

had the luck to be by when the pretty poppet came up; however, the nearest thing I ever saw to that was maidens swimming alongside of us when we were in the South Seas, and would have come aboard, too; but Drake sent them all off again for a lot of naughty packs, and I verily believe they were no better. Look at the butterflies, now! Don't you wish you were a boy again, and not too proud to go catching them in your cap?"

And so the two wandered on together through the glorious tropic woods, and then returned to the beach, to find the sick already grown cheerful, and many who that morning could not stir from their hammocks, pacing up and down, and gaining strength with every step.

"Well done, lads!" cried Amyas, "keep a cheerful mind. We will have the music ashore after dinner, for want of mermaids to sing to us, and those that can dance may."

And so those four days were spent; and the men, like school-boys on a holiday, gave themselves up to simple merriment, not forgetting, however, to wash the clothes, take in fresh water, and store up a good supply of such fruit as seemed likely to keep; until, tired with fruitless rambles after gold, which they expected to find in every bush, in spite of Yeo's warnings that none had been heard of on the island, they were fain to lounge about, full-grown babies, picking up shells and sea-fans to take home to their sweethearts, smoking agoutis out of the hollow trees, with shout and laughter, and tormenting every living thing they could come near, till not a land-crab dare look out of his hole, or an armadillo unroll himself, till they were safe out of the bay, and off again to the westward, unconscious pioneers of all the wealth, and commerce, and beauty, and science which has in later centuries made that lovely isle the richest gem of all the tropic seas.



#### HOW THEY TOOK THE PEARES AT MARGARITA.

*P. Henry.* Why, what a rascal art thou, then, to praise him so for running! *Falstaff.* O' horseback, ye cuckoo! but a-foot, he will not budge a foot.

*P. Henry.* Yes, Jack, upon instinct.

*Falstaff.* I grant ye, upon instinct.—HENRY IV. Pt. I.

THEY had slipped past the southern point of Grenada in the night, and were at last within that fairy ring of islands, on which nature had concentrated all her beauty, and man all his sin. If Barbados had been invested in the eyes of the new-comers with some strange glory, how much more the seas on which they now entered, which smile in almost perpetual calm, untouched by the hurricane which roars past them far to northward! Sky, sea, and islands were one vast rainbow; though little marked, perhaps, by those sturdy practical sailors, whose main thought was of Spanish gold and pearls, and as little by Amyas, who, accustomed to the scenery of the tropics, was speculating inwardly on the possibility of extirpating the Spaniards, and annexing the West Indies to the domains of Queen Elizabeth. And yet even their unpoetic eyes could not behold without awe and excitement lands so famous and yet so new, around which all the wonder, all the pity, and all the greed of the age had concentrated itself. It was an awful thought, and yet inspiring, that they were entering regions all but unknown to Englishmen, where the penalty of failure would be worse than death—the torments of the Inquisition. Not more than five times before, perhaps, had those mysterious seas been visited by English keels; but there were those on board who knew them well, and too well; who, first of all British mariners, had attempted under Captain John Hawkins to trade along those very coasts, and, interdicted from the necessities of life by Spanish jealousy, had, in true English fashion, won their markets at the sword's point, and then bought and sold honestly and peaceably therein. The old mariners of the Pelican and the Minion were questioned all day long for the names of every isle and



cape, every fish and bird; while Frank stood by listening, serious and silent.

A great awe seemed to have possessed his soul: yet not a sad one: for his face seemed daily to drink in glory from the glory round him; and murmuring to himself at whiles, "This is the gate of heaven," he stood watching all day long, careless of food and rest, as every forward plunge of the ship displayed some fresh wonder. Islands and capes hung high in air, with their inverted images below them; long sand-hills rolled and weltered in the mirages; and the yellow flower-beds, and huge thorny cacti like giant candelabra, which clothed the glaring slopes, twisted, tossed and flickered, till the whole scene seemed one blazing phantom-world, in which everything was as unstable as it was fantastic, even to the sun itself, distorted into strange oval and pear-shaped figures by the beds of crimson mist through which he sank to rest. But while Frank wondered, Yeo rejoiced; for to the southward of that setting sun a cluster of tall peaks rose from the sea; and they, unless his reckonings were wrong, were the mountains of Macanao, at the western end of Margarita, the Isle of Pearls, then famous in all the cities of the Mediterranean, and at the great German fairs, and second only in richness to that pearl island in the gulf of Panama, which fifteen years before had cost John Oxenham his life.

The next day saw them running along the north side of the island, having passed undiscovered (as far as they could see) the castle which the Spaniards had built at the eastern end for the protection of the pearl fisheries.

At last they opened a deep and still bight, wooded to the water's edge; and lying in the roadstead a caravel, and three boats by her. And at that sight there was not a man but was on deck at once, and not a mouth but was giving its opinion of what should be done. Some were for sailing right into the roadstead, the breeze blowing fresh toward the shore (as it usually does throughout those islands in the afternoon). However, seeing the billows break here and there off the bay's mouth, they thought it better, for fear of rocks, to run by quietly, and then send in the pinnacle and the boat. Yeo would have had them show Spanish colors, for fear of alarming the caravel; but Amyas stoutly refused, "counting it," he said, "a mean thing to tell a lie in that way, unless in extreme danger, or for great ends of state."

So holding on their course till they were shut out by the next point, they started: Cary in the largest boat with twenty men, and Amyas in the smaller one with fifteen more; among whom was John Brimblecombe, who must needs come in his cassock and bands, with an old sword of his uncle's which he prized mightily.

When they came to the bight's mouth they found, as they had expected, coral rocks, and too many of them; so that they had to run along the edge of the reef a long way before they could find a passage for the boats. While they were so doing, and those of them who were new to the Indies were admiring through the clear element those living flower-beds, and subaqueous gardens of Nereus and Amphitrite, there suddenly appeared below what Yeo called "a school of sharks," some of them nearly as long as the boat, who looked up at them wistfully enough out of their wicked scowling eyes.

"Jack," said Amyas, who sat next to him, "look how that big fellow eyes thee: he has surely taken a fancy to that plump hide of thine, and thinks thou wouldst eat as tender as any sucking porker."

Jack turned very pale, but said nothing.

Now, as it befell, just then that very big fellow, seeing a parrot-fish come out of a cleft of the coral, made at him from below, as did two or three more; the poor fish finding no other escape, leaped clean into the air, and almost aboard the boat; while just where he had come out of the water, three or four great brown shagreened noses clashed together within two yards of Jack as he sat, each showing its horrible rows of saw-teeth, and then sank sulkily down again, to watch for a fresh bait. At which Jack said very softly, "In manus tuas, Domine!" and turning his eyes inboard, had no lust to look at sharks any more.

So having got through the reef, in they ran with a fair breeze, the caravel not being now a musket-shot off. Cary laid her aboard before the Spaniards had time to get to their ordnance; and standing up in the stern-sheets, shouted to them to yield. The captain asked boldly enough, in whose name? "In the name of common sense, ye dogs," cries Will; "do you not see that you are but fifty strong to our twenty?" Whereon up the side he scrambled, and the captain fired a pistol at him. Cary knocked him over, unwilling to shed needless blood; on which all the crew



yielded, some falling on their knees, some leaping overboard; and the prize was taken.

In the meanwhile, Amyas had pulled round under her stern, and boarded the boat which was second from her, for the nearest was fast alongside, and so a sure prize. The Spaniards in her yielded without a blow, crying "Misericordia;" and the negroes, leaping overboard, swam ashore like sea-dogs. Meanwhile, the third boat, which was not an oar's length off, turned to pull away. Whereby befell a notable adventure; for John Brimblecombe, casting about in a valiant mind how he should distinguish himself that day, must needs catch up a boat-hook, and claw on to her stern, shouting "Stay, ye Papists! Stay, Spanish dogs!"—by which, as was to be expected, they being ten to his one he was forthwith pulled overboard, and fell all along on his nose in the sea, leaving the hook fast in her stern.

Where, I know not how, being seized with some panic fear (his lively imagination filling all the sea with those sharks which he had just seen), he fell a-roaring like any town-bull, and in his confusion never thought to turn and get aboard again, but struck out lustily after the Spanish boat, whether in hope of catching hold of the boat-hook which trailed behind her, or from a very madness of valor, no man could divine; but on he swam, his cassock afloat behind him, looking for all the world like a great black monk-fish, and howling and puffing, with his mouth full of salt water, "Stay, ye Spanish dogs! Help, all good fellows! See you not that I am a dead man? They are nuzzling already at my toes! He hath hold of my leg! My right thigh is bitten clean off! Oh that I were preaching in Hartland pulpit! Stay, Spanish dogs! Yield, Papist cowards, lest I make mincemeat of you; and take me aboard! Yield, I say, or my blood be on your heads! I am no Jonah; if he swallow me, he will never cast me up again! it is better to fall into the hands of man, than into the hands of devils with three rows of teeth apiece. *In manus tuas. Orate pro anima—!*"

And so forth, in more frantic case than ever was Panurge in that his ever-memorable sea-sickness; till the English, expecting him every minute to be snapped up by sharks, or brained by the Spaniard's oars, let fly a volley into the fugitives, on which they all leaped overboard like their fellows; whereon Jack scrambled into the boat, and draw-

ing sword with one hand, while he wiped the water out of his eyes with the other, began to lay about him like a very lion, cutting the empty air, and crying, "Yield, idolaters! Yield, Spanish dogs!" However, coming to himself after awhile, and seeing that there was no one on whom to flesh his maiden steel, he sits down panting in the sternsheets, and begins stripping off his hose. On which Amyas, thinking surely that the good fellow had gone mad with some stroke of the sun, or by having fallen into the sea after being overheated with his rowing, bade pull alongside, and asked him in heaven's name what he was doing with his nether tackle. On which Jack, amid such laughter as may be conceived, vowed and swore that his right thigh was bitten clean through, and to the bone; yea, and that he felt his hose full of blood; and so would have swooned away for imaginary loss of blood (so strong was the delusion on him) had not his friends, after much arguing on their part, and anger on his, persuaded him that he was whole and sound.

After which they set to work to overhaul their maiden prize, which they found full of hides and salt-pork; and yet not of that alone; for in the captain's cabin, and also in the sternsheets of the boat which Brimblecombe had so valorously boarded, were certain frails of leaves packed neatly enough, which being opened were full of goodly pearls, though somewhat brown (for the Spaniards used to damage the color in their haste and greediness, opening the shells by fire, instead of leaving them to decay gradually after the Arabian fashion); with which prize, though they could not guess its value very exactly, they went off content enough, after some malicious fellow had set the ship on fire, which, being laden with hides, was no nasegay as it burnt.

Amyas was very angry at this wanton damage, in which his model, Drake, had never indulged; but Cary had his jest ready.

"Ah!" said he, "'Lutheran devils' we are, you know; so we are bound to vanish, like other fiends, with an evil savor."

As soon, however, as Amyas was on board again, he rounded his friend Mr. Brimblecombe in the ear, and told him he had better play the man a little more, roaring less before he was hurt, and keeping his breath to help his



strokes, if he wished the crew to listen much to his discourses. Frank, hearing this, bade Amyas leave the offender to him, and so began upon him with—

"Come hither, thou recreant Jack, thou lily-livered Jack, thou hysterical Jack. Tell me now, thou hast read Plato's Dialogues, and Aristotle's Logic?"

To which Jack very meekly answered, "Yes."

"Then I will deal with thee after the manner of those ancient sages, and ask whether the greater must not contain the less?"

Jack.—Yes, sure.

Frank.—And that which is more than a part, contain that part, more than which it is?

Jack.—Yes, sure.

Frank.—Then tell me, is not a priest more than a layman?

Jack.—(who was always very loud about the dignity of the priesthood, as many of his cloth are, who have no other dignity whereon to stand) answered very boldly—Of course.

Frank.—Then a priest containeth a man, and is a man, and something over—viz., his priesthood?

Jack.—(who saw whither this would lead).—I suppose so.

Frank.—Then, if a priest show himself no man, he shows himself all the more no priest?

"I'll tell you what, Master Frank," says Jack, "you may be right by logic; but sharks aren't logic, nor don't understand it neither."

Frank.—Nay but, my recalcitrant Jack, my stiff-necked Jack, is it the part of a man to howl like a pig in a gate, because he thinks that is there which is not there?

Jack had not a word to say.

Frank.—And still more, when if that had been there, it had been the duty of a brave man to have kept his mouth shut, if only to keep salt water out, and not add the evil of choking to that of being eaten?

"Ah!" says Jack, "that's all very fine; but you know as well as I that it was not the Spaniards I was afraid of. They were Heaven's handiwork, and I knew how to deal with them; but as for those fiends' spawn of sharks, when I saw that fellow take the fish alongside, it upset me clean, and there's an end of it!"

Frank.—Oh, Jack, Jack, behold how one sin begets another! Just now thou wert but a coward, and now thou

art a Manichee. For thou hast imputed to an evil creator that which was formed only for a good end, namely, sharks, which were made on purpose to devour useless carcasses like thine. Moreover, as a brother of the Rose, thou wert bound by the vow of thy brotherhood to have leaped joyfully down that shark's mouth.

Jack.—Ay, very likely, if Mistress Rose had been in his stomach; but I wanted to fight Spaniards just then, not to be shark-bitten.

Frank.—Jack, thy answer savors of self-will. If it is ordained that thou shouldst advance the ends of the Brotherhood by being shark-bitten, or flea-bitten, or bitten by sharpers, to the detriment of thy carnal wealth, or, shortly to suffer any shame or torment whatsoever, even to strappado and scarpines, thou art bound to obey thy destiny, and not, after that vain Roman conceit, to choose the manner of thine own death, which is indeed only another sort of self-murder. We therefore consider thee as a cause of scandal, and a rotten and creaking branch, to be excised by the spiritual arm, and do hereby excise thee, and cut thee off.

Jack.—Nay faith, that's a little too much, Master Frank. How long have you been Bishop of Exeter?

Frank.—Jack, thy wit being blinded, and full of gross vapors, by reason of the perturbations of fear (which, like anger, is a short madness, and raises in the phantasy vain spectres,—videlicet, of sharks and Spaniards), mistakes our lucidity. For thy Manicheism, let his lordship of Exeter deal with it. For thy abominable howling and caterwauling, offensive in a chained cur, but scandalous in a preacher and a brother of the Rose, we do hereby deprive thee of thine office of chaplain to the Brotherhood; and warn thee, that unless within seven days thou do some deed equal to the Seven Champions, or Ruggiero and Orlando's self, thou shall be deprived of sword and dagger, and allowed henceforth to carry no more iron about thee than will serve to mend thy pen.

"And now, Jack," said Amyas, "I will give thee a piece of news. No wonder that young men, as the parsons complain so loudly, will not listen to the Gospel, while it is preached to them by men on whom they cannot but look down; a set of soft-handed fellows who cannot dig, and are ashamed to beg; and, as my brother has it, must needs be parsons before they are men."



Frank.—Ay, and even though we may excuse that in Popish priests and friars, who are vowed not to be men, and get their bread shamefully and rascally by telling sinners who owe a hundred measures to sit down quickly and take their bill and write fifty: yet for a priest of the Church of England (whose business is not merely to smuggle sinful souls up the backstairs into heaven, but to make men good Christians by making them good men, good gentlemen, and good Englishmen) to show the white feather in the hour of need, is to unpreach in one minute all that he had been preaching his life long.

"I tell thee," said Amyas, "if I had not taken thee for another guess sort of man, I had never let thee have the care of a hundred brave lads' immortal souls——"

And so on, both of them boarding him at once with their heavy shot, larboard and starboard, till he fairly clapped his hands to his ears and ran for it, leaving poor Frank laughing so heartily, that Amyas was after all glad the thing had happened, for the sake of the smile which it put into his sad and steadfast countenance.

The next day was Sunday; on which, after divine service (which they could hardly persuade Jack to read, so shamefaced was he; and as for preaching after it, he would not hear of such a thing), Amyas read aloud, according to custom, the articles of their agreement; and then seeing abreast of them a sloping beach with a shoot of clear water running into the sea, agreed that they should land there, wash the clothes, and again water the ship; for they had found water somewhat scarce at Barbados. On this party Jack Brimblecombe must needs go, taking with him his sword and a great arquebuse; for he had dreamed last night (he said) that he was set upon by Spaniards, and was sure that the dream would come true; and moreover, that he did not very much care if they did, or if he ever got back alive; "for it was better to die than be made an ape, and a scarecrow, and laughed at by the men, and badgered with Ramus his logic, and Plato his dialectical devilries, to confess himself a Manichee, and, for aught he knew, a turbaned Turk, or Hebrew Jew," and so flung into the boat like a man desperate.

So they went ashore, after Amyas had given strict commands against letting off firearms, for fear of alarming the Spaniards. There they washed their clothes, and stretched their legs with great joy, admiring the beauty of the place,

and then began to shoot the seine which they had brought on shore with them. "In which," says the chronicler, "we caught many strange fishes, and beside them, a sea-cow full seven feet long, with limpets and barnacles on her back, as if she had been a stick of drift-timber. This is a fond and foolish beast: and yet pious withal; for finding a corpse, she watches over it day and night until it decay or be buried. The Indians call her *manati*; who carries her young under her arm, and gives it suck like a woman: and being wounded, she lamenteth aloud with a human voice, and is said at certain seasons to sing very melodiously; which melody, perhaps, having been heard in those seas, is that which Mr. Frank reported to be the choirs of the Sirens and Tritons. The which I do not avouch for truth, neither rashly deny, having seen myself such fertility of Nature's wonders that I hold him who denieth aught merely for its strangeness to be a ribald and an ignoramus. Also one of our men brought in two great black fowls which he had shot with a crossbow, bodied and headed like a capon, but bigger than any eagle, which the Spaniards call *curassos*; which, with that sea-cow, afterwards made us good cheer, both roast and sodden, for the cow was very dainty meat, as good as a four-month's calf, and tender and fat withal."

After that they set to work filling the casks and barricos, having laid the boat up to the outflow of the rivulet. And lucky for them it was, as it fell out, that they were all close together at that work, and not abroad skylarking as they had been half-an-hour before.

Now John Brimblecombe had gone apart as soon as they landed, with a shamefaced and doleful countenance; and sitting down under a great tree, plucked a Bible from his bosom, and read steadfastly, girded with his great sword, and his arquebuse lying by him. This too was well for him, and for the rest; for they had not yet finished their watering, when there was a cry that the enemy was on them; and out of the wood, not twenty yards from the good parson, came full fifty shot, with a multitude of negroes behind them, and an officer in front on horseback, with a great plume of feathers in his hat, and his sword drawn in his hand.

"Stand, for your lives!" shouted Amyas: and only just in time; for there was ten good minutes lost in running up and down before he could get his men into some order



of battle. But when Jack beheld the Spaniards, as if he had expected their coming, he plucked a leaf and put it into the page of his book for a mark, laid the book down soberly, caught up his arquebuse, ran like a mad dog right at the Spanish captain, shot him through the body stark dead, and then, flinging the arquebuse at the head of him who stood next, fell on with his sword like a very Colbrand, breaking in among the arquebuses, and striking right and left such ugly strokes, that the Spaniards (who thought him a very fiend, or Luther's self come to life to plague them) gave back pell-mell, and shot at him five or six at once with their arquebuses: but whether from fear of him, or of wounding each other, made so bad play with their pieces, that he only got one shrewd gail in his thigh, which made him limp for many a day. But as fast as they gave back he came on; and the rest by this time ran up in good order, and altogether nearly forty men well armed. On which the Spaniards turned, and went as fast as they had come, while Cary hinted that, "The dogs had such a taste of the parson, that they had no mind to wait for the clerk and people."

"Come back, Jack! are you mad?" shouted Amyas.

But Jack (who had not all this time spoken one word) followed them as fiercely as ever, till, reaching a great blow at one of the arquebusiers, he caught his foot in a root; on which down he went, and striking his head against the ground, knocked out of himself all the breath he had left (which between fatness and fighting was not much), and so lay. Amyas, seeing the Spaniards gone, did not care to pursue them; but picked up Jack, who staring about, cried, "Glory be! glory be!—How many have I killed? How many have I killed?"

"Nineteen, at the least," quoth Cary, "and seven with one back stroke;" and then showed Brimblecombe the captain lying dead, and two arquebusiers, one of which was the fugitive by whom he came to his fall, beside three or four more who were limping away wounded, some of them by their fellows' shot.

"There!" said Jack, pausing and blowing, "will you laugh at me any more, Mr. Cary; or say that I cannot fight, because I am a poor parson's son?"

Cary took him by the hand, and asked pardon of him for his scoffing, saying that he had that day played the

best man of all of them; and Jack, who never bore malice, began laughing in his turn, and—

"Oh, Mr. Cary, we have all known your pleasant ways, ever since you used to put drumble-drones into my desk to Bideford school." And so they went to the boats, and pulled off, thanking God (as they had need to do) for their great deliverance: while all the boats' crew rejoiced over Jack, who after a while grew very faint (having bled a good deal without knowing it), and made as little of his real wound as he made much the day before of his imaginary one.

Frank asked him that evening how he came to show so cool and approved a valor in so sudden a mishap.

"Well, my masters," said Jack, "I don't deny that I was very downcast on account of what you said, and the scandal which I had given to the crew; but as it happened, I was reading there under the tree, to fortify my spirits, the history of the ancient worthies, in St. Paul his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews: and just as I came to that, 'out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens,' arose the cry of the Spaniards. At which, gentlemen, thinking in myself that I fought in just so good a cause as they, and, as I hoped, with like faith, there came upon me so strange an assurance of victory, that I verily believed in myself that if there had been a ten thousand of them, I should have taken no hurt. Wherefore," said Jack modestly, "there is no credit due to me, for there was no valor in me whatsoever, but only a certainty of safety; and any coward would fight if he knew that he were to have all the killing and none of the scratches."

Which words he next day, being Sunday, repeated in his sermon which he made on that chapter, with which all, even Salvation Yeo himself, were well content and edified, and allowed him to be as godly a preacher as he was (in spite of his simple way) a valiant and true-hearted comrade.

They brought away the Spanish officer's sword (a very good blade), and also a great chain of gold which he wore about his neck, both of which were allotted to Brimblecombe as his fair prize; but he, accepting the sword, steadfastly refused the chain, entreating Amyas to put it into the common stock; and when Amyas refused, he cut it into links and distributed it among those of the boat's