

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ
ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

4
УРОВЕНЬ



Jules Verne
MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

Жюль Верн
ТАИНСТВЕННЫЙ ОСТРОВ

словарь • комментарии

Легко читаем по-английски

Жюль Верн

**Таинственный остров /
Mysterious Island**

«АСТ»

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«Таинственный остров» Жюль Верна рассказывает историю группы людей, сбежавших из плена на воздушном шаре и потерпевших крушение на необитаемом острове. Отважным героям предстоит преодолеть немало трудностей, чтобы подчинить себе дикую природу острова и разгадать его главную тайну. Для удобства читателя текст сопровождается комментариями и кратким словарем. Предназначается для продолжающих изучать английский язык (уровень 4 – Upper-Intermediate).

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MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

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Chapter I

“Are we going up again?”

“No. On the contrary; we are going down!”

“Worse than that, **Mr. Smith**¹, we are falling!”

“Throw over all the ballast!”

“The last sack is empty!”

“And the balloon rises again?”

“No!”

“I hear the splashing waves!”

“The sea is under us!”

“It is not five hundred feet off!”

“God help us!”

Such were the words which rang through the air above the vast wilderness of **the Pacific**², at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 23d of March, 1865.

It was a hurricane lasting without intermission from the 18th to the 26th of March. Covering a space of 1,800 miles, it occasioned immense destruction in America, Europe and Asia. Cities in ruins, forests uprooted, hundreds of shipwrecks, thousands of persons crushed to the earth or engulfed in the sea; such were the witnesses to its fury.

And while these catastrophes were taking place upon the land and the sea, something was enacting in the heavens.

A balloon, caught in the whirl of a column of air, spinning around as in some aerial whirlpool, rushed through space with a velocity of ninety miles an hour. Below the balloon swung a basket containing five persons.

The storm had been raging five days. The balloon had come from a great distance, the passengers, indeed, had been unable to determine the course, they could not calculate their position. Their vision could not penetrate anything, as the thick fog was under the balloon. Around them everything was obscure. The clouds were so dense that they could not **tell the day from the night**³. No reflection of light, no sound, no roaring of the ocean had penetrated that profound obscurity.

Meanwhile the balloon had risen to a height of 4,500 feet, and the passengers discovered that the sea was beneath them, and realizing that the dangers above were less formidable than those below.

The night passed in the midst of dangers. At dawn, the clouds rose high into the heavens; and, in a few hours more, **the whirlwind had spent its force**⁴. Now, however, it became evident that the balloon was again sinking, slowly but surely. The voyagers threw overboard the remaining articles which weighed down the balloon, the few provisions they had kept, and everything they had in their pockets. But it was evident that the gas was escaping, and that the voyagers could no longer keep the balloon afloat.

They were lost!

There was no land, not even an island, beneath them. It was a vast sea on which the waves were surging with incomparable violence. It was the limitless ocean. Not a ship was in sight.

In order to save themselves it was necessary for them to stop the downward movement. But in spite of all they could do the balloon continued to descend.

¹ **Mr. Smith** – мистер Смит

² **the Pacific** – Тихий океан

³ **tell the day from the night** – отличить день от ночи

⁴ **the whirlwind had spent its force** – ураган стих

It was a terrible situation, this, of these unfortunate men. The gas continued to escape. Faster and faster they fell, until at 1 o'clock they were not more than 600 feet above the sea. The gas poured out of a rent in the silk. Unless some land was to appear before nightfall, voyagers, balloon, and basket would disappear beneath the waves.

It was evident that these men were strong and able to face death. Not a murmur escaped their lips. They were determined to struggle to the last second. The basket, constructed of willow osiers, could not float, and they had no means of supporting it on the surface of the water. It was 2 o'clock, and the balloon was only 400 feet above the waves.

Then a voice was heard, the voice of a man whose heart knew no fear.

"Is everything thrown out?"

"No, we yet have 10,000 francs in gold."

A heavy bag fell into the sea.

"Is the balloon rising?"

"A little, but it will soon fall again."

"Is there nothing else we can get rid of?"

"Not a thing."

"Yes there is; there is the basket! **Catch hold of the net**⁵, and let it go."

This was, indeed, the last means of lightening the apparatus. The five passengers had clambered into the net around the hoop, and looked into the abyss below.

The balloon went up. But soon it began to descend again. It was impossible to repair the rent, through which the gas was rushing out.

At 4 o'clock, when the balloon was only 500 feet above the sea, the loud barking of a dog was heard.

"**Top**⁶ has seen something! Land! Land!"

They saw a high land. But it was still far, and it would take an hour to reach it. An hour! They did not know whether it was an island or a continent, as they were uninformed as to what part of the world the tempest had hurried them. But they knew that this land must be reached.

At 4 o'clock it was plain that the balloon could not sustain itself much longer. It grazed the surface of the sea.

A half hour later the land was scarcely a mile distant. The balloon made a bound into the air. It rose 1,500 feet, then began to descend and soon fell upon the sand. The passengers, assisting each other, hastened to the ground.

The basket had contained five passengers and a dog, but only four had been thrown upon the shore. The fifth one, then, had been washed off by the great wave. His friends cried:

"Perhaps he is trying to swim ashore. Save him! Let us save him!"

⁵ **catch hold of the net** – цепляйтесь за сетку

⁶ **Top** – Топ (кликча собаки)

Chapter II

They were neither professional aeronauts nor **amateurs in aerial navigation**⁷ whom the storm had thrown upon this coast. They were prisoners of war and succeeded to escape. Their aerial voyage had lasted five days. How did it happen?

This same year, in the month of February, 1865, many officers were captured by the enemy and confined within the city. One of the most famous of them was a Federal staff officer named **Cyrus Smith**⁸.

Cyrus Smith was a native of **Massachusetts**⁹, an engineer by profession, and a scientist, to whom the Government had given, during the war, the direction of the railways.

He was thin, bony, lean, about forty-five years old, with **heavy moustache**¹⁰. His muscles showed remarkable firmness. He was as much a man of action as of study. He was highly educated, practical, clear-headed, and his temperament was superb. Cyrus Smith was also the personification of courage. He had been in every battle of the war.

At the same time with Cyrus Smith another important personage fell into the power of **the Southerners**¹¹. This was no other than the honorable **Gideon Spilett**¹², reporter to the *New York Herald*¹³. He obtained exact information and transmitted it to the journal in the quickest manner, and belonged in the first rank of the reporters.

A man of great merit; energetic, prompt, and ready; full of ideas; soldier and artist; vehement in council; resolute in action; thinking nothing of pain, fatigue, or danger when seeking information; a master of recondite information of the unpublished, the unknown, the impossible. He was one of those to whom all perils are welcome.

He also had been in all the battles, in the front rank, revolver in one hand and notebook in the other, his pencil never trembling in the midst of a cannonade. Gideon Spilett was tall, forty years old or more. Sandy-colored whiskers encircled his face. His eye was clear, lively, and quick moving.

Cyrus Smith and Gideon Spilett knew each other only **by reputation**¹⁴, but the two soon learned to appreciate each other.

Cyrus Smith had a devoted servant. This man was black, born of slave parents, whom Smith had freed. But the servant had no desire to leave his master, for whom he would have given his life. He was a man of thirty years, vigorous, agile, adroit, intelligent, quick, and self-possessed, sometimes ingenuous, always smiling, ready and honest. He was named **Nebuchadnezzar**¹⁵, but he answered to the nickname of Neb.

All these people were in **Richmond**¹⁶, and it was very difficult to get out. Nothing indicated an early release to the prisoners. The reporter had but one idea; to get out of Richmond at any risk. Many times, indeed, he tried the experiment, and was stopped by obstacles.

⁷ **amateurs in aerial navigation** – любители воздушных путешествий

⁸ **Cyrus Smith** – Сайрес Смит

⁹ **Massachusetts** – Массачусетс

¹⁰ **heavy moustache** – густые усы

¹¹ **the Southerners** – южане

¹² **Gideon Spilett** – Гидеон Спилет

¹³ **New York Herald** – «Нью-Йорк Геральд» (название газеты)

¹⁴ **by reputation** – понаслышке

¹⁵ **Nebuchadnezzar** – Навуходоносор

¹⁶ **Richmond** – Ричмонд

Meanwhile, the siege continued, and the prisoners were anxious to escape in order to join the **army of Grant**¹⁷; and among these was a certain **Jonathan Forster**¹⁸, who was a violent Southerner. This Jonathan Forster had conceived the idea of passing over the lines of the besiegers in a balloon.

So a balloon was made and placed at the disposal of Forster and five of his companions. They were provided with arms and food. The departure of the balloon had been fixed for the 18th of March. However, on the morning of the 18th the tempest broke forth.

The balloon, inflated in the great square of Richmond, was all ready, but the weather was terrible. The night of the 19th and 20th passed, but the storm only developed in intensity, and departure was impossible.

On that day Cyrus Smith in one of the streets of Richmond met a man whom he did not know. It was a sailor named **Pencroff**¹⁹, aged from thirty-five to forty years, strongly built, much sun-burnt, his eyes bright and glittering. This Pencroff had sailed every sea, and had experienced every kind of extraordinary adventure that a man could encounter. It is needless to say that he was of an adventurous nature. Pencroff, in the early part of this year, had come to Richmond on business, having with him **Herbert Brown**²⁰, of **New Jersey**²¹, a lad fifteen years old, the son of Pencroff's captain, and an orphan whom he loved as his own child. He also had but one idea: to get out. He did not hesitate to address Mr. Smith without ceremony:

"Mr. Smith, **have you had enough of**²² Richmond?"

The engineer looked fixedly at the man who spoke thus, and who added in a low voice:

"Mr. Smith, do you want to escape?"

"How?" answered the engineer, quickly. "Who are you?" he demanded, in a cold voice.

Pencroff **made himself known**²³.

"Well," replied Smith. "And by what means do you propose to escape?"

"By this idle balloon which is doing nothing, and is ready to take us!"

The engineer seized Pencroff by the arm and hurried him to his house. There the sailor explained his project, which, in truth, was simple enough. They risked only their lives in carrying it out. The storm was terrible, it is true; but a skilful and daring engineer like Smith would know well how to manage a balloon. He had seen many storms and he thought nothing of them.

Cyrus Smith listened to the sailor without saying a word, with glistening eyes. This was the opportunity! The project was very dangerous, but it could be accomplished. During the night, in spite of the guards, they might reach the balloon, creep into the basket, and then cut the lines which held it!

"I am not alone," said Smith.

"How many would you want to take?" demanded the sailor.

"Two; my friend Spilett, and my man Neb."

"That would be three," replied Pencroff; "and, with Herbert and myself, five. Well, the balloon can carry six."

"Very well. We will go!" said the engineer.

"Tonight, then," said Pencroff.

"Tonight, at ten o'clock," replied Smith.

Pencroff returned to his lodging, where he found young Herbert Brown. This brave boy knew the plans of the sailor, and he was ready to go with him.

¹⁷ **army of Grant** – армия Гранта

¹⁸ **Jonathan Forster** – Джонатан Форстер

¹⁹ **Pencroff** – Пенкроф

²⁰ **Herbert Brown** – Герберт Браун

²¹ **New Jersey** – Нью-Джерси

²² **have you had enough of** – вам не надоед

²³ **made himself known** – рассказал о себе

The storm did not abate, the journey would be terrible. The engineer feared but one thing; that the balloon, held to the ground and beaten down under the wind, would be torn into a thousand pieces.

Evening arrived. Thick masses of fog passed like clouds low down over the earth. Rain mingled with snow fell. The weather was cold. A sort of mist enveloped Richmond. The streets of the city were deserted; it had not even seemed necessary, in such weather, to guard the square in which swung the balloon. Everything favored the departure of the prisoners!

“Bad weather,” said Pencroff, holding his hat, which the wind was trying to take off, firmly to his head.

At half past 9, Cyrus Smith and his companions came together at the basket. They had not been discovered. Without saying a word, four of them took their places in it, while Pencroff, under the direction of the engineer, unfastened the bundles of ballast. It took but a few moments, and then the sailor joined his companions. Then, a dog leaped with a bound into the basket. It was Top, the dog of the engineer, who had followed his master.

The storm burst upon them with frightful violence. The engineer did not dare to descend during the night. It was not until five days later that the breaking of the clouds enabled them to see the vast sea extending below them.

So of these five men, who started on the 20th of March, four were thrown, four days later, on a desert coast, more than 6,000 miles from this country. And the one who was missing was their leader, Cyrus Smith.

Chapter III

The engineer had been swept away by a wave. His dog had disappeared at the same time. The faithful animal tried to rescue its master.

“Forward!” cried the reporter, and all four, forgetting weakness and fatigue, began their search. Poor Neb wept with grief and despair. But Smith’s companions hoped to find him.

“Look for him!” cried Neb.

“Yes, Neb, and we will find him,” replied Spilett.

“Alive?”

“Alive!”

“Can he swim?” demanded Pencroff.

“Oh, yes”, responded Neb. “And, besides, Top is with him.”

The sailor, looking at the roaring sea, shook his head.

It was nearly 6 o’clock. The fog had risen and made the night very dark. The men went northward along the shore of that land upon which chance had thrown them. A land unknown, whose geographical situation they could not guess. They walked upon a sandy soil, mixed with stones. The little party was searching all the windings of the shore.

After a walk of twenty minutes the four men were suddenly stopped by a rock. They found themselves upon the extremity of a sharp point upon which the sea broke with fury.

“This is a promontory,” said the sailor, “we must turn back.”

“But if he is there!” cried Neb, pointing towards the ocean.

“Well, let us call again.”

And all together, uniting their voices, they uttered a vigorous cry, but without response. They waited, and tried once more. And again there was no answer.

Then they turned back, following the opposite side of the promontory over ground equally sandy and rocky. However, Pencroff observed that the shore was bold there, and the birds were less numerous.

But by following this direction they were walking towards the south, which was going away from that place where Smith had landed. Soon they found themselves again arrested by the sea, upon a high promontory of slippery rocks.

“We are on an island,” exclaimed Pencroff.

The words of the sailor were true. The castaways had been thrown, not upon a continent, but upon an island not more than two miles long.

This desert isle, covered with stones, without vegetation, desolate refuge of sea-birds, did it belong to a more important archipelago? They could not tell. It was necessary to wait until the next day to search for the engineer; who, alas! had made no cry to signal his presence.

“The silence of Cyrus proves nothing,” said the reporter. “He may be wounded, and unable to reply, but we will not despair.”

The reporter then offered to light a fire upon the point of the island, which would serve as a signal for the engineer. But they searched in vain for wood or dry branches. Sand and stones were all they found.

One can understand the grief of Neb and his companions, who were strongly attached to their comrade. It was too evident that they could not help him now, and that they must wait till day. Either the engineer had escaped, and was already safe upon the land, or he was lost forever. The hours were long and dreadful, the cold was intense. But the castaways did not think of sleep. They moved back and forth upon that arid island, constantly returning to the northern end, where they would be closest to the place of the catastrophe. They listened, they shouted, they tried to catch some call.

Once the cry of Neb was answered by an echo; and Herbert said:

“That proves that there is land not far to the west.”

The sailor nodded; he knew his eyes could not deceive him. He thought he had seen land, and it must be there. Meanwhile the sky was clearing slowly.

The night passed; and towards 5 o'clock in the morning the heavens began to brighten, though the horizon remained obscure.

“I feel the land,” said Pencroff, “it is there!”

The fog soon rose. A clear sun warmed the upper. At half past 6, the mist was nearly gone. The sea appeared, limitless towards the east, but bounded on the west by a high and abrupt coast.

Yes, the land was there! The island and the main land were separated by a channel half a mile wide. Into this current one of the party, without saying a word or consulting with his companions, precipitated himself. It was Neb. Pencroff called to him in vain. The reporter prepared to follow, but the sailor ran to him, exclaiming:

“Do you want to cross this channel?”

“Yes, I do,” replied Spilett.

“Well, then, listen to me a moment. Neb can rescue his master alone. If we throw ourselves into the channel we are in danger: this strong current can carry us out to sea by. You see the tide is going out. Wait, just wait a little.”

“You are right,” answered the reporter; “we will keep together as much as possible.”

Meantime, Neb was swimming vigorously in a diagonal direction, against the current. He was gaining towards the other shore. It took him more than half an hour to cross the half mile which separated the isle from the mainland.

Neb landed at the base of a high rocky wall, and clambered quickly up its side, and then disappeared behind a rock.

Neb's companions fixed their eyes upon that land from which they were going to demand refuge. They ate some of the shellfish which they found upon the sands; it was a poor meal, but it was better than nothing.

The opposite coast formed an immense bay, terminated to the south by a sharp point. This point at its junction with the shore was abutted by high granite rocks. Towards the north, on the contrary, the bay widened, with a shore more rounded, extending from the southwest to the northeast, and ending in a narrow cape. Between these two points, the distance was about eight miles. A half mile from the shore the island, like an enormous whale, lay upon the sea. Its width was not greater than a quarter of a mile.

Before the Island, the shore began with a sandy beach strewn with black rocks. Beyond this rose, like a curtain, a perpendicular granite wall, at least 300 feet high and terminated by a ragged edge. This extended for about three miles, ending abruptly on the right, as if cut by the hand of man.

Upon the upper level of the coast not a tree was visible. To the right, however, and back of the smooth face of rock, some verdure appeared. Finally, distant towards the northwest about seven miles, shone a white summit, reflecting the sun's rays. It was the snowy cap of some lofty mountain.

It was not possible to say whether this land was an island or a part of a continent. Gideon Spilett, Pencroff, and Herbert looked earnestly upon this land where they were to live, perhaps for long years.

“Well,” demanded Herbert, “what do you think of it, Pencroff?”

“Well,” replied the sailor, “there's good and bad in it, as with everything else. But we will soon see. In three hours we can reach that shore, and we will see what we can do to find Mr. Smith.”

Pencroff was not wrong in his predictions. Three hours later, at low tide, Spilett and his two companions waded through the water, which was nowhere more than five feet deep. Herbert, where the water was too deep, swam like a fish; and all arrived without difficulty at the other shore.

Chapter IV

The reporter walked along the coast in the direction which Neb had taken some hours before, and disappeared quickly around a turn in the shore. Herbert wished to go with him.

“Stay, my boy,” said the sailor. “We must pitch our camp for the night, and try to find something more satisfying to eat than shellfish. Our friends will need food when they come back.”

“I am ready, Pencroff,” said Herbert.

“Good,” said the sailor. “We are tired, cold, and hungry; we need shelter, fire, and food. There is plenty of wood in the forest, and we can get eggs from the nests; but we must find a house.”

“Well,” said Herbert, “I will look for a cave in these rocks.”

“Right,” said Pencroff. “Let us start at once.”

They walked along the base of the rocky wall. But instead of going northwards, they turned to the south. Pencroff had noticed a narrow inlet in the coast. Now it was important to pitch the camp near the fresh water; in that part of the island, too, Smith could be found.

The rock rose 300 feet, smooth and massive. It was a sturdy wall of the hardest granite. About the summit hovered a host of aquatic birds, with long, narrow, pointed beaks.

Meanwhile Herbert noticed some rocks. On them lay hosts of bivalves. Herbert called to Pencroff, who came running to him.

“Ah, they are mussels,” said the sailor.

“They are not mussels,” said Herbert, examining the mollusks carefully, “they are **lithodomes**²⁴.”

“Can we eat them?” said Pencroff.

“Certainly.”

“Then let us eat some lithodomes.”

These lithodomes were oblong **shell-fish**²⁵, adhering in clusters to the rocks. They tasted like oysters; Pencroff and Herbert made a good meal of them.

Their hunger was allayed for the moment, but their thirst was increased by the spicy flavor of the mollusks. The thing now was to find fresh water. Two hundred feet further on Pencroff and Herbert reached the inlet, through which a little river was flowing with full current.

“Here is water,” said Pencroff, “and over there is wood. Well, Herbert, now all we need is a house.”

The river water was clear. Pencroff and Herbert went down between the rocks, into sandy corridors.

“This is just what we want,” said Pencroff. “These Chimneys will be our house. But first we must get together some firing.”

Herbert and Pencroff left the Chimneys, and walked up the left bank of the river. After a quarter of an hour’s walk, the two reached the elbow which the river made in turning to the left. From this point they saw a forest of magnificent trees.

“Good,” said the sailor, “I may not know the name of these trees, but I know they will help us to make a fire, and that’s the main thing for us.”

It was easy to gather the firewood; plenty of dead branches lay at their feet. The dry wood would burn rapidly. Herbert asked, how could two men carry such a load to the Chimneys.

“My boy,” said the sailor, “there’s a way to do everything. If we had a car or a boat it would be too easy.”

“We have the river,” suggested Herbert.

²⁴ **lithodomes** – литодомы

²⁵ **shell-fish** – ракушки

“Exactly,” said Pencroff. “The river will be our road and our carrier, too.”

They looked at the ocean. The sea was a watery desert. The coast, too, was desolate. Neither Neb, nor the reporter could be seen.

“Something tells me,” said Herbert, “that a person so energetic as Mr. Smith could not be drowned like an ordinary man. He got to the shore; don’t you think so, Pencroff?”

The sailor shook his head sadly. He never thought to see Smith again; but he left Herbert a hope.

“No doubt,” said he, “our engineer saved himself.”

As Pencroff and Herbert walked towards the west, their looks fell on the snowcapped mountain, which rose six or seven miles away. They saw a forest. Then from the edge of this forest to the coast stretched a plateau.

“Are we upon an island?” muttered the sailor.

“It is big enough,” said the boy.

“An island’s an island, no matter how big,” said Pencroff.

Chapter V

The first care of Pencroff was to make the Chimneys habitable. One narrow, winding passage was arranged to carry out the smoke and to quicken the draught of the fire. The Chimneys were divided into three or four chambers. They were dry, and one could stand up in them, or at least in the principal one, which was in the centre. The floor was covered with sand. While working, Herbert and Pencroff chatted together.

“Perhaps,” said the boy, “our companions found a better place than ours.”

“It is possible,” answered the sailor, “but, until we know, don’t let us stop. Better have two houses than none at all!”

“Oh,” said Herbert, “if they can only find Mr. Smith, and bring him back with them, how thankful we will be!”

“Yes,” murmured Pencroff. “He was a good man.”

“Was!” said Herbert. “Do you think we will not see him again?”

“**Heaven forbid!**²⁶” replied the sailor.

Once the work was accomplished, Pencroff declared himself satisfied.

“Now,” said he, “our friends may return, and they will find a good shelter.”

It was 5 o’clock when they returned again to the Chimneys. Towards 6 o’clock, just as the sun was disappearing behind the high land in the west, Herbert, who was walking back and forth upon the shore, announced the return of Neb and Gideon Spilett. They came back alone. The sailor was right: they could not find the engineer.

The reporter, when he came up, seated himself upon a rock, without speaking. Fainting from fatigue, half dead with hunger, he was unable to utter a word. Neb’s reddened eyes showed that he was weeping and lost all hope.

The reporter gave the history of their search. Neb and he had followed the coast for more than eight miles. The shore was deserted. Not a trace upon the sand, not a footprint, was upon the shore. It was evident that nobody inhabited that portion of the island.

At that moment Neb raised his head, and exclaimed:

“No, he is not dead! It is impossible! He is a man who can get out of anything!”

Herbert ran to him and cried:

“Neb, we will find him; God will give him back to us; but please eat something.”

And the lad offered the poor servant a handful of shell-fish. But Neb refused them. Poor fellow! Deprived of his master, he wished no longer to live.

As to Gideon Spilett, he devoured the mollusks, and then laid down upon the sand at the foot of a rock. He was exhausted, but calm. Herbert, approaching him, took his hand.

“Mr. Spilett,” said he, “we have discovered a shelter where you will be more comfortable. The night is coming on; so come and rest there. Tomorrow we will see.”

The reporter rose, and, guided by the lad, proceeded towards the Chimneys.

Pencroff took the match and made some fire. Two dozen eggs were brought by Herbert, and the reporter, seated in a corner, watched them without speaking. Did Cyrus still live? If alive, where was he?

In a few minutes the food was ready, and the sailor invited the reporter to take part in the supper. This was the first meal of the castaways upon this unknown coast. The hard eggs were excellent.

Thus passed the 25th of March. The reporter had retired to a dark corner. Herbert fell asleep at once. The sailor passed the night by the fire. Neb wandered upon the sands calling for his master.

²⁶ **Heaven forbid!** – Боже упаси!

Chapter VI

The castaways had nothing but the clothes they wore in the balloon. Spilett had a watch and a note-book; but there were no firearms and no tools, not even a pocket knife. They had thrown everything overboard to lighten the balloon. The castaways could rely on Providence only, and on their own hands.

It seemed to Pencroff that it was better to wait a few days before undertaking an exploration. They had to try to procure more satisfying food than eggs and shellfish. It was decided then to wait a few days at the Chimneys, and to prepare for an expedition either along the coast or into the interior of the land.

This plan was especially agreeable to Neb, who did not believe that Smith was dead. Upon the morning of the 26th of March, at daybreak, Neb started along the coast northward.

For breakfast that morning they had only eggs and lithodomes, with salt which Herbert had found in the cavities of the rocks. When the meal was over they divided forces. The reporter stayed behind to keep up the fire, while Herbert and Pencroff went into the forest.

“We will go hunting, Herbert,” said the sailor. “We will cut our guns in the forest.”

At 9 o'clock the weather was threatening and the breeze blew from the southeast. When Herbert and Pencroff reached the forest, Pencroff broke from a tree two thick branches which he made into cudgels. The sailor carefully observed the character and peculiarities of the region. On this left bank the surface was flat, rising insensibly towards the interior. Sometimes it was moist and swampy. The opposite bank was more undulating, and the valley was more **clearly defined**²⁷. The hill, covered with trees, rising in terraces, intercepted the vision. They could hardly walk along the right bank, for the descent was steep, and the trees were only sustained by their roots. It is needless to say that both forest and shore seemed a virgin wilderness. They even saw fresh traces of animals whose species was unknown to them.

They hardly spoke, and their hunting was fruitless. Birds were singing and flying **to and fro**²⁸ under the trees; but they showed an instinctive fear of their enemy man. Among fir trees was fluttering a flock of birds, with small bodies and long, glittering tails.

“These are **couroucous**²⁹,” said Herbert. “They are good to eat; their meat is delicious. Besides, I think we can easily get at them with our sticks.”

They reached the foot of a tree. Using their sticks like a scythe, they mowed down whole rows of the couroucous, of whom 105 were knocked over before the stupid birds thought of escape.

Their route was indicated by the river; they followed it downward, and by 6 o'clock Herbert and Pencroff re-entered the Chimneys.

²⁷ **clearly defined** – отчётливо обрисована

²⁸ **to and fro** – взад-вперёд

²⁹ **couroucous** – куруку (птица из породы ворон)

Chapter VII

Gideon Spilett stood motionless upon the shore, gazing on the sea, whose horizon was darkened. The wind, already strong, was freshening, and the heavens had an angry look. Pencroff began to prepare dinner. At 7 o'clock Neb was still absent.

The storm began. A furious gust of wind passed over the coast from the southeast. At 8 o'clock Neb had not returned. The birds were all they had for supper, but the party found them excellent eating. Pencroff and Herbert devoured them. Then each one retired to his corner, and Herbert was soon asleep.

It was about 2 o'clock when Pencroff was suddenly aroused from a deep sleep. The reporter was shaking him.

"What's the matter?" Pencroff cried.

The reporter was bending over him and saying:

"Listen, Pencroff, listen!"

The sailor listened, but could hear nothing interesting.

"It is the wind," he said.

"No," answered Spilett, "listen again! I think I heard..."

"What?"

"The barking of a dog!"

"A dog!" cried Pencroff, springing to his feet.

"Yes, the barking."

"Impossible!" answered the sailor.

"Wait and listen," said the reporter.

Pencroff listened most attentively, and at length he caught the sound of distant barking.

"Is it?" asked the reporter.

"Yes, yes!" said Pencroff.

"It is Top! It is Top!" cried Herbert, who had just wakened, and the three rushed to the entrance of the Chimneys. The darkness was absolute. Sea, sky, and earth, were one intense blackness.

For some moments the reporter and his two companions stood in this place, drenched by the rain, blinded by the sand. Then again, in the hush of the storm, they heard, far away, the barking of a dog. This must be Top. But was he alone or accompanied?

It was indeed Top. But he was alone! Neither his master nor Neb accompanied him. It seemed inexplicable how, through the darkness and storm, the dog's instinct had directed him to the Chimneys. Herbert had drawn him towards him, patting his head; and the dog rubbed his neck against the lad's hands.

"If the dog is found, the master will be found also," said the reporter.

"Top will guide us!" responded Herbert.

Pencroff made no objection. The tempest was, perhaps, at its maximum intensity. It was difficult to follow a straight course. The better way, therefore, was to trust to the instinct of Top. The reporter and the lad walked behind the dog, and the sailor followed after. To speak was impossible. The rain was not heavy, but the strength of the storm was terrible.

They felt, no doubt, that Neb had found his master and had sent the faithful dog to them. But was the engineer living or dead?

"Saved! He is saved! Isn't he, Top?" repeated the boy. And the dog **barked his answer**³⁰.

³⁰ **barked his answer** – лаял в ответ

By 4 o'clock they estimated the distance travelled as eight miles. The clouds had risen a little, and the wind was drier and colder. No murmur passed their lips. **They were determined**³¹ to follow Top wherever he wished to lead them.

Towards 5 o'clock **the day began to break**³². The sailor and his companions were some six miles from the Chimneys, following a very flat shore. Top ran ahead, returned, and seemed to try **to hurry them on**³³. The dog had left the coast, and had gone **among the downs**³⁴. The border of the downs was composed of hills and hillocks. It was like a little Switzerland of sand, but a dog's astonishing instinct could find the way.

Five minutes after the reporter and his companions reached a sort of hollow, before which Top stopped with a loud bark. The three entered the cave. Neb was there, kneeling beside a body extended upon a bed of grass. It was the body of Cyrus Smith.

³¹ **they were determined** – они твёрдо решили

³² **the day began to break** – забрезжил рассвет

³³ **to hurry them on** – поторопиться

³⁴ **among the downs** – между дюнами

Chapter VIII

Neb did not move. The sailor uttered one word.

“Alive?” he cried.

Neb did not answer. Spilett and Pencroff **turned pale**³⁵. Herbert stood motionless. But it was evident that the poor servant, overcome by grief, had not heard the voice of the sailor.

The reporter knelt down beside the motionless body, and pressed his ear to the chest of the engineer. Then he tried to detect some movement of the heart.

Neb was hardly recognizable. He believed his master dead. Gideon Spilett, however, after a long and attentive examination, rose up.

“He lives!” he said.

Pencroff, **in his turn**³⁶, knelt down beside Cyrus Smith; he also detected some heartbeats. Herbert hurried in search of water. A hundred paces off he found a clear brook; so the lad soaked his handkerchief in the stream, and hastened back with it to the cave.

The drops of fresh water produced an instantaneous effect. A sigh escaped from the breast of Smith.

“We will save him,” said the reporter.

Neb removed the clothing from his master to see if his body was wounded anywhere. But neither on his head nor body nor limbs was there a bruise or even a scratch. That was an astonishing circumstance.

“You thought he was dead?” asked the sailor Neb.

“Yes, I thought so,” answered Neb. “And if Top had not found you and brought you back, I would have buried my master and died beside him.”

Then Neb told them what had happened. The day before, Neb had followed along the coast in a direction due north, until he reached that part of the beach. There he searched the shore, the rocks, the sand for any marks that could guide him. He did not hope to find his master living. Then he decided to continue some miles further up the coast. It was possible that the currents had carried the body to some distant point. He followed the shore two miles further, hardly hoping to find anything, when yesterday evening, about 5 o'clock, he discovered footprints upon the sand.

“Footprints?!” cried Pencroff.

“Yes, sir,” replied Neb.

“And did they begin at the water?” demanded the reporter.

“No,” answered Neb, “above high-water mark; below that the tide had washed out the others. The sight of these footprints made me wild with joy. They went towards the downs. I followed them for a quarter of an hour. Five minutes later, as it was growing dark, I heard a dog bark. It was Top. And he brought me here, to my master.”

“So you, Neb,” said the reporter, “did not bring your master to this place?”

“No, it was not I,” answered Neb.

They must wait for the solution of the mystery until the engineer could speak. It was therefore the unanimous opinion that Cyrus Smith must be carried to the Chimneys as soon as possible.

Soon the engineer opened his eyes. Neb and the reporter were leaning over him.

“My master! My master!” cried Neb.

The engineer heard him. He recognized Neb and his companions.

“Is it an island or a continent?” he murmured.

³⁵ **turned pale** – побледнели

³⁶ **in his turn** – в свою очередь

“What the devil do we care³⁷,” cried Pencroff, unable to restrain the exclamation, “now that you are alive, sir. Island or continent? We will find that out later.”

The engineer seemed to sleep. The sailor was repeating:

“Island or continent! To think of that! What a man!”

Pencroff and his companions constructed a litter, which they covered with leaves and grass. This work occupied some little time, and it was 10 o'clock when the three returned to Smith and Spilett.

The engineer had just wakened from the sleep. The color had come back to his lips. He raised himself slightly, and looked about.

“Well,” said the sailor, “Mr. Smith, your litter is ready, and we will carry you to our house.”

“Thanks, my friend,” replied the engineer. “In an hour or two we will go.”

The reporter related everything that had happened.

“But,” asked Smith, in a feeble voice, “You did not pick me up on the beach?”

“No,” replied the reporter.

“And it was not you who brought me to this hollow?”

“No.”

“How far is this place from the reef?”

“At least half a mile,” replied Pencroff. “And we are very surprised to find you here. But cannot you remember anything that happened after you were washed away by the sea?”

Cyrus Smith tried to think, but he remembered little. The wave had swept him from the net of the balloon. Then Top had sprung to his rescue. Smith found himself in the midst of the tumultuous sea, more than half a mile from shore. He swum vigorously against the waves, and Top sustained him by his garments; but a strong current seized him, carrying him to the north, and, after struggling for half an hour, he sank, dragging the dog with him into the abyss. From that moment he remembered nothing.

“It’s strange,” said the reporter. “If someone had rescued you from the waves, why should he then have abandoned you?”

“That is inexplicable.”

Towards noon, Pencroff asked Smith if he felt strong enough to be carried. Eight miles had to be travelled, and the wind was still strong, but, fortunately, it had ceased raining. At half past 5 the little party reached the Chimneys.

³⁷ **what the devil do we care** – какая нам, к чёрту, разница

Chapter IX

The engineer had sunk into a lethargy, the result of the journey. First of all, Cyrus Smith was carried into the main corridor. There they were able to make for him a couch of seaweeds.

The supper that evening consisted of the lithodomes, which Herbert and Neb had gathered from the beach.

The next day, the 28th of March, when the engineer awoke at about 8 o'clock, he saw his companions beside him, and, as on the day before, his first words were "Island or continent?"

It was his one thought.

"Well, Mr. Smith," answered Pencroff, "we don't know."

"You haven't found out yet?"

"But we will," affirmed Pencroff, "when you are able to guide us in this country."

"I believe that I am able to do that now," answered the engineer, who, without much effort, rose up.

"That is good," exclaimed the sailor.

"When you were carrying me here yesterday, did I not see a mountain rising in the west?"

"Yes," said Spilett, "quite a high one."

"All right," exclaimed the engineer. "Tomorrow we will climb to its summit and determine whether this is an island or a continent."

"But," asked Spilett, "whether it is a continent or an island, where do you think this storm has thrown us, Cyrus?"

"In truth, I cannot say," replied the engineer, "but the probability is that we are somewhere in the Pacific. When we left Richmond the wind was northeast, and its very violence proves that its direction did not vary much. We crossed **North and South Carolina**³⁸, **Georgia**³⁹, the **Gulf of Mexico**⁴⁰, and the narrow part of Mexico, and a portion of the Pacific Ocean. I do not estimate the distance traversed by the balloon at less than 6,000 or 7,000 miles. But if this coast belongs to some barren island in the **Micronesian Archipelago**⁴¹, perhaps we will never leave it.

"Never?" cried the reporter. "Do you say "never", my dear Cyrus?"

"We will know how to act when we first ascend the mountain," answered Smith.

"But will you be able, Mr. Smith, to make the climb tomorrow?" asked Herbert.

"I hope so," answered the engineer, "if Pencroff and you, my boy, show yourselves to be good hunters."

³⁸ **North and South Carolina** – Северная и Южная Каролина

³⁹ **Georgia** – Джорджия

⁴⁰ **Gulf of Mexico** – Мексиканский залив

⁴¹ **Micronesian Archipelago** – архипелаг Микронезии

Chapter X

The three hunters were seated before a sparkling fire. Beside them sat Cyrus Smith and the reporter.

“Yes, my good fellow,” said the reporter, “a fire, a real fire!”

“But who lighted it?” said the sailor.

“The sun.”

The sailor could not believe his eyes.

“Do you have a **burning-glass**⁴², sir?” asked Herbert of Cyrus Smith.

“No, my boy,” said he, “but I made one.”

And he showed his lens. It was simply the two glasses, from his own watch and the reporter’s, which he had taken out, filled with water, and stuck together at the edges with a little clay. Thus he had made a veritable burning-glass, and by concentrating the solar rays on some dry moss had set it on fire.

With the help of Neb, the sailor arranged the spit. The engineer and his companion **had made good use of their day**⁴³. Smith had almost entirely recovered his strength. They had a pleasant supper. The engineer said little; he was planning for the next day. After supper, the party lay down to sleep. The morning found them fresh and eager for the expedition.

Everything was ready. At half past 7 they left the Chimneys, each with a stout cudgel. By Pencroff’s advice, they took the route of the previous day, which was the shortest way to the mountain. They turned the southern angle, and followed the left bank of the river. They took the path under the evergreens, and soon reached the northern border of the forest. The soil was flat and swampy, then dry and sandy. Among the trees appeared a few animals. The engineer was going straight for the top of the mountain.

The mountain was composed of two cones. The first was truncated about 2,500 feet up, and supported by fantastic spurs. Between these spurs were narrow valleys. On the northeast side of the mountain, vegetation was scanty.

On the first cone lay the second one, slightly rounded towards the summit. The surface seemed utterly bare. The object of the expedition was to reach the top of this cone, and their best way was along the edge of the spurs.

“We are in a volcanic country,” said Cyrus Smith, as they began to climb, little by little, up the side of the spurs. They were gradually ascending. At noon, when the little company halted to dine at the foot of a great clump of firs, they were still half way from the first plateau, and could hardly reach it before nightfall. From this point the sea stretched broad beneath their feet. On the left they could see directly north for several miles; but the northwest was concealed from them.

At 1 o’clock, the ascent again began. The easiest route slanted upwards towards the southwest, through the thick copse. Leaving the copse, the climbers ascended for a hundred feet up a very steep hill, and reached a terrace, almost bare of trees, whose soil was evidently volcanic. From hence, their course was a zigzag towards the east. Neb and Herbert led the way, then came Smith and the reporter; Pencroff was last.

They had come across large animals, with thick horns, curved backwards and flattened at the end, and with woolly fleece. They were not the common sheep. Their name, according to Herbert, was a **Moufflon**⁴⁴.

⁴² **burning-glass** – увеличительное стекло

⁴³ **had made good use of their day** – провели день с пользой

⁴⁴ **Moufflon** – муфлон

As the ascension continued, the traces of lava were more frequent, and **little sulphur springs**⁴⁵ intercepted their route. As they neared the first plateau, formed by the truncation of the lower cone, the ascent became very difficult. By 4 o'clock the last belt of trees had been passed. Fortunately for the engineer and his party, it was a pleasant, mild day. The sky overhead was extremely bright and clear. A perfect calm reigned around them. The sun was hidden by the upper mountain, which cast its shadow westward to the edge of the sea.

There were only 500 feet between the explorers and the plateau where they meant to encamp for the night. Little by little the evening set in, and it was almost night when the party, tired out by a seven hours' climb, arrived at the top of the first cone.

Now they must pitch their camp, and think of supper and sleep. The sailor built up a fireplace with huge stones, while Neb and Herbert **went after the combustibles**⁴⁶. They soon came back with a load of thistles.

The night was beautiful and still; and not yet very dark. They walked together in silence. Sometimes the plateau was wide and easy, sometimes very encumbered with rubbish. There were yet 1,000 feet to climb. Fortunately, the long and sinuous declivities described a winding staircase, and greatly helped their ascent. The volcano was not only quiet, but extinct.

It was nearly 8 o'clock when they **set foot on the summit**⁴⁷ of the cone. The darkness was by this time complete, and they could hardly see a couple of miles around them. Was the land an island, or the eastern extremity of a continent? They could not yet discover. At one point of the horizon suddenly appeared a vague light, which slowly sank as the clouds mounted to the zenith. The line of the horizon was now cloudless, and as the moon touched it, the engineer seized the boy's hand.

"An island!" said he.

⁴⁵ **little sulphur springs** – сольфаторы (*небольшие вулканы*)

⁴⁶ **went after the combustibles** – отправились за дровами

⁴⁷ **set foot on the summit** – вышли на вершину

Chapter XI

A half hour later they walked back to the camp. The land was an island, and tomorrow they would consider what to do.

The next day, March 30, after a hurried breakfast, they started out for the summit of the volcano. All desired to see the isle on which perhaps they were to spend their lives. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning when they left the camp.

"Bah!" said Pencroff, "we got out of Richmond without the permission of the authorities, and it will be strange if we can't get away some time from this place!"

It was a superb day, and the southern side of the mountain was bathed in sunlight. The crater was a huge shaft gradually opening to a height of 1,000 feet above the plateau. The interior of the crater was easily scaled. They saw on the way traces of ancient lava. As to the volcano chimney, its depth could not be estimated by the eye, for it was lost in obscurity. Before 8 o'clock, the party was standing at the summit of the crater.

"The sea! The sea everywhere!" was the universal exclamation. There it lay, an immense sheet of water around them on every side. Nothing appeared to the horizon-line, a radius of more than fifty miles. Not a sail was in sight. Around the island stretched a desert infinity of ocean.

Silent and motionless, they surveyed every point of the horizon. Then they looked down upon their island, and the silence was broken by Spilett:

"How large do you think this island is?"

"It seemed small enough in the midst of the infinite ocean."

"My friends," said Smith, "if I am not mistaken, the coast of the island is more than 100 miles around."

If Smith was right, the island would be about the size of **Malta**⁴⁸; but it was more irregular than it. The eastern coast, upon which the castaways had landed, was a decided curve, embracing a large bay. On the northeast, two other capes shut in the bay, and between them lay a narrow gulf. From northeast to northwest the coast was round and flat, like the skull of a wild beast; then came a sort of indeterminate hump, whose centre was occupied by the volcanic mountain. From this point the coast ran directly north and south. For two-thirds of its length it was bordered by a narrow creek; then it finished in along cue, like the tail of a gigantic alligator. The narrowest part of the island, between the Chimneys and the creek, on the west, was ten miles wide, but its greatest length was not less than thirty miles.

The southern part, from the shore to the mountain, was covered with woods; the northern part was arid and sandy. Between the volcano and the eastern coast there was a lake, surrounded by evergreens.

"So, then, it is a fresh water lake?" asked Pencroff.

"Yes, of course," said the engineer.

"I can see a little river flowing into it," said Herbert, pointing to a narrow brook.

The volcano did not occupy the centre of the island. It rose in the northwest, and seemed to indicate the dividing line of the two zones. On the southwest, south, and southeast, the beginnings of the spurs were lost in masses of verdure.

They remained for an hour at the summit of the mountain. The island lay stretched before them like **a plan in relief**⁴⁹, with its different tints, green for the forests, yellow for the sands, blue for the water. They understood the configuration of the entire island, but there remained a great question: was the island inhabited? It was the reporter who put this question. Nowhere could they perceive the

⁴⁸ **Malta** – Мальта

⁴⁹ **a plan in relief** – рельефная карта

handiwork of man; no late settlement on the beach, not even a lonely cabin or a fisherman's hut. No smoke rising on the air.

The exploration of the island was finished, its configuration determined, a map of it drawn, its size calculated. They had only now to descend the declivities of the mountain, and to examine into the animal, vegetable, and mineral resources of the land. But before giving the signal of departure, Cyrus Smith, in a calm, grave voice, addressed his companions.

"Look, my friends, upon this little corner of the earth. Here, perhaps, we may long dwell."

"Mr. Smith," said the sailor, "we will make a little America here. We will build cities, lay railroads, establish telegraphs. We should not consider ourselves any longer as castaways, but as colonists. Well, let's start for the Chimneys!"

"One minute, my friends," said the engineer; "let's name the island, as well as the capes, promontories, and water-courses, which we see before us."

"Yes," said Smith, "for instance, let us call the great bay to the east **Union Bay**⁵⁰, the southern indentation **Washington Bay**⁵¹, the mountain on which we are standing **Mount Franklin**⁵², the lake beneath our feet **Lake Grant**⁵³. These names will recall our country and the great citizens who have honored it. What will you say, my friends?"

The engineer's proposal was unanimously applauded. Spilett put down the names over the proper places, and the geographical nomenclature of the island was complete.

"Now," said the reporter, "to that peninsula projecting from the southwest I propose to give the name of **Serpentine Peninsula**⁵⁴, and to call the twisted curve at the termination of it **Reptile End**⁵⁵, for it is just like a snake's tail."

"And the other extremity of the island," said Herbert, "the gulf so like an open pair of jaws, let us call it **Shark Gulf**⁵⁶."

"Good enough," said Pencroff, "and we may complete the figure by calling the two capes **North Mandible**⁵⁷ and **South Mandible**⁵⁸. Now we must name the southwestern extremity of the island.

"**Claw Cape**⁵⁹," suggested Neb.

The river with fresh water they called **the Mercy**⁶⁰. The islet on which they first set foot, was **Safety Island**⁶¹; the plateau at the top of the high granite wall above the Chimneys, from which the whole sweep of the bay was visible, **Prospect Plateau**⁶²; and, finally, that mass of impenetrable woods which covered Serpentine Peninsula, the **Forests of the Far West**⁶³.

All was settled, and the colonists were about to descend the mountain, when Pencroff cried:

"Why, what idiots we are!"

"Why so?" said Spilett, who had closed his note-book.

"We have forgotten to name our island!"

Cyrus Smith said quietly:

⁵⁰ **Union Bay** – бухта Соединения

⁵¹ **Washington Bay** – бухта Вашингтона

⁵² **Mount Franklin** – гора Франклина

⁵³ **Lake Grant** – озеро Гранта

⁵⁴ **Serpentine Peninsula** – полуостров Извилистый

⁵⁵ **Reptile End** – Змеиный мыс

⁵⁶ **Shark Gulf** – залив Акулы

⁵⁷ **North Mandible** – Северная Челюсть

⁵⁸ **South Mandible** – Южная Челюсть

⁵⁹ **Claw Cape** – мыс Коготь

⁶⁰ **the Mercy** – река Благодарения

⁶¹ **Safety Island** – остров Спасения

⁶² **Prospect Plateau** – плато Кругозора

⁶³ **Forests of the Far West** – леса Дальнего Запада

“Let us give it the name of a great citizen, my friends, of the defender of American unity! Let us call it **Lincoln Island**⁶⁴!”

⁶⁴ **Lincoln Island** – остров Линкольна

Chapter XII

The colonists of Lincoln Island walked around the verge of the crater. Half an hour afterwards they were again upon the lower plateau. Pencroff thought it was breakfast time.

As they were leaving the plateau, Smith proposed to his companions to take a new road back to the Chimneys. He wished to explore Lake Grant, which lay surrounded so beautifully with trees. The colonists employed in conversation only the proper names which they had just devised, and found that they could express themselves much more easily. Herbert and Pencroff, one of whom was young and the other something of a child, were delighted, and the sailor said as they walked along:

“Well, Herbert, this is jolly! We can’t lose ourselves now, my boy, since, whether we follow Lake Grant or get to the Mercy through the woods of the Far West, we must come to Prospect Plateau, and so to Union Bay.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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