on which they could run her aground; but there was a line of breakers with the black heads of rock rising out of the surge, where the first shock would wrench the schooner to pieces.

Briant decided that it would be better for all his friends to be on deck when the crash came; opening the companion-door he shouted—

‘Come on deck, every one of you!’



Immediately out jumped the dog, and then the eleven boys one after the other; the sight of the mighty waves around them made the smallest of them yell with terror.

It was a little before six in the morning when the schooner reached the first line of breakers.

'Hold on, all of you!' shouted Briant, stripping off half his clothes, so as to be ready to help those whom the surf swept away when the vessel struck.

Suddenly there came a shock. The schooner had grounded under the stern. But the hull was not damaged, and no water rushed in. A second wave took her fifty feet further, just skimming the rocks that projected above the water level in a thousand places. Then she heeled over to port and lay motionless, surrounded by the boiling surf.

She was not in the open sea, but a quarter of a mile from the beach.