



My father was not a rich man. He had a small estate in Nottinghamshire. I was the third of five sons. When I was fourteen, I entered Emanuel College in Cambridge. For three years, I applied myself to my studies. But soon, the costs of college grew too great. I left school and became an apprentice to Mr. James Bates, a famous surgeon in London. I stayed with him for four years. At the same time, I was also able to learn navigation and some mathematics. Such knowledge is useful to those who travel. I had always believed that, some-time or another, I would journey about the world.

When I left Mr. Bates, I returned to my father. With his help, and the help of some other relatives, I spent almost three years in Holland continuing my study of medicine. I knew a surgeon's skills are always in demand on long voyages.

Soon after I returned to England, I secured a position as ship's surgeon on the *Swallow*. There I served for three and a half years, voyaging to the Middle East and other places. When I came back, I decided to settle in London. Mr. Bates, my former master, recommended me to several patients. In this way, I was able to start up a private practice. I bought a small house and married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter of Mr. Edmund Burton, who made a handsome living selling stockings. He gave us a generous wedding present, a small fortune in cash.

But my good master, James Bates, died two years later. I no longer had someone referring patients to me and my business began to fail. I refused to do as other doctors and take advantage of my clients by overcharging or performing unnecessary surgeries. Instead, I decided to go to sea again. I served as surgeon on two ships and, for six years, made several voyages, including trips to the East and West Indies. I spent my leisure hours reading the best authors, ancient and modern. When ashore, I carefully observed the locals. I studied their culture and language, proving to have a talent for such learning.

Eventually, I grew weary of the sea once more. Intending to stay at home with my wife and family, I moved my business to a port city, expecting to find customers among the sailors. After three years of hoping my business fortunes would improve, I



accepted an offer from Captain William Prichard of the ship *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South Seas. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699. Our voyage was—at first—very successful.

Then, misfortune struck. While passing from the South Seas to the East Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the northwest of Tasmania. Twelve members of our crew had already died from too much work and too little food. The rest were very weak indeed. On the 5th of November, the beginning of summer in those parts, a thick haze obscured the view from the ship. Suddenly, a seaman spied a rock close by, but the wind was so strong that we crashed into it. The boat split apart on impact. Six of the crew—including me—let down a lifeboat and managed, with great difficulty, to get clear of the ship and the rock. We rowed about nine miles. We could row no longer. All we

could do next was trust our fate to the mercy of the sea.

In about half an hour, we were overtaken by a sudden storm. The boat capsized. What became of the others in the lifeboat or my companions who were left on the *Antelope*, I do not know. I assume they were all lost. As for me, I swam as well as my limited strength would allow. Just when I was almost completely exhausted, I found I could stand. The storm was nearly over.

I had to walk through the shallows for nearly an hour before I finally reached the shore. I guessed it to be about eight o'clock in the evening. I continued inland for perhaps half a mile, without seeing any sign of houses or inhabitants. Perhaps I was so weak, I simply failed to see them. Needless to say, I was exhausted. That, along with the heat and the half-pint of brandy I drank as I left the ship, put me much in need of sleep. I lay down on my back in the grass, which was very short and soft, and slept more soundly than I had ever done in my life.

I estimate I lay there lifeless for at least nine hours. When I awoke, it was daybreak. I attempted to rise, but was unable to move. I discovered that my arms and legs were solidly fastened to the ground. My hair, which was long and thick, was tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ropes across my body from my armpits to my thighs. I could only look up. The sun began

to grow hot. The light hurt my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me, but could see nothing except the sky.

Suddenly, I felt something moving up my left leg. It advanced gently forward over my chest, stopping just before my chin. Bending my eyes down as much as I could, I saw a human creature not six inches high with a bow and arrow in his hands and a quiver on his back. In the meantime, what felt like at least forty more of the same creatures followed the first. Completely astonished, I roared so loudly that they all ran back in fright. Some of them, I learned later, were hurt leaping to the ground in their panic. However, they soon returned. One brave soul risked approaching close enough to get a full view of my face. His eyes opened wide with awe and he cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, "*Hekinah degul.*" The others repeated the same words several times, but I did not know what they meant. As the reader should appreciate, I was feeling rather uneasy at this point.

Struggling to get loose, I discovered how I was bound. Lifting my arm toward my face, I saw the pegs that had fastened my left arm to the ground. At the same time, with a violent pull (which hurt quite a bit), I loosened the strings that tied my hair down on the left side. I was, at last, able to turn my head, though only about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time before I could grab one.

There was a great shout. A wee voice cried aloud, "*Tolgo phonac.*" In an instant, perhaps a hundred tiny arrows pierced my left hand like so many needles. They followed that volley with another flight of arrows, just as we do with bombs in Europe. I suppose many of them fell on my body, but I did not feel them. I did feel a few on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I groaned with grief and pain. When I attempted once again to get loose, they discharged another volley, larger than the first. Some of them attempted to stick spears in my side. Luckily, I was wearing a leather vest, which they could not pierce.

I devised a plan. I would simply lie still until nightfall. With my left arm already loose, I reckoned I could easily free myself. I had every reason to believe, as well, I could defeat an army of these miniature creatures. But fate was against me.

No more arrows flew. But, judging from the noise, many more of the creatures had assembled. About four yards from my right ear, I heard a knocking for more than an hour. Turning my head as best I could, I saw them building something like a stage. It could hold four natives about a foot and a half from the ground. Two or three ladders were placed to allow them to climb onto it. From that stage, one of the creatures, who seemed to be an important person, recited a long speech to me. I didn't understand a syllable.

I should have mentioned that before the oration began, he cried out three times, "*Langro dehul san.*" Immediately, about fifty of the inhabitants cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head. I could now turn and observe the gentleman who was speaking. He appeared to be middle-aged, and taller than any of the other three waiting upon him. The first, whom I estimated to be about as long as my middle finger, was his page. The second and third stood on either side and supported him. As for the speechmaker, he acted very much like orators in our country. Though I could not understand what he said, I could understand what he meant. At times he made threats. At other times he made promises. His gestures expressed pity and kindness.

I answered briefly and meekly in words and gestures. But then, famished with hunger, I let my impatience show a bit. I put my finger to my mouth to indicate that I wanted food. The *hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I learned later) understood me very well. Climbing down from the stage, he barked a command. Some ladders were propped against me. No fewer than a hundred citizens climbed up to my mouth. They carried baskets full of meat. The king had ordered that these be provided the moment he learned of my arrival.

There was a variety of meat. I did not recognize the taste of anything. There were shoulders,

legs, and loins, shaped like mutton. Each was smaller than a wing of the smallest bird in England. I ate them two or three to a mouthful. I consumed three loaves of bread at a time. Each was the size of a bullet. They supplied me as fast as they could, astonished at my appetite. I then made a sign that I wanted drink. They knew now that a small quantity would not suffice me. These clever folk quickly took one of their largest barrels, rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top. I downed it in a single gulp. After all, it was less than half a pint and tasted more delicious than Burgundy wine.

They brought me a second barrel, which I drank in the same manner. I made signs for more, but they had none left. When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy and danced on my chest, repeating several times as before, "*Hekinah degul.*" They signaled to me to throw down the two hogsheds. They warned the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, "*Borach mevolah.*" When they saw the wine casks flying through the air, everyone shouted, "*Hekinah degul.*"

I have a confession. I was tempted, while they were scurrying back and forth across my body, to seize forty or fifty and dash them against the ground. But I remembered the sting of their arrows and wondered if they could do even worse to me. And there was the matter of the promise of

honor I made with my previous gestures. Besides, I now considered myself bound by the laws of hospitality. Furthermore, I admired the courage of these pint-sized people. Though one of my hands was free, they ventured out fearlessly onto the body of a giant, before whom they should have trembled.

When they saw that I was no longer demanding food, a person of high rank appeared before me. He climbed up my right leg and proceeded to my face with a dozen followers. He placed his royal credentials close to my eyes. Showing neither fear nor anger, he spoke quite seriously for about ten minutes. He often pointed in the direction—I found out later—of the capital city, about a half-mile away. The Emperor, along with his council, had decided I must be brought there.

I answered briefly but was not understood. I made a gesture with my loose hand (but well above his Excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his attendants) to indicate that I wanted to be freed. It appeared he understood me, for he shook his head in disapproval. Instead, he indicated that I must continue as their prisoner. However, he made other signs to communicate that I would be well fed and gently treated.

I once more thought about breaking the strings that bound me. But the sting of arrows on my face and hands was still fresh in my mind. In fact, some of the arrows were still in my flesh. With

the numbers of natives surrounding me increasing, I decided it best to let them do with me as they pleased. As soon as I signaled my submission, a great shout arose, the words "*Peplom selan*" frequently repeated. A large number of wee folk on my left loosened the cords there. Able at last to turn on my side, I immediately proceeded to relieve myself. The people, guessing correctly what I was about to do, parted to avoid the downpour.

Before this, they had daubed my face and both my hands with a pleasant smelling ointment. In a few minutes, it removed all the pain from their arrows. Being relatively comfortable and completely sated with food and drink for the first time in hours, I became drowsy. I slept about eight hours, I was later told. That was not surprising. By order of the Emperor, a sleeping potion had been mixed into my wine.

It seems a special messenger had notified the Emperor the moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground. Everything I've just described had been decided then. I would be tied up in the night while I slept. Plenty of meat and drink would be prepared. A machine was prepared to carry me to the capital city.

To some, this may appear to have been a very bold and dangerous plan. No prince of Europe would have the courage or intelligence to do the same. However, in my opinion, it was both sensible and generous. Suppose these people had tried

to kill me with their spears and arrows while I was asleep? I would certainly have awakened with the first arrow. My anger and strength would have enabled me to break the strings with which I was tied. At that point, I would have shown no mercy.

The Emperor had long encouraged his subjects through his support of learning. As a result, his people are excellent mathematicians who can apply their skills. Long before my arrival, they already had constructed several machines—on wheels—for hauling trees and other great weights. The emperor's largest warships—some as long as nine feet—are built in the woods right where the timber grows and then hauled three or four hundred yards to the sea.

Upon my arrival, five hundred carpenters and engineers had immediately set to work building the greatest machine the country had ever known. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground. About seven feet long and four wide, it was set on twenty-two wheels. A shout announced the arrival of this marvel, which had been built in a matter of hours. It was put directly beside me. Everything was now in place for the greatest challenge, lifting me onto the vehicle. Eighty poles, each one-foot high, were erected. Using hooks, workmen fastened heavy-duty cords—similar to the twine we use for packages—to many sturdy cloths. Hundreds of laborers slung these around my neck, hands, trunk, and legs.

Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to tighten these cords. Each was fastened by pulley to one of the poles. In less than three hours, I was raised onto the vehicle and securely tied. All this I was told later. While the work went on, I had been in a deep sleep, under the influence of the medicines in my liquor.

Fifteen hundred of the emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, pulled me towards the capital city. As I said, it was a distance of about a half-mile.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awoke due to a ridiculous accident. The vehicle had been stopped for an adjustment of some sort. Two or three of the young natives, curious to see me asleep, climbed up to take a look. They quietly approached my face. One of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his spear a good way up my left nostril. This tickled my nose like a feather. I sneezed violently. They snuck off before anyone saw them. It was not until three weeks later that I learned what had awakened me so suddenly.

We continued on all day. At night we rested. Five hundred guards stood on each side of me; half held torches. The other half held bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should stir. The next morning at sunrise we continued our march and arrived outside the city gates about noon. The emperor and all his court came out to meet us. The assem-

bled ministers would not, however, permit his majesty to risk climbing onto me.

Where we stopped there stood an ancient temple, said to be the largest in the whole kingdom. Ever since someone committed a terrible murder there, it had not been used. The king and his council had declared I would stay in this imposing structure. The great gate on its northern side was about four feet high and almost two feet wide. I could easily creep through it. On each side of the gate was a small window, less than six inches from the ground. There, the king's own blacksmith fastened ninety-one chains, rather like those that hang from a lady's watch in Europe. Using these chains, my left leg was locked with thirty-six padlocks. About twenty feet from this temple, on the other side of the great highway, there was a tower at least five feet high. The emperor climbed it, with many important officers of his court, to look me over. This I was also told later. I could not see them.

More than one hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town for the same purpose. And, in spite of my guards, I believe no less than ten thousand citizens mounted my body by climbing ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued, forbidding such sightseeing on pain of death.

Convinced it was impossible for me to break loose, the workmen cut all the strings that bound me. I stood up immediately, as downhearted as I

had ever been in my life. The chains were about six feet long, allowing me to creep into the temple and lie full length. I discovered I could also walk backwards and forwards in a semicircle. The clamor that arose from the people at seeing me rise and walk is beyond description.