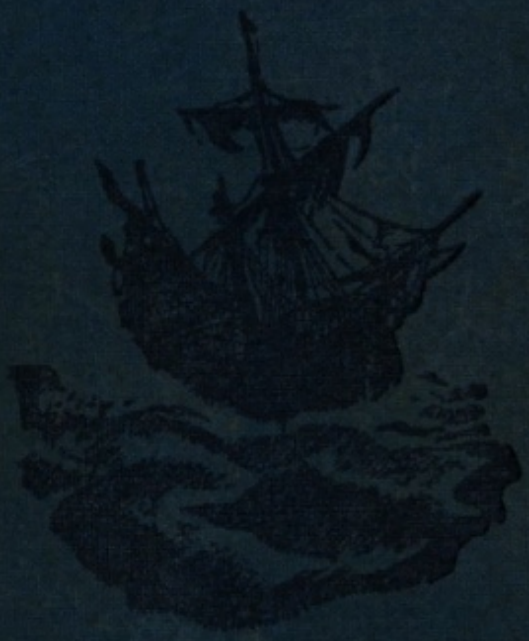

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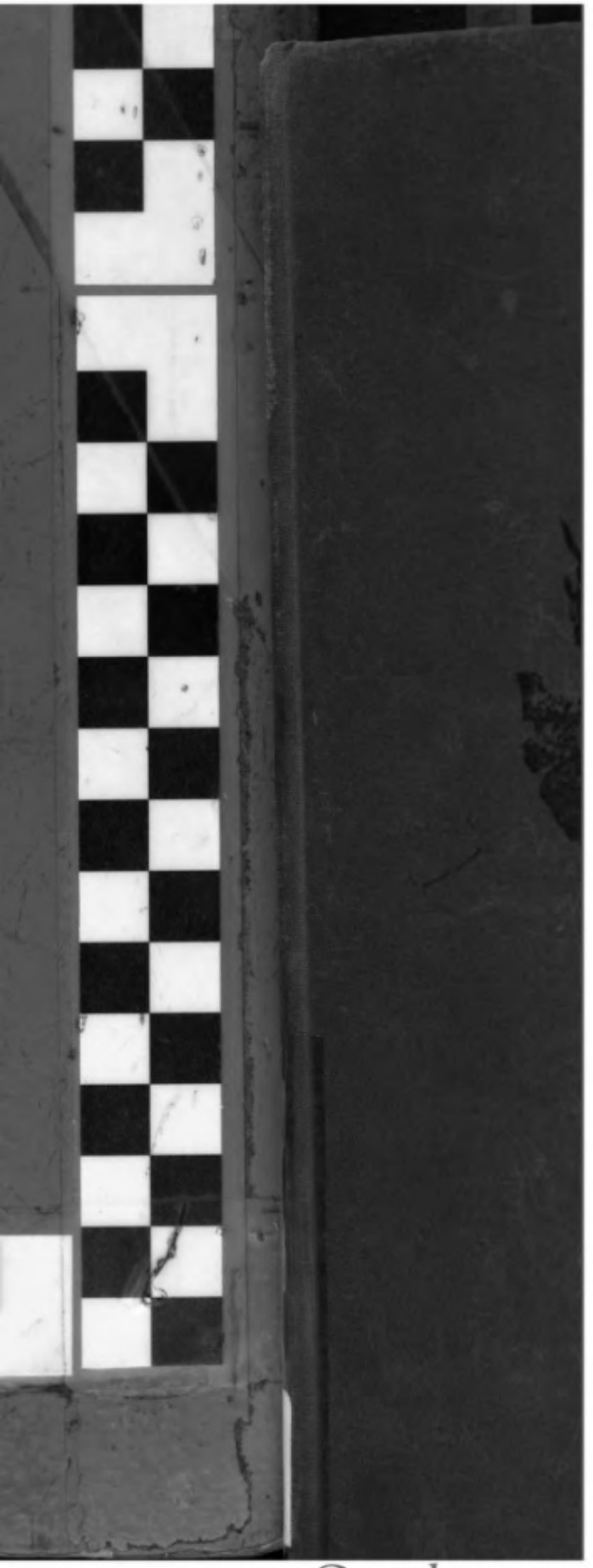

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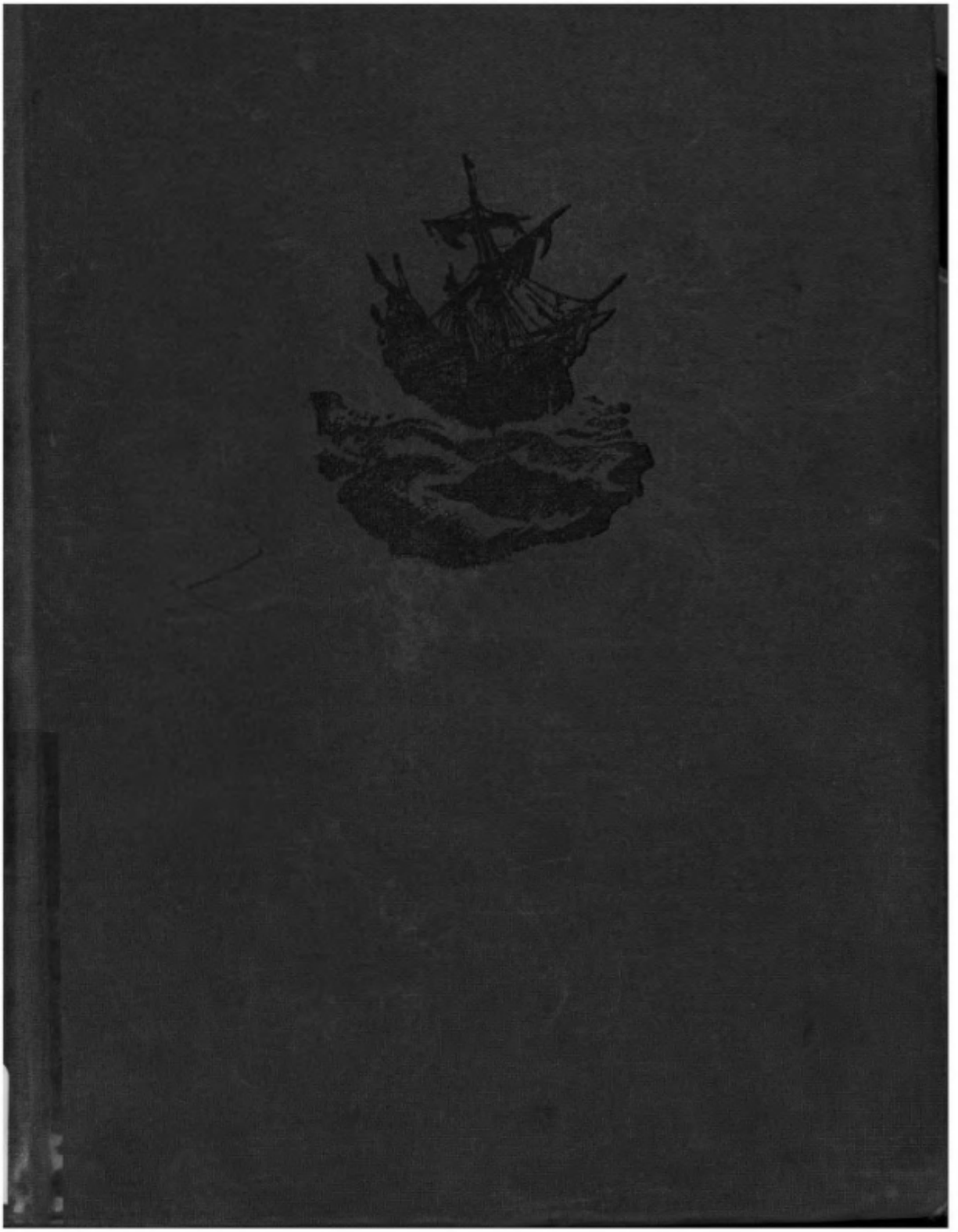

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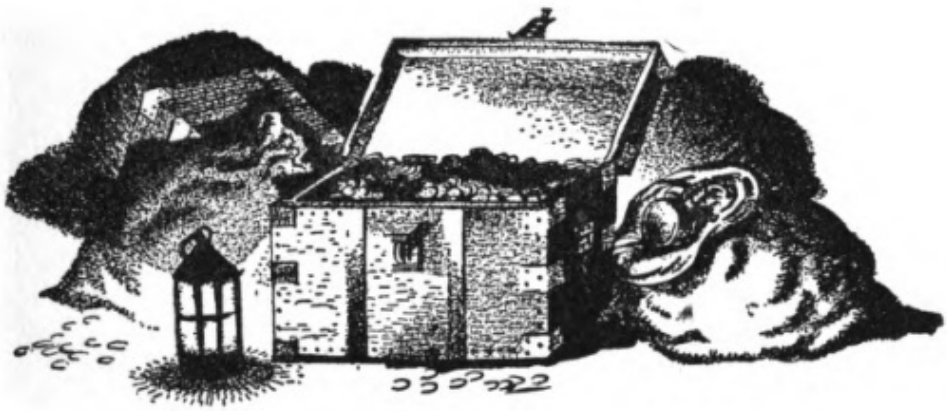

THE STORY

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AND DRAWINGS

throughout the book

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SPANISH GALLEON

THE STATELY GALLEON shuddered and drove her nose more deeply into the tumultuous waves that heaved and foamed about her bows. Her sails, slashed into ribbons by the howling gale, flapped like pistol shots about the rigging; huge seas broke over her as she raised herself out of the angry waters, and struggled like a stricken animal to gain an even keel.

High on the poop, Captain del Cordobo had cunningly constructed for himself a wind break of rough canvas, and by peering over it commanded a view of the wave-swept deck. He steadied himself, and wiping his hand over his face, stared into the driving murkiness of sea drift and wind. He cursed softly under his breath, and roared out an order into the windy darkness. His men were getting out of hand... a week out from Lisbon and heavy weather all the way... he'd hoped for better weather off the English coast, but there was no sign of the storm abating... his ship was rapidly becoming waterlogged... the pumps un-

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CHAPTER TWO

SPANISH GOLD

ONE WINTER'S EVENING at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the inn, The Jolly Fishermen, was fuller and noisier than usual. The big, oak-raftered room was full of men, all laughing and chattering: coastwise fishermen, sailors with an urge for company and money to spend; farmers and cattle drovers from the market at Castell Ddu. The rum punch sold at the little sea-shore tavern was famous for miles around, and its warm, spicy fragrance filled the crowded room.

The laughing and chattering grew louder as the evening wore on, and Joanna, the proprietress, went from group to group, grumbling at the impatience of the patrons. Joanna was as famous as the inn, as a matter of fact, she was part of it; a middle-aged fierce woman, her eyes fixed on

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Peg Leg swallowed and started to speak, but was restrained. Patchy went on:

"That gold moidore tells me certain things. See the date on it?"

The little man leaned forward and peered hard at the coin.

"I can't see nothing, Mr. Davis. Nothing at all. Now hif I could pick it up and spit on hit, and rub it a bit with me sleeve—then p'raps, I could see—"

Patchy smiled. "I'll tell ye the date, me buckoes. 1629. That's it. 1629."

Peg Leg looked blank. "What difference does that make?" he asked.

"The difference between my brain and yours. Now like a real honest sailorman I took this coin up to the old rector. I knocked at the front door, polite like, and he asked me in. He told me about the good ship *Espinosa del Terrega*—"

Dandy sighed. "A furriner," he said.

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CHAPTER THREE

UNDER THE WATERFALL

THE DAWN HAD colored the sea slate-grey when Peter and Dewi set out the following morning for the foreshore. Slung over Peter's back was a canvas satchel, while Dewi had a coil of rope wound around his waist.

Peter's uncle had fired their imaginations months ago with his story of the Spanish galleon being buried intact in the cliff, and whenever weather permitted the two boys explored the loftly caves and inlets of the cliff.

One significant clue was the repeated presence of pieces of Spanish gold being turned up in the sand—and always at the same spot, the base of Three Fingers Rock.

Peter was chattering about this as they made their way to the Rock.

"You see, Dewi," he was saying, "the galleon must be somewhere behind the cliff—and it *must* be there somewhere." He indicated the sheer mass of rock that extended for hundreds of feet from the sandy shore to the summit. Screaming gulls wheeled and glided from ledges overhead,

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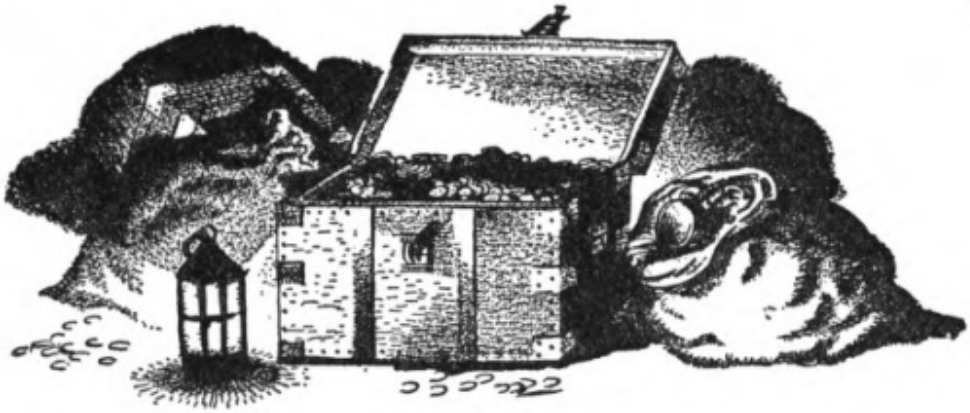

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHASE IN THE TUNNELS

AT THE EXACT moment that Peter and Dewi disappeared into the tunnel, Patchy Davis was seated in the favorite window seat of The Jolly Fishermen and sipping a tot of rum. Facing him across the table sat Joanna looking more wrinkled and rosy in the bright sunlight that flooded through the leaded window and shone on the oak rafters of the room.

Patchy was exerting himself to please the woman. "You see," he was saying, "you understand me, Joanna. And for why? Because you are one of the wealthiest women along the coast. Oh ay, but Patchy Davis knows. He knows all about it, does Patchy."

Joanna darted a sharp glance at him. "What do you know, Patchy?" she inquired.

Patchy laughed, and with shoulders shaking, looked around. "The Jolly Fishermen is a snug little tavern, Joanna, and owned entirely by you. Now you're careful and cautious like, and ye've no doubt gotten together a

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CHAPTER FIVE

RECTOR AND COAST GUARD

THE COAST GUARD STATION was a little, whitewashed cottage situated somewhat boisterously on the top of the headland, and overlooking the Channel. The constant quiver and flap of the flag outside bore eloquent testimony of the storminess of the site.

Except for the flagpole in the middle of the close-cropped lawn and the iron bars at the window, it differed little from the other cottages sprinkled about the coast.

Captain Handel Morgan lived at the station with Dai, nicknamed "Slippers." Dai "Slippers" did the household tasks, overhauled the armory, and attended to the flag every morning and night.

Captain Morgan was the Crown representative for the area, and his jurisdiction extended for over twenty miles

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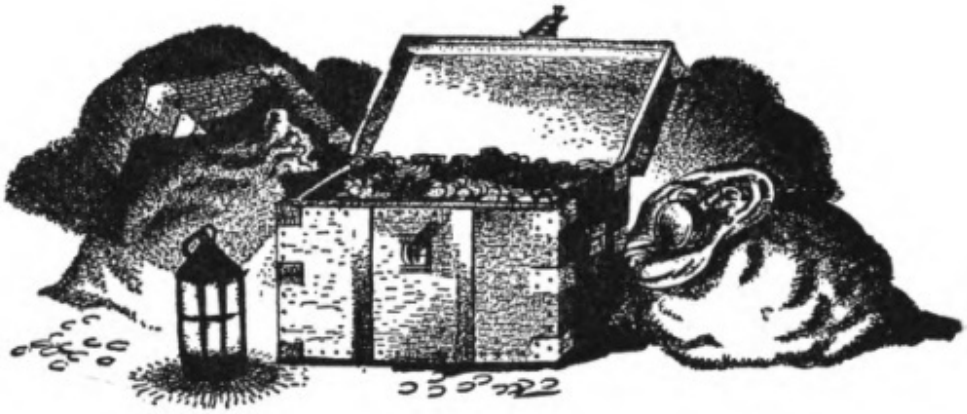

CHAPTER SIX

THE SPANISH LADY

WITH THUMPING HEARTS and leaden legs Peter and Dewi had raced wildly along the passage that wound and spun its serpentine way deeper and deeper into the depths of the cliff. The air had taken on sharp freshness, and at times the boys felt a cold breeze whipping across their hot faces. Always their path led them down—gently sloping at first until it became almost a sharp drop.

Peter was gradually forming the opinion that they would soon find themselves on the sandy bed of the foreshore, and would possibly find a means of escape through one of the lofty caves that opened their big mouths to the lash of the sea.

Dewi was dismal. He was never at his best while running from danger. He was essentially a boy of vigorous action and present trouble. Besides, a gnawing at his stomach reminded him that some considerable time had elapsed since he had eaten. His thoughts switched quickly from golden pieces of eight to meat pasties of gargantuan proportions and steaming bowls of hot soup.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SMOKE SIGNAL

DAI "SLIPPERS" WIPED his forehead with the lower sleeve of his thick woolen jersey, and spat accurately over the cliff.

He looked casually around and then flopped down on a clump of springy turf. In front of him was the sheer drop of the cliff and the swaying tide of the Channel; behind and to his right the rectory house. By turning his head slightly he could see the silvery glitter of the brook which chuckled onward to disappear in a distant smother over the cliff and to cascade on to the foreshore below.

Dai felt bitter that he should have had to climb the cliff to survey the surrounding country.

"Two days they had been," he reflected, "two days covering every nook and cranny of the coast, searching for those two harum scarum boys. It wasn't right for a man of his age to be clambering over rocks and stubbing his toes against boulders. Kids ought to be kept under lock and key."

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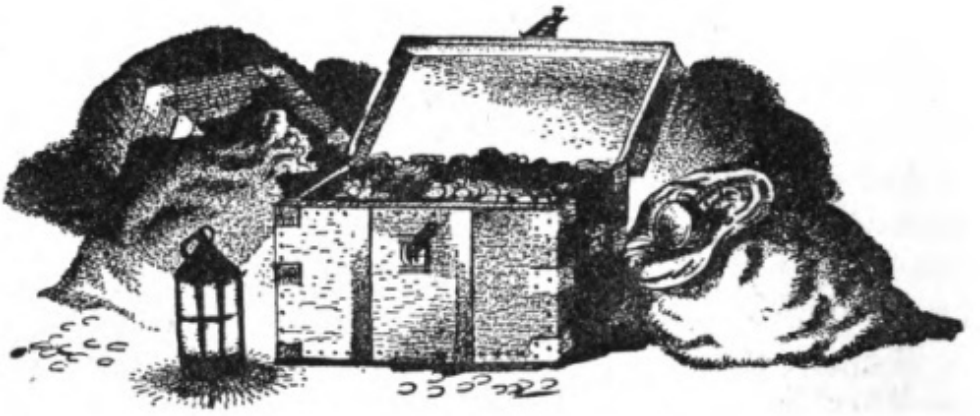

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RECTOR DISAPPEARS

BLACK CLOUDS ROLLED across the bay and cast sinister moon shadows across the white smother of the waves. Little flurries of rain dashed angrily against the leaded windows of The Jolly Fishermen. Crouched behind a clump of bushes Dai "Slippers" listened miserably to the hoarse whispers of his superior. He was heartily sick of the business and looking forward to his fireside and a hot toddy.

Morgan's voice reached his ears in what was meant to be a carrying whisper, "I've got the place surrounded and every exit cornered. We'll go up to the front door. Come on, reverend, keep your gun ready."

He moved off cautiously. Dai trotted up to him but was ordered to return to his vantage point. He raised the collar of his oilskin and peered dismally through the darkness at the retreating figure of Captain Morgan and the rector. By now the wind was getting up and driving rain across the face of the inn. The two men bent their heads against the storm and moved cautiously up to the front door.

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"Now is our chance," muttered Morgan, and seizing the big iron knocker sent it thundering against the door. The sound echoed through the house. There was a pause. The rector looked at the coast guard.

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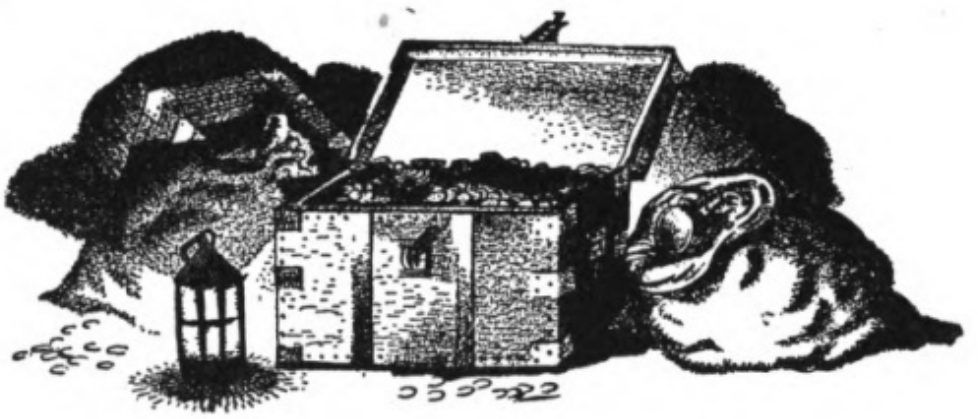

CHAPTER NINE

STRANGE MEETING

DEWI'S ARM FELT as if it was on fire. He rolled over the cabin floor and kicked his corded legs at Peter's back. Peter stirred drowsily and waking, groaned.

The strain of their hurried journey through the tunnels had taken toll of them and in spite of their bonds they had fallen asleep.

Dewi blinked owlishly at Peter and sighed. "Come on, Peter," he said softly, "this is no time for sleeping."

It was some time before full consciousness returned to Peter. He looked across at his friend. He was feeling extremely miserable, cold, and very sorry for himself.

"Golly, but we're in a frightful mess, Dewi," he said.

"What about that woman?" Dewi asked with a quick glance at the cabin door. "We must get away before she comes back."

Peter squirmed into a sitting position and looked around the cabin. His eye took in the piled boxes of gold coin, the bales of silk and the small kegs all littered in wildest profusion around the cabin. He sighed.

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CHAPTER TEN

GULL ISLAND

SOME TIME LATER the rector and the two boys found themselves at the foot of a stout ladder that stretched up into the darkness of the roof.

The rector tied the lantern to his waist, and with surprising dexterity swung his foot onto the bottom rung and quickly climbed upwards.

He looked back and motioned the boys to follow him.

Nothing loth, Peter grasped the ladder and followed

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RECTOR HAS A PLAN

HANDEL MORGAN TUGGED angrily at his whiskers and blinked furiously at the rector.

"You say you left the boy at the inn?"

"Yes, with a strict injunction not to look for trouble."

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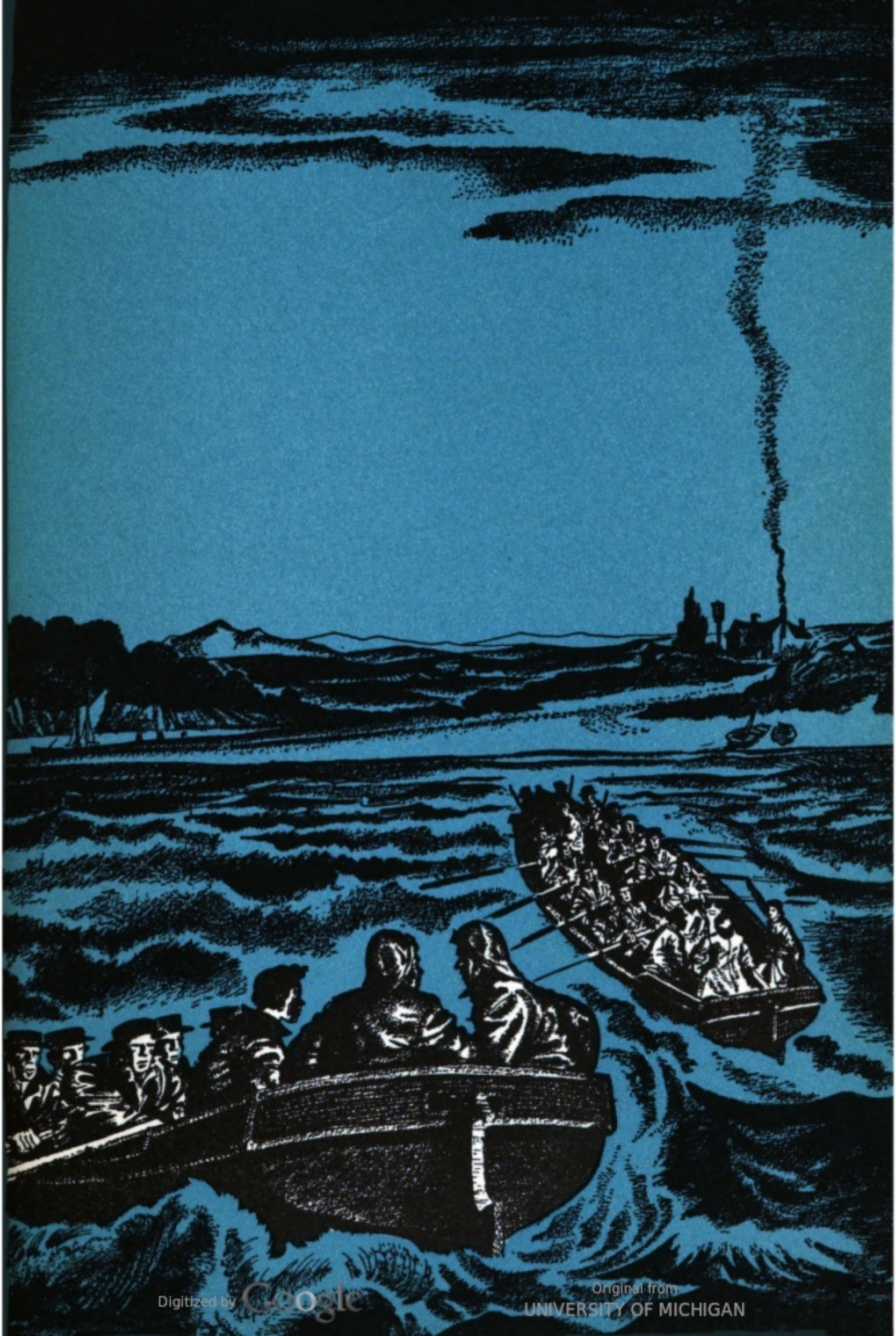

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CHAPTER TWELVE

DAFT SAMMY

"I THINK YOU must have lost your reason," snapped Joanna, staring fiercely at the back of Sammy's head.

Sammy did not answer, but reached out for another handful of seaweed which he carefully placed on the glowing embers of the fire. The smoke billowed and rolled up the chimney. Sammy looked at it with satisfaction, and glanced around at the dark walls of the coffee room. There was a wild look in his eyes. His hair was tousled, and his white face had taken on an unearthly pallor.

"Well—" said Joanna, "have you finished?"

"Not yet," he muttered. "The fools—to pit their puny wits against me. Do they think they can send me to the gallows?"

"But that smoke will be seen for miles around, Sammy. It's light. Everyone will see it. I hope they won't be watching."

Sammy laughed wildly.

"But I want them to see it. I want everyone to see it."

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE END OF THE SPANISH LADY

HANDEL MORGAN LED his party to the inn without any loss of time. He had decided to dispense with subtlety and attack bull fashion and without preliminaries. He felt that at last he was getting to grips with the problem, and felt very satisfied with himself. He had sent a party of men around to the Bishop's Rock to close that bolt hole, and now looked forward with intense delight to the prospect of cornering the rats in their holes.

He stormed along the stone-flagged passage leading to the coffee room, and flung open the door. The others trooped behind him rather breathlessly and not quite knowing what to expect.

The room was empty. A dull fire smouldered lazily in the grate. All around the hearth there were fragments of seaweed and little bits of damp straw.

"Ha!" said Morgan. "Seaweed."

The rector took out his handkerchief and blew his nose

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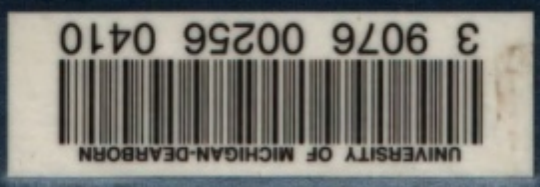

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