

THE WORLD

Written for the "Record" by
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Alone on the ship with Bruno, de Rougement sailed for thirteen days until he foundered on a reef off the Australian coast. The ship was piled on the reef. De Rougement and Bruno took to the sea.

Feeling himself sinking with exhaustion, de Rougement held on to the tip of Bruno's tail with his teeth until the faithful animal pulled him ashore.

HE found himself on a small sand-pit of an island, 100 yards long, ten yards wide and eight feet above sea-level at high water.

Next day the storm having gone down he was able to get out to the wreck. He got a tomahawk, a bow and arrows, a stiletto and some Indian corn seeds from the ship.

To grow food, he filled a large turtle with sand and clay, wetted it with turtle's blood and puddled it. He planted the corn seed.

The crop did well and later he transplanted it.

Collecting the old used pearl shells from the ship, he next made himself a house out of them. He fed himself by fishing and by bringing down birds with his bow and arrows.

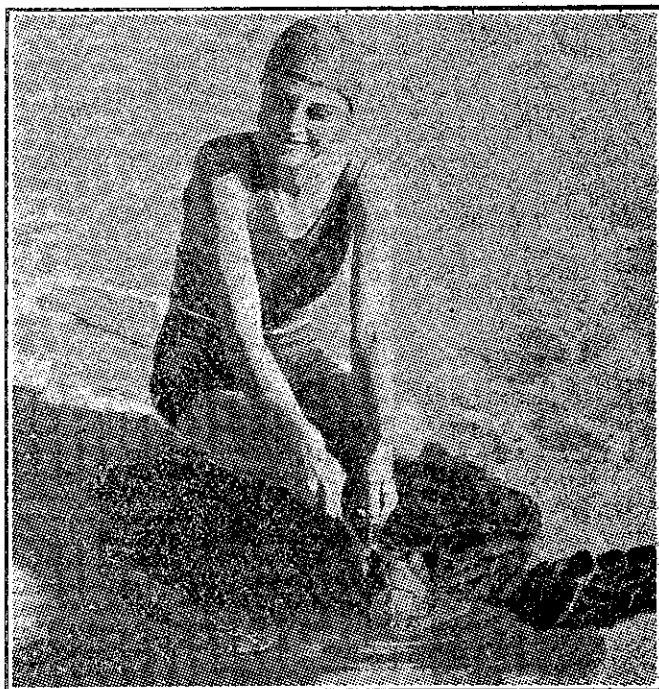
To ward off ennui and the depression caused by his solitary state, he took up the exercise of gymnastics. He became a proficient tumbler and acrobat and could turn two or three somersaults in the air while diving down from the sloping roof of his pearl shell hut, before reaching the ground.

Suicide Averted

OFTEN he rushed into the sea to drown himself, the faithful Bruno barking meanwhile in anguish at his side, but he would cure himself of the desire by catching hold of a large turtle and swimming on the creature's back until his thoughts had been diverted into other channels.

He liked swimming on turtles. This is how he did it.

He would wade out and catching a big one of 600lb. weight, he would sit astride its back.



—Australian Publicity Dept., photo.

AND YET

They do ride turtles there.

Away would swim the startled turtle. De Rougement steered it in a curious way. To make it turn left, he put his foot in its right eye, and vice versa to make it turn right.

To make it stop, he simply put his two big toes over the creature's eyes. Sometimes he would go a mile out to sea on these rides.

TIME hung on his hands. He made a drum to beat from shark skins to cheer himself up, and he fastened messages round the necks of pelicans, stating his predicament, but the birds never came back.

Often he would preach long sermons on Gospel texts to the faithful Bruno.

Visitors Arrive

ONE day he saw a catamaran floating near his island, followed by sharks. He drew the boat ashore and found four blacks lying on board, all emaciated and exhausted with hunger and thirst.

One of them was a woman, Yamba, who was to become his faithful companion and "wife."

Before this, de Rougement had made a small boat from the timber of the wreck. Now, with the black people, he set out to their habitation down the coast towards the Cambridge Gulf.

HE was well received. The blacks admired his acrobatics. But he grew weary and longed for civilisation. With Yamba he proposed a trip overland.

They wandered on for many days. Once, when he was lassoing a young buffalo calf from a tree, the angry bull buffalo approached and endangered the life of Yamba.

From the tree de Rougement fired with his bow and arrow. The arrow took the buffalo in the eye and stopped him. De Rougement fired at the other eye. The buffalo was blinded. He descended from the tree and dispatched the animal with his tomahawk.

That evening he felt the chills of fever. He could not get warm. To get heat, he slit the carcass of the buffalo from end to end and crawled into the interior.

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—Australian Publicity Dept., photo.

THE SEA THAT HAUNTED DE ROUGEMENT.
... Soothes the city-worn to-day.