The ISLAND of REGENERATION

By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RALPH PAYNE

SYNOPSIS.

A young woman cast ashore on a lonely island, a mutinous crew, a mysterious young white man, dressed like a savage, and shadowy figures that flit through the jungle by night make up her own ideas. She decides that Whittaker is a murderer and that the man in John Bull clothes is a confederate of his. Whittaker tells her that when a man is left alone on an island he is apt to become highly specialized product of his environment. Whittaker is a specialized product of the primeval jungle. Bull-Hopkins is a specialized product of the sea. Whittaker tells her that he is the king of the island and that she is his property. Bull-Hopkins tells her that he is only a passenger and that Whittaker is a murderer. Whittaker shows her a cave where he has stored away the bodies of the men he has killed. Bull-Hopkins tells her that he is only a passenger on an island. Three years before he was a passenger on the ship Whittaker. There were fourteen men in the crew and Whittaker killed a dozen of them with a rifle which he had smuggled aboard. Bull-Hopkins and the captain of the ship were the only ones left. The woman recognizes Whittaker as Lieutenant Commander Whittaker, who was in charge of the gunnery department of the battleship Alabama. Bull-Hopkins declares that Whittaker is insane because of his fear of capture. Whittaker declares Bull-Hopkins is an American crimper. Whittaker tells her that he will marry no one but her. Bull-Hopkins tells her that Whittaker is insane and that he will kill her if she marries Whittaker. Whittaker declares Bull-Hopkins is a coward and a liar. Bull-Hopkins declares that Whittaker is a murderer. Whittaker declares that Bull-Hopkins has failed when clothed with authority.

CHAPTER XX—Continued.

And then he discovered that he wanted her more than he had ever desired her before; that she was more necessary to him than ever he had dreamed she would be; that here was the opportunity of honor or duty, indeed, but of love, overwhelming, obsessing. And then he admitted that she was purely, even business itself; that her hand behaved to her like a cur, that he had been neither grateful, nor kind, nor tender, nor loving. He began to wonder tearfully if, after having failed so egregiously and terribly, there was any possible chance that she would ever care for him again. Fate had brought her into intimate contact, he realized, with two men. One had treated her outrageously in the beginning and had nobly made amends. He hated Langford, and yet his sense of justice forced him to admit that he had played the man at last, while he, the islander, had treated her out-rageously and in the end had played the fool. Was there a chance that she would forgive him?

The desire to see her, to plead with her, to beg her forgiveness—and he knew how far a base one, he thanked God — was so great that he could not master it. He rose to his feet and looked out of the open port hole. The sun was graying the east. Attired as he was in the loose shirt and trousers in which he had left dawn, which were not unlike the tunic that he habitually wore, save that they were of soft, luxurious silk, he opened the door of the cabin, stepped out through the silent ward room—he had the natural savage art of treading without a sound—ran lightly up the companion ladder and stepped upon the deck. The officer of the watch and his middyman did not disturbe him. Their eyes were elsewhere. He ran swiftly across the deck and stopped at the gangway. A marine stood there and started forward as he approached.

"That's my island," said the man. "I'm going to swim off to it, and I don't wish to be followed."

"It's a long swim, sir," ventured the marine, scarcely knowing what to do.

He stepped fairly in the gangway as if to bar the exit.

"It is nothing to me," said the man "Stand aside!"

"Mr. Hopkins" called the marine, turning toward the officer of the deck.

"Aye, aye," came from Mr. Hopkins as he turned and started forward on the gangway.

The next moment the man had seized the marine in a grip which left him helpless, lifted him gently over the gangway, dropped him carelessly upon the deck and had dashed through the air into the water.

By the time Mr. Hopkins reached the gangway the half-dazed marine had risen to his feet.

"What is it?"

"Why, it's the castaway, sir, the wild man that we brought ashore to-day."

"Well."

"He said he wanted to swim to the shore and did not want to be followed."

"Why didn't you stop him?"

"I did try, sir, but he picked me up as if I had been a baby and threw me aside and went overboard."

The officer was in a quandary. He had received no orders to prevent the man from going out of the ship. He was not quite sure what his duty was. At any rate, he turned to the quartermaster and bade him call away a cutter for the cutter swinging astern. He directed the coxswain to bring the boat to the gangway and then and there put the matter to the captain and ask his orders.

Capt. Ashby, as it happened, was awake. He came on deck immediately in his pajamas and received confirmation of the middyman's extraordinary story from the watch officer. It was light enough now for the waters and the shore clearly to be seen. The captain stared over the side. He could make out the man's head swimming through the opening in the barrier. He could see the splash that he made as his rapid progress through the quiet seas.

"Mr. Hopkins," he said, after a moment's thought, "tell Mr. Cady—the middyman of the watch—to take the boat and follow after. If the man gets safely to the shore, there are not to be forty him him but to come back and report. he needs help, they are to take him aboard and bring him back to the ship."

So much time was lost in these preliminaries, however, that when the order was executed and the boat had scarcely reached the entrance to the barrier when the man saw the meaning of the stopping of the engines and the steering through the shallow waters to the beach. There was, therefore, nothing for Mr. Cady to do but to turn back and report the matter to the captain. When he reached the deck of the cruiser he found the executive officer with the chaplain and the surgeon who had been summoned from their berths in the wardroom with the captain. By Mr. Whittaker's advice, he and the chaplain were the messengers sent ashore to see what had happened and what was to be done.

There was considerable anxiety in the minds of the officers who had been dealing with the affair heretofore as to what conditions might be. They did not know the man. They did not know what he might be doing, or to what danger he might be exposing those who still pitied most profoundly, might be exposed. Of all with whom he had come in contact, the lieutenant commander and the chaplain were those who would have the most influence over the man of the island, before they were dispatched to the island.

Another boat crew was therefore called away and the two gentlemen were rowed ashore. It was not yet sunrise but still sufficiently light to make them see quite well. They were at a loss at first what to do, for they had not yet had opportunity for a long conference. They had learned that the cave in which the woman dwelt was upon the other side and that little rose between the landing place and the cave. They knew, of course, that they could get to it by following the shores of the island, but they had a reasonably accurate idea of its size and knew that such a walk would take a great deal of time. Time was precious if they were themselves more and more fearful with every moment.

Lying Upon the Sands.

"Those clothes, have you examined them?"

"No," said the chaplain, "it has been too dark in the first place, and—"

"I noticed at them," said Mr. Whittaker. "Perhaps we may find some new clew in them."

The lieutenant-commander stooped over the pathetic little heap of worn garments. Those were the blouse, the skirt, the stockings, and the worn and torn white shoes. The latter he put them as if to weigh them down, and then he carried them down to the water's reach of the highest tide. The tide was then just coming in. He knew that the Eddie had been opened and laid face downward on the clothes. Mr. Whittaker lifted it up reverently. He observed as he did so that his own pencil, which he had left, he now remembered, with the woman, lay by the south the open book. On the blank leaves between the text and fore were some something was written. No mention of any writing had been made in the affidavit of the night before. He lifted it, turned the book over to see what was written on the top of the ripping and stuffed it into his pocket.

"Do you find anything" asked the chaplain.

There is writing on the page," said the islander "In the fragment I found. Let's out!"

Man," he read slowly, studying each word in the dim light, "I loved you. In one sense, I do not. You was unworthy of you, perhaps, but not in another sense. You alone of my heart. The past was a frightful mistake for which I should—no, he blacked out here which I could not suffer. I tried you with the world by your side. The world was kind, but you were not here. You broke my soul and killed something within me which I had thought good, but which you had revived. No power could revive it again. I realize now that Langford, for I do not love him. I will not marry you. You alone of my heart. I will not go back to the world now I have no desire to do so and I cannot live alone with you upon the island. You will not go without me, and so I will go first by myself alone. You will think of me. I know that. I am in the world. Perhaps you will judge your self harshly, but I do not judge you at all. You did not know, you did not understand. It came too suddenly upon you. You cannot forget me, but do not regret ever me and remember me to the very last that I loved you. Goodby. May God bless you, and may he pity me!"

Underneath she had written the fragmental name which he had loved to call her, "Woman."

To characterize was the letter that that superscription was superscription? thought Mr. Whittaker daily a woman could have written it. She had given up all of his life, because with her in it there was no solution of it for her. Her conscience pitiful it sounded there in the gray of that morning in that lone island, and left no trace of the woman he did not love her. And she had gone out of it with earnest for him, for she had loved him, and he knew her heart. No wonder that, divining this much, she had not suddenly upon you. She had not suddenly upon you. You cannot forget me, but do not regret ever me and remember