

(*Halcyon erythrogastra*) is common. The bird is peculiar to the island, though very closely allied to an African species. It is a beautiful bird of a brilliant blue and white with a red beak. Like many other kingfishers it is not aquatic in its habits, but feeds mainly on locusts and other small terrestrial animals. It has a terribly harsh laughing cry, a feeble imitation of that of its congener of Australia, the laughing jackass.

We met with several flocks of wild gallinis, which are abundant on the island, but are very difficult to approach. The birds inhabit the slopes of the gorges, which are covered with a thick growth of oil trees (*Jatropha curcas*), which have very much the habit and general appearance of castor-oil plants. The flocks of gallinis station sentries to keep a look-out from some rocky eminence, and these, when once they have discovered an enemy, never lose sight of him, but carefully watch the stalking operations of a sportsman and give warning as soon as he gets too near to their comrades and is just expecting to get a shot.

We returned to the town in the afternoon in order to join a seining party. All English men-of-war on foreign service are provided with a seine net, and a seining party is regarded as a sort of lark or picnic by the Blue-jackets. There are always plenty of volunteers eager to go, and a good many officers are ready to join.

With us, Mr. Cox, the boatswain, was the great man on such occasions, and he enjoyed the sport as much as any one in the ship. The party of volunteers, of perhaps thirty men besides the officers, goes ashore in the afternoon at about four o'clock in one of the cutters with the net in the dingey, the smallest ship's boat. Then the net is payed out, and every one is dressed and prepared for going into the water up to his neck and hauling on the lines. At last in comes the bag of the net, or "cod" as Mr. Cox calls it. It is run up the beach with a final spurt, and then comes the fun of handing out the fish and looking at the many unfamiliar forms, for which the Blue-jackets have all sorts of extraordinary names.

At one haul on the present occasion there was a large shark (*Carcharias sp.*), 14 feet long in the net. Mr. Cox in the dingey following the net as usual as it was drawn in, in order to free it if it should hitch on the bottom, sighted the shark swimming round within the rapidly decreasing circle, and making bolts at the net to try and break through. And the beast would have burst through had not Mr. Cox hammered it on the head with a boat-hook whenever it turned at the net, whilst the men belaboured it with anything they could get hold of as it got drawn into shallow water.