

the communion together at Northam Church, amid a mighty crowd; and then going on board again, hove anchor and sailed out over the Bar before a soft east wind, to the music of sacbut, fife and drum, with discharge of all ordnance, great and small, with cheering of young and old from cliff and strand and quay, and with many a tearful prayer and blessing upon that gallant bark, and all brave hearts on board.

And Mrs. Leigh, who had kissed her sons for the last time after the communion at the altar-steps (and what more fit place for a mother's kiss?) went to the rocky knoll outside the churchyard wall, and watched the ship glide out between the yellow dunes, and lessen slowly hour by hour into the boundless West, till her hull sank below the dim horizon, and her white sails faded away into the gray Atlantic mist, perhaps forever.

And Mrs. Leigh gathered her cloak about her, and bowed her head and worshipped; and then went home to loneliness and prayer.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THEY CAME TO BARBADOS, AND FOUND NO MEN THEREIN.

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark."—COLERIDGE.

LAND! land! land! Yes, there it was, far away to the south and west, beside the setting sun, a long blue bar between the crimson sea and golden sky. Land at last, with fresh streams, and cooling fruits, and free room for cramped and scurvy-weakened limbs. And there, too, might be gold, and gems, and all the wealth of Ind. Who knew? Why not? The old world of fact and prose lay thousands of miles behind them, and before them and around them was the realm of wonder and fable, of boundless hope and possibility. Sick men crawled up out of their stifling hammocks; strong men fell on their knees and gave God thanks; and all eyes and hands were stretched eagerly toward the far blue clouds, fading as the sun sank down, yet rising higher and broader as the ship rushed on before the rich trade-wind, which whispered lovingly round brow and sail, "I am the faithful friend of those who dare!" "Blow freshly, freshlier yet, thou good trade-wind, of whom it is written that He makes the winds His angels, ministering breaths to the heirs of His salvation. Blow freshlier yet, and save, if not me from death, yet her from worse than death. Blow on, and land me at her feet, to call the lost lamb home, and die!"

So murmured Frank to himself, as with straining eyes he gazed upon that first outlier of the New World which held his all. His cheeks were thin and wasted, and the hectic spot on each glowed crimson in the crimson light of the setting sun. A few minutes more, and the rainbows of the West, were gone; emerald and topaz, amethyst and ruby, had faded into silver-gray; and overhead, through the dark sapphire depths, the Moon and Venus reigned above the sea.

"That should be Barbados, your worship," said Drew, the master; "unless my reckoning is far out, which,

Heaven knows, it has no right to be, after such a passage, and God be praised."

"Barbados? I never heard of it."

"Very like, sir: but Yeo and I were here with Captain Drake, and I was here after, too, with poor Captain Barlow; and there is good harborage to the south and west of it, I remember."

"And neither Spaniard, cannibal, or other evil beasts," said Yeo. "A very garden of the Lord, sir, hid away in the seas, for an inheritance to those who love Him. I heard Captain Drake talk of planting it, if ever he had a chance."

"I recollect now," said Amyas, "some talk between him and poor Sir Humphrey about an island here. Would God he had gone thither instead of to Newfoundland!"

"Nay, then," said Yeo, "he is in bliss now with the Lord; and you would not have kept him from that, sir?"

"He would have waited as willingly as he went, if he could have served his queen thereby. But what say you, my masters? How can we do better than to spend a few days here, to get our sick round, before we make the Main, and set to our work?"

All approved the counsel except Frank, who was silent.

"Come, fellow-adventurer," said Cary, "we must have your voice too."

"To my impatience, Will," said he, aside in a low voice, "there is but one place on earth, and I am all day longing for wings to fly thither: but the counsel is right. I approve it."

So the verdict was announced, and received with a hearty cheer by the crew; and long before morning they had run along the southern shore of the island, and were feeling their way into the bay where Bridgetown now stands. All eyes were eagerly fixed on the low wooded hills which slept in the moonlight, spangled by fire-flies, with a million dancing stars; all nostrils drank greedily the fragrant air, which swept from the land, laden with the scent of a thousand flowers; all ears welcomed, as a grateful change from the monotonous whisper and lap of the water, the hum of insects, the snore of the tree-toads, the plaintive notes of the shore-fowl, which fill a tropic night with noisy life.

At last she stopped; at last the cable rattled through the hawsehole; and then, careless of the chance of lurk-

ing Spaniard or Carib, an instinctive cheer burst from every throat. Poor fellows! Amyas had much ado to prevent them going on shore at once, dark as it was, by reminding them that it wanted but two hours of day.

"Never were two such long hours," said one young lad, fidgeting up and down.

"You never were in the Inquisition," said Yeo, "or you'd know better how slow time can run. Stand you still, and give God thanks you're where you are."

"I say, Gunner, be there goold to that island?"

"Never heard of none; and so much the better for it," said Yeo dryly.

"But I say, Gunner," said a poor scurvy-stricken cripple, licking his lips, "be there oranges and limmons there?"

"Not of my seeing; but plenty of good fruit down to the beach, thank the Lord. There comes the dawn at last."

Up flushed the rose, up rushed the sun, and the level rays glittered on the smooth stems of the palm-trees, and threw rainbows across the foam upon the coral-reefs, and gilded lonely uplands far away, where now stands many a stately country-seat and busy engine-house. Long lines of Pelicans went clanging out to sea; the hum of the insects hushed, and a thousand birds burst into jubilant song; a thin blue mist crept upward toward the inner downs, and vanished, leaving them to quiver in the burning glare; the land-breeze, which had blown fresh out to sea all night, died away into glassy calm, and the tropic day was begun.

The sick were lifted over the side, and landed boat-load after boat-load on the beach, to stretch themselves in the shade of the palms; and in half-an-hour the whole crew were scattered on the shore, except some dozen worthy men, who had volunteered to keep watch and ward on board till noon.

And now the first instinctive cry of nature was for fruit! fruit! fruit! The poor lame wretches crawled from place to place plucking greedily the violet grapes of the creeping shore vine, and straining their mouths and blistering their lips with the prickly pears, in spite of Yeo's entreaties and warnings against the thorns. Some of the healthy began hewing down cocoanut-trees to get at the nuts, doing little thereby but blunt their hatchets: till Yeo and

Drew, having mustered half-a-dozen reasonable men, went off inland, and returned in an hour laden with the dainties of that primeval orchard,—with acid junipa-apples, luscious guavas, and crowned ananas, queen of all the fruits, which they had found by hundreds on the broiling ledges of the low tufa-cliffs; and then all, sitting on the sandy turf, defiant of galliwasp and jack-spaniards, and all the weapons of the insect host, partook of the equal banquet, while old blue land-crabs sat in their house-doors and brandished their fists in defiance at the invaders, and solemn cranes stood in the water on the shoals with their heads on one side, and meditated how long it was since they had seen bipeds without feathers breaking the solitude of their isle.

And Frank wandered up and down, silent, but rather in wonder than in sadness, while great Amyas walked after him, his mouth full of junipa-apples, and enacted the part of showman, with a sort of patronizing air, as one who had seen the wonders already, and was above being astonished at them.

"New, new; everything new!" said Frank meditatively. "Oh, awful feeling! All things changed around us, even to the tiniest fly and flower; yet we the same; the same forever!"

Amyas to whom such utterances were altogether sibylline and unintelligible, answered by—

"Look, Frank, that's a colibri. You've heard of colibris?"

Frank looked at the living gem, which hung, loud humming, over some fantastic bloom, and then dashed away, seemingly to call his mate, and whirled and danced with it round and round the flower-starred bushes, flashing fresh rainbows at every shifting of the lights.

Frank watched solemnly awhile, and then—

"Qualis Natura formatrix, si talis formata? Oh, my God, how fair must be Thy real world, if even Thy phantoms are so fair!"

"Phantoms?" asked Amyas uneasily. "That's no ghost, Frank, but a jolly little honey-sucker, with a wee wife, and children no bigger than peas, but yet solid greedy little fellows enough, I'll warrant."

"Not phantoms in thy sense, good fellow, but in the sense of those who know the worthlessness of all below."

"I'll tell you what, brother Frank, you are a great deal

wiser than me, I know; but I can't abide to see you turn up your nose, as it were, at God's good earth. See now, God made all these things; and never a man, perhaps, set eyes on them till fifty years ago; and yet they were as pretty as they are now, ever since the making of the world. And why do you think God could have put them here, then, but to please Himself?"—and Amyas took off his hat—"with the sight of them? Now, I say, brother Frank, what's good enough to please God, is good enough to please you and me."

"Your rebuke is just, dear old simple-hearted fellow; and God forgive me, if with all my learning, which has brought me no profit, and my longings, which have brought me no peace, I presume at moments, sinner that I am, to be more dainty than the Lord Himself. He walked in Paradise among the trees of the garden, Amyas; and so will we, and be content with what He sends. Why should we long for the next world, before we are fit even for this one?"

"And in the meanwhile," said Amyas, "this earth's quite good enough, at least here in Barbados."

"Do you believe," asked Frank, trying to turn his own thoughts, "in those tales of the Spaniards, that the Sirens and Tritons are heard singing in these seas?"

"I can't tell. There's more fish in the water than ever came out of it, and more wonders in the world, I'll warrant, than we ever dreamt of; but I was never in these parts before; and in the South Sea, I must say, I never came across any, though Yeo says he has heard fair music at night up in the Gulf, far away from land."

"The Spaniards report that at certain seasons choirs of these nymphs assemble in the sea, and with ravishing music sing their watery loves. It may be so. For Nature, which has peopled the land with rational souls, may not have left the sea altogether barren of them; above all, when we remember that the ocean is, as it were, the very fount of all fertility, and its slime (as the most learned hold with Thales of Miletus) that prima materia out of which all things were one by one concocted. Therefore, the ancients feigned wisely that Venus, the mother of all living things, whereby they designed the plastic force of nature, was born of the sea-foam, and rising from the deep, floated ashore upon the isles of Greece."

"I don't know what plastic force is; but I wish I had