

When do peach blossoms bloom

I shall never forget the first time, while talking to me, that he squashed a mosquito. The stinging pest had settled in the middle of his back between his shoulders. Without interrupting the flow of conversation, without dropping even a syllable, his clenched fist shot up in the air, curved backward, and smote his back between the shoulders, killing the mosquito and making his frame resound like a bass drum. It reminded me of nothing so much as of horses kicking the woodwork in their stalls. 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. He sketched out their plans to her. It seemed to be all going in at one ear and out at the other. What was the matter with her? Perhaps she was tired without knowing it. She would get him to tell her all about it to-morrow. Also, to-morrow, she would tell him about Phillips, and ask his advice. It was really quite late. If he talked any more now, it would give her a headache. She felt it coming on. “Quite alone. I take a German maid with me, and never speak a word to anyone else on the journey.” All was plain again. The *Snark* was in 19° south latitude. The world wasn’t as big around there as at the equator. Therefore, every mile of westing at 19° south was more than a minute of longitude; for sixty miles were sixty

miles, but sixty minutes are sixty miles only at the equator.

George Francis Train broke Jules Verne's record of around the world. But any man that wants can break George Francis Train's record. Such a man would need only to go, in a fast steamer, to the latitude of Cape Horn, and sail due east all the way around. The world is very small in that latitude, and there is no land in the way to turn him out of his course. If his steamer maintained sixteen knots, he would circumnavigate the globe in just about forty days.