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“Perhaps, I am not of the stuff that conquerors are made,” he went on. “Perhaps, if I were, I should be thinking differently. It comes to me sometimes that I may be one of those intended only to prepare the way—that for me there may be only the endless struggle. I may have to face unpopularity, abuse, failure. She won’t mind.” “I wonder if you’re right,” mused Mrs. Phillips. “He does often say that he’d just as soon I didn’t talk about them.” “What is it that you want me to do?” she said, jumping up from her seat. “Set me a task, and if I don’t go mad over it, I’ll get through it. There are the account books. Give them to me. I don’t suppose I can see the figures, but I’ll try to see them.” We were close in to the shore and working in closer, stern-first, when a school of fish was sighted. The fuse was ignited and the stick of dynamite thrown. With the explosion, the surface of the water was broken by the flash of leaping fish. At the same instant the woods broke into life. A score of naked savages, armed with bows and arrows, spears, and Sniders, burst out upon the shore. At the same moment our boat’s crew lifted their rifles. And thus the opposing parties faced each other, while our extra boys dived over after the stunned fish. At the time we tried out our rifles we put up our barbed wire railings. The Minota, crown-decked, without any house, and with a rail six inches high, was too accessible to boarders. So brass stanchions were screwed into the rail and a double row of barbed wire stretched around her

from stem to stern and back again. Which was all very well as a protection from savages, but it was mighty uncomfortable to those on board when the Minota took to jumping and plunging in a sea-way. When one dislikes sliding down upon the lee-rail barbed wire, and when he dares not catch hold of the weather-rail barbed wire to save himself from sliding, and when, with these various disinclinations, he finds himself on a smooth flush-deck that is heeled over at an angle of forty-five degrees, some of the delights of Solomon Islands cruising may be comprehended. Also, it must be remembered, the penalty of a fall into the barbed wire is more than the mere scratches, for each scratch is practically certain to become a venomous ulcer. That caution will not save one from the wire was evidenced one fine morning when we were running along the Malaita coast with the breeze on our quarter. The wind was fresh, and a tidy sea was making. A black boy was at the wheel. Captain Jansen, Mr. Jacobsen (the mate), Charmian, and I had just sat down on deck to breakfast. Three unusually large seas caught us. The boy at the wheel lost his head. Three times the Minota was swept. The breakfast was rushed over the lee-rail. The knives and forks went through the scuppers; a boy aft went clean overboard and was dragged back; and our doughty skipper lay half inboard and half out, jammed in the barbed wire. After that, for the rest of the cruise, our joint use of the several remaining eating utensils was a splendid example of primitive communism. On the Eugenie, however, it was even worse, for we had but one teaspoon among four of us—but the

Eugenie is another story.