

crow who had succored him, winning thereby much goodwill. "And indeed" (says the chronicler), "I never saw in that worthy man, from the first day of our school-fellowship till he was laid in his parish church of Hartland (where he now sleeps in peace), any touch of that sin of covetousness which has in all ages, and in ours no less than others, beset especially (I know not why) them who minister about the sanctuary. But this man, though he was ugly and lowly in person, and in understanding simple, and of breeding but a poor parson's son, had yet in him a spirit so loving and cheerful, so lifted from base and selfish purposes to the worship of duty, and to a generosity rather knightly than sacerdotal, that all through his life he seemed to think only that it was more blessed to give than to receive. And all that wealth which he gained in the wars he dispersed among his sisters and the poor of his parish, living unmarried till his death like a true lover and constant mourner (as shall be said in place), and leaving hardly wherewith to bring his body to the grave. At whom if we often laughed once, we should now rather envy him, desiring to be here what he was, that we may be hereafter where he is. Amen."

## CHAPTER XIX.

## WHAT BEFELL AT LA GUAYRA.

“Great was the crying, the running and riding,  
Which at that season was made in the place ;

The beacons were fired, as need then required,  
To save their great treasure they had little space.

*Winning of Cales.*

THE men would gladly have hawked awhile round Margarita and Cubagua for another pearl prize. But Amyas having, as he phrased it, "fleshed his dogs," was loth to hang about the islands after the alarm had been given. They ran, therefore, south-west across the mouth of that great bay which stretches from the Peninsula of Paria to Cape Codera, leaving on their right hand Tortuga, and on their left the meadow-islands of the Piritoos, two long green lines but a few inches above the tideless sea. Yeo and Drew knew every foot of the way, and had good reason to know it; for they, the first of all English mariners, had tried to trade along this coast with Hawkins. And now, right ahead, sheer out of the sea from base to peak, arose higher and higher the mighty range of the Caraccas mountains; beside which all hills which most of the crew had ever seen seemed petty mounds. Frank, of course, knew the Alps; and Amyas the Andes; but Cary's notions of height were bounded by M'Gillicuddy's Reeks, and Brimblecombe's by Exmoor; and the latter, to Cary's infinite amusement, spent a whole day holding on by the rigging, and staring upwards with his chin higher than his nose, till he got a stiff neck. Soon the sea became rough and chopping, though the breeze was fair and gentle; and ere they were abreast of the Cape, they became aware of that strong eastward current which, during the winter months, so often baffles the mariner, who wishes to go to the westward. All night long they struggled through the billows, with the huge wall of Cape Codera a thousand feet above their heads to the left, and beyond it again, bank upon bank of mountain, bathed in the yellow moonlight.

Morning showed them a large ship, which had passed them during the night upon the opposite course, and was



now a good ten miles to the eastward. Yeo was for going back and taking her. Of the latter he made a matter of course; and the former was easy enough, for the breeze blowing dead off the land, was a "soldier's wind, there and back again," for either ship; but Amyas and Frank were both unwilling.

"Why, Yeo, you said that one day more would bring us to La Guayra."

"All the more reason, sir, for doing the Lord's work thoroughly, when He has brought us safely so far on our journey."

"She can pass well enough, and no loss."

"Ah, sirs, sirs, she is delivered into your hands, and you will have to give an account of her."

"My good Yeo," said Frank, "I trust we shall give good account enough of many a tall Spaniard before we return: but you know surely that La Guayra, and the salvation of one whom we believe dwells there, was our first object in this adventure."

Yeo shook his head sadly. "Ah, sirs, a lady brought Captain Oxenham to ruin."

"You do not dare to compare her with this one?" said Frank and Cary, both in a breath.

"God forbid, gentlemen: but no adventure will prosper, unless there is a single eye to the Lord's work; and that is, as I take it, to cripple the Spaniard, and exalt her Majesty the queen. And I had thought that nothing was more dear than that to Captain Leigh's heart."

Amyas stood somewhat irresolute. His duty to the queen bade him follow the Spanish vessel: his duty to his vow, to go on to La Guayra. It may seem a far-fetched dilemma. He found it a practical one enough.

However, the counsel of Frank prevailed, and on to La Guayra he went. He half hoped that the Spaniard would see and attack them. However, he went on his way to the eastward; which if he had not done, my story had had a very different ending.

About mid-day a canoe, the first which they had seen, came staggering toward them under a huge three-cornered sail. As it came near, they could see two Indians on board.

"Metal floats in these seas, you see," quoth Cary.

"There's a fresh marvel for you, Frank."

"Expound," quoth Frank, who was really ready to swallow any fresh marvel, so many had he seen already.

"Why, how else would those two bronze statues dare to go to sea in such a cockleshell, eh? Have I given you the dor now, master courtier?"

"I am long past dors, Will. But what noble creatures they are! and how fearlessly they are coming alongside! Can they know that we are English, and the avengers of the Indians?"

"I suspect they just take us for Spaniards, and want to sell their cocoanuts. See, the canoe is laden with vegetables."

"Hail them, Yeo!" said Amyas. "You talk the best Spanish, and I want speech of one of them."

Yeo did so; the canoe without more ado, ran alongside, and lowered her felucca sail, while a splendid Indian scrambled on board like a cat.

He was full six feet high, and as bold and graceful of bearing as Frank or Amyas' self. He looked round for the first moment smilingly, showing his white teeth; but the next, his countenance changed; and springing to the side, he shouted to his comrade in Spanish.

"Treachery! No Spaniard!" and would have leaped overboard, but a dozen strong fellows caught him ere he could do so.

It required some trouble to master him, so strong was he, and so slippery his naked limbs; Amyas, meanwhile, alternately entreated the men not to hurt the Indian, and the Indian to be quiet, and no harm should happen to him; and so, after five minutes' confusion, the stranger gave in sulkily.

"Don't bind him! Let him loose, and make a ring round him. Now, my man, there's a dollar for you."

The Indian's eyes glistened, and he took the coin.

"All I want of you, is, first, to tell me what ships are in La Guayra, and next, to go thither on board of me, and show me which is the governor's house, and which the custom-house."

The Indian laid the coin down on the deck, and crossing himself, looked Amyas in the face.

"No, Señor! I am a freeman and a cavalier, a Christian Guayqueria, whose forefathers, first of all the Indians, swore fealty to the King of Spain, and whom he calls to this day in all his proclamations his most faithful, loyal, and noble Guayquerias. God forbid, therefore, that I should tell aught to his enemies, who are my enemies like-



wise." A growl arose from those of the men who understood him; and more than one hinted that a cord twined round the head, or a match put between the fingers, would speedily extract the required information.

"God forbid!" said Amyas, "a brave and loyal man he is, and as such will I treat him. Tell me, my brave fellow, how do you know us to be his Catholic Majesty's enemies?"

The Indian, with a shrewd smile, pointed to a half-a-dozen different objects, saying to each, "Not Spanish."

"Well, and what of that?"

"None but Spaniards and free Guayquerias have a right to sail these seas."

Amyas laughed.

"Thou art a right valiant bit of copper. Pick up thy dollar, and go thy way in peace. Make room for him, men. We can learn what we want without his help."

The Indian paused, incredulous and astonished.

"Overboard with you!" quoth Amyas. "Don't you know when you are well off?"

"Most illustrious Señor," began the Indian, in the drawing sententious fashion of his race (when they take trouble to talk at all), "I have been deceived. I heard that you heretics roasted and ate all true Catholics (as we Guayquerias are), and that all your padres had tails."

"Plague on you, sirrah!" squeaked Jack Brimblecombe. "Have I a tail! Look here!"

"Quien sabe? Who knows?" quoth the Indian through his nose.

"How do you know we are heretics?" said Amyas.

"Humph! But in repayment for your kindness, I would warn you, illustrious Señor, not to go on to La Guayra. There are ships of war there waiting for you; and moreover, the governor, Don Guzman, sailed to the eastward only yesterday to look for you; and I wonder much that you did not meet him."

"To look for us! On the watch for us!" said Cary. "Impossible; lies! Amyas, this is some trick of the rascal's to frighten us away."

"Don Guzman came out but yesterday to look for us? Are you sure you spoke truth?"

"As I live, Señor, he and another ship, for which I took yours."

Amyas stamped upon the deck; that then was the ship which they had passed!

"Fool that I was, to have been close to my enemy, and let my opportunity slip! If I had but done my duty, all would have gone right!"

But it was too late to repine; and after all, the Indian's story was likely enough to be false.

"Off with you!" said he; and the Indian bounded over the side into his canoe, leaving the whole crew wondering at the stateliness and courtesy of this bold sea-cavalier.

So Westward-ho they ran, beneath the mighty northern wall, the highest cliff on earth, some seven thousand feet of rock parted from the sea by a narrow strip of bright green lowland. Here and there a patch of sugar-cane, or a knot of cocoanut trees, close to the water's edge, reminded them that they were in the tropics; but above, all was savage, rough, and bare as an Alpine precipice. Sometimes deep clefts allowed the southern sun to pour a blaze of light down to the sea marge, and gave glimpses far above of strange and stately trees lining the glens, and of a veil of perpetual mist which shrouded the inner summits; while up and down, between them and the mountain side, white fleecy clouds hung motionless in the burning air, increasing the impression of vastness and of solemn rest, which was already overpowering.

"Within those mountains, three thousand feet above our heads," said Drew, the master, "lies Saint Yago de Leon, the great city which the Spaniards founded fifteen years ago."

"Is it a rich place?" asked Cary.

"Very, they say."

"Is it a strong place?" asked Amyas.

"No forts to it at all, they say. The Spaniards boast, that Heaven has made such good walls to it already, that man need make none."

"I don't know," quoth Amyas. "Lads, could you climb those hills, do you think?"

"Rather higher than Harty Point, sir: but it depends pretty much on what's behind them."

And now the last point is rounded, and they are full in sight of the spot in quest of which they have sailed four thousand miles of sea. A low black cliff, crowned by a wall; a battery at either end. Within, a few narrow streets of white houses, running parallel with the sea, upon a strip of flat, which seemed not two hundred yards in breadth: and behind, the mountain wall, covering the whole



in deepest shade. How that wall was ever ascended to the inland seemed the puzzle; but Drew, who had been off the place before, pointed out to them a narrow path, which wound upwards through a glen, seemingly sheer perpendicular. That was the road to the capital, if any man dare try it. In spite of the shadow of the mountain, the whole place wore a dusty and glaring look. The breaths of air which came off the land were utterly stifling; and no wonder, for La Guayra, owing to the radiation of that vast fire-brick of heated rock, is one of the hottest spots upon the face of the whole earth.

Where was the harbor? There was none. Only an open roadstead, wherein lay tossing at anchor five vessels. The two outer ones were small merchant caravels. Behind them lay two long, low, ugly-looking craft, at sight of which Yeo gave a long wheugh.

"Galleys, as I'm a sinful saint! And what is that big one inside of them, Robert Drew? She has more than hawseholes in her idolatrous black sides, I think."

"We shall open her astern of the galleys in another minute," said Amyas. "Look out, Cary, your eyes are better than mine."

"Six round portholes on the main deck," quoth Will.

"And I can see the brass patararoes glittering on her poop," quoth Amyas. "Well, we're in for it."

"In for it we are, captain."

"Farewell, farewell, my parents dear,  
I never shall see you more, I fear."

Let's go in, nevertheless, and pound the Don's ribs, my old lad of Smerwick. Eh? Three to one is very fair odds."

"Not underneath those fort guns, I beg leave to say," quoth Yeo. "If the Philistines will but come out unto us, we will make them like unto Zeba and Zalmunna."

"Quite true," said Amyas. "Game-cocks are game-cocks, but reason's reason."

"If the Philistines are not coming out, they are going to send a messenger instead," quoth Cary. "Look out, all thin skulls!"

And as he spoke, a puff of white smoke rolled from the eastern fort, and a heavy ball plunged into the water between it and the ship.

"I don't altogether like this," quoth Amyas. "What do they mean by firing on us without warning? And what

are these ships of war doing here? Drew, you told me the armadas never lay here."

"No more, I believe, they do, sir, on account of the anchorage being so bad, as you may see. I'm mortal afeared that rascal's story was true, and that the Dons have got wind of our coming."

"Run up a white flag, at all events. If they do expect us, they must have known some time since, or how could they have got their craft hither?"

"True, sir. They must have come from Santa Martha; at the least; perhaps from Carthagena. And that would take a month at least going and coming."

Amyas suddenly recollected Eustace's threat in the way-side inn. Could he have betrayed their purpose? Impossible!

"Let us hold a council of war, at all event, Frank."

Frank was absorbed in a very different matter. A half-mile to the eastward of the town, two or three hundred feet up the steep mountain side, stood a large, low, white house embosomed in trees and gardens. There was no other house of similar size near; no place for one. And was not that the royal flag of Spain which flaunted before it? That must be the governor's house; that must be the abode of the Rose of Torridge! And Frank stood devouring it with wild eyes, till he had persuaded himself that he could see a woman's figure walking upon the terrace in front, and that the figure was none other than hers whom he sought. Amyas could hardly tear him away to a council of war, which was a sad, and only not a peevish one.

The three adventurers, with Brimblecombe, Yeo, and Drew, went apart upon the poop; and each looked the other in the face awhile. For what was to be done? The plans and hopes of months were brought to nought in an hour.

"It is impossible, you see," said Amyas at last, "to surprise the town by land, while these ships are here; for if we land our men, we leave our ship without defence."

"As impossible as to challenge Don Guzman while he is not here," said Cary.

"I wonder why the ships have not opened on us already," said Drew.

"Perhaps they respect our flag of truce," said Cary. "Why not send in a boat to treat with them, and to inquire for—"



"For her?" interrupted Frank. "If we show that we are aware of her existence, her name is blasted in the eyes of those jealous Spaniards."

"And as for respecting our flag of truce, gentlemen," said Yeo, "if you will take an old man's advice, trust them not. They will keep the same faith with us as they kept with Captain Hawkins at San Juan d'Ulloa, in that accursed business which was the beginning of all the wars; when we might have taken the whole Plate-fleet, with two hundred thousand pounds' worth of gold on board, and did not, but only asked license to trade like honest men. And yet, after they had granted us license, and deceived us by fair speech into landing ourselves and our ordnance, the governor and all the fleet set upon us, five to one, and gave no quarter to any soul whom he took. No, sir; I expect the only reason why they don't attack us is, because their crews are not on board."

"They will be, soon enough then," said Amyas. "I can see soldiers coming down the landing-stairs."

And, in fact, boats full of armed men began to push off to the ships.

"We may thank Heaven," said Drew, "that we were not here two hours ago. The sun will be down before they are ready for sea, and the fellows will have no stomach to go looking for us by night."

"So much the worse for us. If they will but do that, we may give them the slip, and back again to the town, and there try our luck; for I cannot find it in my heart to leave the place without having one dash at it."

Yeo shook his head. "There are plenty more towns along the coast more worth trying than this, sir: but Heaven's will be done!"

And as they spoke, the sun plunged into the sea, and all was dark.

At last it was agreed to anchor, and wait till midnight. If the ships of war came out, they were to try to run in past them, and, desperate as the attempt might be, attempt their original plan of landing to the westward of the town, taking it in flank, plundering the government storehouses which they saw close to the landing-place and then fighting their way back to their boats, and out of the roadstead. Two hours would suffice if the armada and the galleys were but once out of the way.

Amyas went forward, called the men together, and told

them the plan. It was not very cheerfully received: but what else was there to be done!

They ran down about a mile and a half to the westward, and anchored.

The night wore on, and there was no sign of stir among the shipping for though they could not see the vessels themselves, yet their lights (easily distinguished by their relative height from those in the town above) remained motionless; and the men fretted and fumed for weary hours at thus seeing a rich prize (for of course the town was paved with gold) within arm's reach, and yet impossible.

Let Amyas and his men have patience. Some short five years more, and the great Armada will have come and gone; and then that avenging storm, of which they, like Oxenham, Hawkins, and Drake, are but the avant-couriers, will burst upon every Spanish port from Corunna to Cadiz, from the Canaries to Havanna, and La Guayra and St. Yago de Leon will not escape their share. Captain Amyas Preston and Captain Sommers, the colonists of the Bermudas, or Sommers' Islands, will land, with a force tiny enough, though larger far than Leigh's, where Leigh dare not land; and taking the fort of Guayra, will find, as Leigh found, that their coming has been expected, and that the Pass of the Venta, three thousand feet above, has been fortified with huge barricadoes, abattis, and cannon, making the capital, amid its ring of mountain-walls, impregnable—to all but Englishmen of Zouaves. For up that seven thousand feet of precipice, which rises stair on stair behind the town, those fierce adventurers will climb hand over hand, through rain and fog, while men lie down and beg their officers to kill them, for no farther can they go. Yet farther they will go, hewing a path with their swords through woods of wild plantain, and rhododendron thickets, over (so it seems, however incredible) the very saddle of the Silla,\* down upon the astonished "Mantuanos" of St. Yago, driving all before them; and having burnt the city in default of ransom, will return triumphant by the right road, and pass along the coast, the masters of the deep.

I know not whether any men still live who count their

\*Humboldt says that there is a path from Caravallada to St. Yago, between the peaks, used by smugglers. This is probably the "unknown way of the Indians," which Preston used.



descent from those two valiant captains; but if such there be, let them be sure that the history of the English navy tells no more Titanic victory over nature and man than that now forgotten raid of Amyas Preston and his comrade, in the year of grace 1595.

But though a venture on the town was impossible, yet there was another venture which Frank was unwilling to let slip. A light which now shone brightly in one of the windows of the governor's house was the lodestar to which all his thoughts were turned; and as he sat in the cabin with Amyas, Cary, and Jack, he opened his heart to them.

"And are we then," asked he mournfully, "to go without doing the very thing for which we came?"

All were silent awhile. At last John Brimblecombe spoke.

"Show me the way to do it, Mr. Frank, and I will go."

"My dearest man," said Amyas, "what would you have? Any attempt to see her, even if she be here, would be all but certain death."

"And what if it were? What if it were, my brother Amyas? Listen to me. I have long ceased to shrink from Death; but till I came into these magic climes, I never knew the beauty of his face."

"Of death?" said Cary. "I should have said, of life. God forgive me! but man might wish to live forever if he had such a world as this wherein to live."

"And do you forget, Cary, that the more fair this passing world of time, by so much the more fair is that eternal world, whereof all here is but a shadow and a dream; by so much the more fair is He before whose throne the four mystic beasts, the substantial ideas of Nature and her powers, stand day and night, crying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, Thou hast made all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created!' My friends, if He be so prodigal of His own glory as to have decked these lonely shores, all but unknown since the foundation of the world, with splendors beyond all our dreams, what must be the glory of His face itself! I have done with vain shadows. It is better to depart and to be with Him, where shall be neither desire nor anger, self-deception nor pretence, but the eternal fullness of reality and truth. One thing I have to do before I die, for God has laid it on me. Let that be done tonight, and then farewell!"

"Frank! Frank! remember our mother!"

"I do remember her. I have talked over these things with her many a time; and where I would fain be, she would fain be also. She sent me out with my virgin honor, as the Spartan mother did her boy with the shield, saying, 'Come back either with this, or upon this;' and one or the other I must do, if I would meet her either in this life or in the next. But in the meanwhile do not mistake me; my life is God's, and I promise not to cast it away rashly."

"What would you do, then?"

"Go up to that house, Amyas, and speak with her, if Heaven gives me an opportunity, as Heaven, I feel assured, will give."

"And do you call that no rashness?"

"Is any duty rashness? Is it rash to stand amid the flying bullets, if your queen has sent you? Is it more rash to go seek Christ's lost lamb, if God and your own oath hath sent you? John Brimblecombe answered that question for us long ago."

"If you go, I go with you!" said all three at once.

"No. Amyas, you owe a duty to our mother, and to your ship. Cary, you are heir to great estates; and are bound thereby to your country and to your tenants. John Brimblecombe—"

"Ay!" squeaked Jack. "And what have you to say, Mr. Frank, against my going?—I, who have neither ship nor estates—except, I suppose, that I am not worthy to travel in such good company?"

"Think of your old parents, John, and all your sisters."

"I thought of them before I started, sir, as Mr. Cary knows, and you know too. I came here to keep my vow, and I am not going to turn renegade at the very foot of the cross."

"Some one must go with you, Frank," said Amyas, "if it were only to bring back the boat's crew in case—"

"In case I fall," replied Frank, with a smile. "I will finish your sentence for you, lad; I am not afraid of it, though you may be for me. Yet some one, I fear, must go. Unhappy me! that I cannot risk my own worthless life without risking your more precious lives."

"Not so, Mr. Frank! Your oath is our oath, and your duty ours!" said John. "I will tell you what we will do, gentlemen all. We three will draw cuts for the honor of going with him."



"Lots?" said Amyas. "I don't like leaving such grave matters to chance, friend John."

"Chance, sir? When you have used all your own wit, and find it fail you, then what is drawing lots but taking the matter out of your own weak hands, and laying it in God's strong hands?"

"Right, John!" said Frank. "So did the apostles choose their successor, and so did holy men of old decide controversies too subtle for them; and we will not be ashamed to follow their example. For my part, I have often said to Sidney and to Spenser, when we have babbled together of Utopian governments in days which are now dreams to me, that I would have all officers of state chosen by lot out of the wisest and most fit; so making sure that they should be called by God, and not by man alone. Gentlemen, do you agree to Sir John's advice?"

They agreed, seeing no better counsel, and John put three slips of paper into Frank's hand, with the simple old apostolic prayer—"Show which of us three Thou hast chosen."

The lot fell upon Amyas Leigh.

Frank shuddered, and clasped his hands over his face.

"Well," said Cary, "I have ill-luck tonight: but Frank goes at least in good company."

"Ah, that it had been I!" said Jack; "though I suppose I was too poor a body to have such an honor fall on me. And yet it is hard for flesh and blood; hard indeed to have come all this way, and not to see her after all!"

"Jack," said Frank, "you are kept to do better work than this, doubt not. But if the lot had fallen on you—ay, if it had fallen on a three years' child, I would have gone up as cheerfully with that child to lead me, as I do now with this my brother! Amyas, can we have a boat, and a crew? It is near midnight already."

Amyas went on deck, and asked for six volunteers. Whosoever would come, Amyas would double out of his own purse any prize money which might fall to that man's share.

One of the old Pelican's crew, Simon Evans of Clovelly, stepped out at once.

"Why six only, captain? Give the word, and any and all of us will go up with you, sack the house, and bring off the treasure and the lady, before two hours are out."

"No, no, my brave lads! As for treasure, if there be

any, it is sure to have been put all safe into the forts, or hidden in the mountains; and as for the lady, God forbid that we should force her a step without her own will."

The honest sailor did not quite understand this punctilio; but—

"Well, captain," quoth he, "as you like; but no man shall say that you asked for a volunteer, were it to jump down a shark's throat, but what you had me first of all the crew."

After this sort of temper had been exhibited, three or four more came forward—Yeo was very anxious to go, but Amyas forbade him.

"I'll volunteer, sir, without reward, for this or anything; though" (added he in a lower tone) "I would to Heaven that the thought had never entered your head."

"And so would I have volunteered," said Simon Evans, "if it were the ship's quarrel, or the queen's; but being it's a private matter of the captain's and I've a wife and children at home, why I take no shame to myself for asking money for my life."

So the crew was made up; but ere they pushed off, Amyas called Cary aside—

"If I perish, Will—"

"Don't talk of such things, dear old lad."

"I must. Then you are captain. Do nothing without Yeo and Drew. But if they approve, go right north away for San Domingo and Cuba, and try the ports; they can have no news of us there, and there is booty without end. Tell my mother that I died like a gentleman; and mind—mind, dear lad, to keep your temper with the men, let the poor fellows grumble as they may. Mind but that, and fear God, and all will go well."

The tears were glistening in Cary's eyes as he pressed Amyas' hand, and watched the two brothers down over the side upon their desperate errand.

They reached the pebble beach. There seemed no difficulty about finding the path to the house—so bright was the moon, and so careful a survey of the place had Frank taken. Leaving the men with the boat (Amyas had taken care that they should be well armed), they started up the beach, with their swords only. Frank assured Amyas that they would find a path leading from the beach up to the house, and he was not mistaken. They found it easily, for it was made of white shell sand; and following it



struck into a "tunal," or belt of tall thorny cactuses. Through this the path wound in zigzags up a steep rocky slope, and ended at a wicket-gate. They tried it, and found it open.

"She may expect us," whispered Frank.

"Impossible!"

"Why not? She must have seen our ship; and if, as seems, the townsfolk know who we are, how much more must she! Yes, doubt it not, she still longs to hear news of her own land, and some secret sympathy will draw her down towards the sea tonight. See! the light is in the window still!"

"But if not," said Amyas, who had no such expectations, "what is your plan?"

"I have none."

"None?"

"I have imagined twenty different ones in the last hour; but all are equally uncertain, impossible. I have ceased to struggle—I go where I am called, love's willing victim. If Heaven accept the sacrifice, it will provide the altar and the knife."

Amyas was at his wits' end. Judging of his brother by himself, he had taken for granted that Frank had some well-concocted scheme for gaining admittance to the Rose; and as the wiles of love were altogether out of his province, he had followed in full faith such a sans-appel as he held Frank to be. But now he almost doubted of his brother's sanity, though Frank's manner was perfectly collected and his voice firm. Amyas, honest fellow, had no understanding of that intense devotion, which so many in those days (not content with looking on it as a lofty virtue, and yet one to be duly kept in its place by other duties), prided themselves on pampering into the most fantastic and self-willed excesses.

Beautiful folly! the death-song of which two great geniuses were composing at that very moment, each according to his light. For, while Spenser was embalming in immortal verse all that it contained of noble and Christian elements, Cervantes sat, perhaps, in his dungeon, writing with his left hand Don Quixote, saddest of books in spite of all its wit; the story of a pure and noble soul, who mistakes this actual life for that ideal one which he fancies (and not so wrongly either) eternal in the heavens: and finding instead of a battlefield for heroes in God's cause, nothing but

frivolity, heartlessness, and godlessness, becomes a laughing-stock,—and dies. One of the saddest books, I say again, which man can read.

Amyas hardly dared trust himself to speak, for fear of saying too much; but he could not help saying—

"You are going to certain death, Frank."

"Did I not entreat," answered he very quietly, "to go alone?"

Amyas had half a mind to compel him to return: but he feared Frank's obstinacy; and feared, too, the shame of returning on board without having done anything; so they went up through the wicket-gate, along a smooth turf walk, into what seemed a pleasure-garden, formed by the hand of man, or rather of woman. For by the light, not only of the moon, but of the innumerable fire-flies, which flitted to and fro across the sward like fiery imps sent to light the brothers on their way, they could see that the bushes on either side, and the trees above their heads, were decked with flowers of such strangeness and beauty, that, as Frank once said of Barbados, "even the garden of Wilton were a desert in comparison." All around were orange and lemon trees (probably the only addition which man had made to Nature's prodigality), the fruit of which, in that strange colored light of the fire-flies, flashed in their eyes like balls of burnished gold and emerald; while great white tassels swinging from every tree in the breeze which swept down the glade, tossed in their faces a fragrant snow of blossoms, and glittering drops of perfumed dew.

"What a paradise!" said Amyas to Frank, "with the serpent in it, as of old. Look!"

And as he spoke, there dropped slowly down from a bough, right before them, what seemed a living chain of gold, ruby and sapphire. Both stopped, and another glance showed the small head, and bright eyes of a snake, hissing and glaring full in their faces.

"See!" said Frank. "And he comes, as of old, in the likeness of an angel of light. Do not strike it. There are worse devils to be fought with tonight than that poor beast." And stepping aside, they passed the snake safely, and arrived in front of the house.

It was, as I have said, a long low house, with balconies along the upper story, and the under part mostly open to the wind. The light was still burning in the window.



"Whither now?" said Amyas, in a tone of desperate resignation.

"Thither! Where else on earth?" and Frank pointed to the light, trembling from head to foot, and pushed on.

"For Heaven's sake! Look at the negroes on the barbeque!"

It was indeed time to stop; for on the barbeque, or terrace of white plaster, which ran all round the front, lay sleeping full twenty black figures.

"What will you do now? You must step over them to gain an entrance."

"Wait here, and I will go up gently towards the window. She may see me. She will see me as I step into the moonlight. At least I know an air by which she will recognize me, if I do but hum a stave."

"Why, you do not even know that that light is hers!—Down, for your life!"

And Amyas dragged him down into the bushes on his left hand; for one of the negroes, wakening suddenly with a cry, had sat up, and began crossing himself four or five times, in fear of "Duppy," and mumbling various charms, aves, or what not.

The light above was extinguished instantly.

"Did you see her?" whispered Frank.

"No."

"I did—the shadow of the face, and the neck! Can I be mistaken?" And then, covering his face with his hands, he murmured to himself, "Misery! misery! So near and yet impossible!"

"Would it be the less impossible were you face to face? Let us go back. We cannot go up without detection, even if our going were of use. Come back, for God's sake, ere all is lost! If you have seen her, as you say, you know at least that she is alive, and safe in his house——"

"As his mistress? or as his wife? Do I know that yet, Amyas, and can I depart until I know?"

There was a few minutes' silence, and then Amyas, making one last attempt to awaken Frank to the absurdity of the whole thing, and to laugh him, if possible, out of it, as argument had no effect—

"My dear fellow, I am very hungry and sleepy; and this bush is very prickly; and my boots are full of ants——"

"So are mine.—Look!" and Frank caught Amyas' arm, and clenched it tight.

For round the farther corner of the house a dark cloaked figure stole gently, turning a look now and then upon the sleeping negroes, and came on right toward them.

"Did I not tell you she would come?" whispered Frank, in a triumphant tone.

Amyas was quite bewildered; and to his mind the apparition seemed magical, and Frank prophetic; for as the figure came nearer, incredulous as he tried to be there was no denying that the shape and the walk were exactly those of her, to find whom they had crossed the Atlantic. True, the figure was somewhat taller; but then, "she must be grown since I saw her," thought Amyas; and his heart for the moment beat as fiercely as Frank's.

But what was that behind her? Her shadow against the white wall of the house. Not so. Another figure, cloaked likewise, but taller far, was following on her steps. It was a man's. They could see that he wore a broad sombrero. It could not be Don Guzman, for he was at sea. Who then? Here was a mystery: perhaps a tragedy. And both brothers held their breaths, while Amyas felt whether his sword was loose in the sheath.

The Rose (if indeed it was she) was within ten yards of them, when she perceived that she was followed. She gave a little shriek. The cavalier sprang forward, lifted his hat courteously, and joined her, bowing low. The moonlight was full upon his face.

"It is Eustace, our cousin! How came he here, in the name of all the fiends?"

"Eustace! Then that is she after all!" said Frank, forgetting everything else in her.

And now flashed across Amyas all that had passed between him and Eustace in the moorland inn, and Parracombe's story, too, of the suspicious gypsy. Eustace had been beforehand with them, and warned Don Guzman! All was explained now: but how had he got hither?

"The devil, his master, sent him hither on a broomstick, I suppose: or what matter how? Here he is; and here we are worse luck!" And, setting his teeth, Amyas awaited the end.

The two came on, talking earnestly, and walking at a slow pace, so that the brothers could hear every word.

"What shall we do now?" said Frank. "We have no right to be eavesdroppers."

"But we must be, right or none." And Amyas held him down firmly by the arm.



"But whither are you going, then, my dear madam?" they heard Eustace say in a wheedling tone. "Can you wonder if such strange conduct should cause at least sorrow to your admirable and faithful husband?"

"Husband!" whispered Frank faintly to Amyas. "Thank God, thank God! I am content. Let us go."

But to go was impossible; for, as fate would have it, the two had stopped just opposite them.

"The inestimable Señor Don Guzman——" began Eustace again.

"What do you mean by praising him to me in this fulsome way, sir? Do you suppose that I do not know his virtues better than you?"

"If you do, madam" (this was spoken in a harder tone), "it were wise for you to try them less severely, than by wandering down towards the beach on the very night that you know his most deadly enemies are lying in wait to slay him, plunder his house, and most probably to carry you off from him."

"Carry me off? I will die first!"

"Who can prove that to him? Appearances are at least against you."

"My love to him, and his trust for me, sir."

"His trust? Have you forgotten, madam, what passed last week, and why he sailed yesterday?"

The only answer was a burst of tears. Eustace stood watching her with a terrible eye; but they could see his face writhing in the moonlight.

"Oh!" sobbed she at last. "And if I have been imprudent, was it not natural to wish to look once more upon an English ship? Are you not English as well as I? Have you no longing recollections of the dear old land at home?"

Eustace was silent, but his face worked more fiercely than ever.

"How can he ever know it?"

"Why should he not know it?"

"Ah!" she burst out passionately, "why not, indeed, while you are here? You, sir, the tempter, you the eaves-dropper, you the sunderer of loving hearts! You, serpent, who found our home a paradise, and see it now a hell!"

"Do you dare to accuse me thus, madam, without a shadow of evidence?"

"Dare? I dare anything, for I know all! I have watched you, sir, and I have borne with you too long."

"Me, madam, whose only sin towards you, as you should know by now, is to have loved you too well? Rose! Rose! have you not blighted my life for me—broken my heart? And how have I repaid you? How but by sacrificing myself to seek you over land and sea, that I might complete your conversion to the bosom of that Church where a Virgin Mother stands stretching forth soft arms to embrace her wandering daughter, and cries to you all day long, 'Come unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!' And this is my reward!"

"Depart with your Virgin Mother, sir, and tempt me no more! You have asked me what I dare; and I dare this, upon my own ground, and in my own garden, I, Donna Rosa de Soto, to bid you leave this place now and forever, after having insulted me by talking of your love, and tempted me to give up that faith which my husband promised me he would respect and protect. Go, sir!"

The brothers listened breathless with surprise as much as with rage. Love and conscience, and perhaps, too, the pride of her lofty alliance, had converted the once gentle and dreamy Rose into a very Roxana; but it was only the impulse of a moment. The words had hardly passed her lips, when, terrified at what she had said, she burst into a fresh flood of tears; while Eustace answered calmly,—

"I go, madam; but how know you that I may not have orders, and that, after your last strange speech, my conscience may compel me to obey those orders, to take you with me?"

"Me? With you?"

"My heart has bled for you, madam, for many a year. It longs now that it had bled itself to death, and never known the last worst agony of telling you——"

And drawing close to her he whispered in her ear—what, the brothers heard not—but her answer was a shriek which rang through the woods, and sent the night-birds fluttering up from every bough above their heads.

"By Heaven!" said Amyas, "I can stand this no longer. Cut the devil's throat I must——"

"She is lost if his dead body is found by her."

"We are lost if we stay here then," said Amyas; "for those negroes will hurry down at her cry, and then found we must be."



"Are you mad, madam, to betray yourself by your own cries? The negroes will be here in a moment. I give you one last chance for life, then:" and Eustace shouted in Spanish at the top of his voice, "Help, help, servants! Your mistress is being carried off by bandits!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Let your woman's wit supply the rest: and forget not him who thus saves you from disgrace."

Whether the brothers heard the last words or not, I know not; but taking for granted that Eustace had discovered them, they sprang to their feet at once, determined to make one last appeal, and then to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

Eustace started back at the unexpected apparition; but a second glance showed him Amyas' mighty bulk; and he spoke calmly—

"You see, madam, I did not call without need. Welcome, good cousins. My charity as you perceive has found means to outstrip your craft; while the fair lady, as was but natural, has been true to her assignation!"

"Liar!" cried Frank. "She never knew of our being—"

"Credat Judæus!" answered Eustace: but, as he spoke, Amyas burst through the bushes at him. There was no time to be lost; and ere the giant could disentangle himself from the boughs and shrubs, Eustace had slipped off his long cloak, thrown it over Amyas' head, and ran up the alley shouting for help.

Mad with rage, Amyas gave chase: but in two minutes more Eustace was safe among the ranks of the negroes, who came shouting and jabbering down the path.

He rushed back. Frank was just ending some wild appeal to Rose—

"Your conscience! your religion!"

"No, never! I can face the chance of death, but not the loss of him. Go! for God's sake leave me!"

"You are lost, then,—and I have ruined you!"

"Come off, now or never," cried Amyas, clutching him by the arm, and dragging him away like a child.

"You forgive me?" cried he.

"Forgive you?" and she burst into tears again.

Frank burst into tears also.

"Let me go back, and die with her—Amyas!—my oath!—my honor!" and he struggled to turn back.

Amyas looked back too, and saw her standing calmly,

with her hands folded across her breast, awaiting Eustace and the servants; and he half turned to go back also. Both saw how fearfully appearances had put her into Eustace's power. Had he not a right to suspect that they were there by her appointment; that she was going to escape with them? And would not Eustace use his power? The thought of the Inquisition crossed their minds. "Was that the threat which Eustace had whispered?" asked he of Frank.

"It was," groaned Frank in answer.

For the first and last time in his life, Amyas Leigh stood irresolute.

"Back, and stab her to the heart first!" said Frank, struggling to escape from him.

Oh, if Amyas were but alone, and Frank safe home in England! To charge the whole mob, kill her, kill Eustace, and then cut his way back again to the ship, or die,—what matter? as he must die some day,—sword in hand! But Frank!—and then flashed before his eyes his mother's hopeless face; then rang in his ears his mother's last bequest to him of that frail treasure. Let Rose, let honor, let the whole world perish, he must save Frank. See! the negroes were up with her now—past her—away for life! and once more he dragged his brother down the hill, and through the wicket, only just in time; for the whole gang of negroes were within ten yards of them in full pursuit.

"Frank," said he sharply, "if you ever hope to see your mother again, rouse yourself, man, and fight!" And, without waiting for an answer, he turned, and charged up-hill upon his pursuers, who saw the long bright blade, and fled instantly.

Again he hurried Frank down the hill; the path wound in zigzags, and he feared that the negroes would come straight over the cliff, and so cut off his retreat: but the prickly cactuses were too much for them, and they were forced to follow by the path, while the brothers (Frank having somewhat regained his senses) turned every now and then to menace them: but once on the rocky path, stones began to fly fast; small ones fortunately, and wide and wild for want of light—but when they reached the pebble-beach? Both were too proud to run; but, if ever Amyas prayed in his life, he prayed for the last twenty yards before he reached the water-mark.



"Now, Frank! down to the boat as hard as you can run, while I keep the curs back."

"Amyas! what do you take me for? My madness brought you hither: your devotion shall not bring me back without you."

"Together, then!"

And putting Frank's arm through his, they hurried down, shouting to their men.

The boat was not fifty yards off; but fast traveling over the pebbles was impossible, and long ere half the distance was crossed, the negroes were on the beach, and the storm burst. A volley of great quartz pebbles whistled round their heads.

"Come on, Frank! for life's sake! Men, to the rescue! Ah! what was that?"

The dull crash of a pebble against Frank's fair head! Drooping like Hyacinthus beneath the blow of the quoit, he sank on Amyas' arm. The giant threw him over his shoulder, and plunged blindly on,—himself struck again and again.

"Fire, men! Give it the black villains!"

The arquebusiers cracked from the boat in front. What were those dull thuds which answered from behind? Echoes? No. Over his head the caliver-balls went screeching. The governor's guard have turned out, followed them to the beach, fixed their calivers, and are firing over the negroes' heads, as the savages rush down upon the hapless brothers.

If, as all say, there are moments which are hours, how many hours was Amyas Leigh in reaching that boat's bow? Alas! the negroes are there as soon as he, and the guard, having left their calivers, are close behind them, sword in hand. Amyas is up to his knees in water—battered with stones—blinded with blood. The boat is swaying off and on against the steep pebble-bank: he clutches at it—misses—falls headlong—rises half-choked with water: but Frank is still in his arms. Another heavy blow—a confused roar of shouts, shots, curses—a confused mass of negroes and English, foam and pebbles—and he recollects no more.

He is lying in the stern-sheets of the boat; stiff, weak, half blind with blood. He looks up; the moon is still bright overhead: but they are away from the shore now, for the wave-crests are dancing white before the land.

reeze, high above the boat's side. The boat seems strangely empty. Two men are pulling instead of six! And what is this lying heavy across his chest? He pushes, and is answered by a groan. He puts his hand down to rise, and is answered by another groan.

"What's this?"

"All that are left of us," says Simon Evans of Clovelly.

"All?" The bottom of the boat seemed paved with human bodies. "Oh God! oh God!" moans Amyas, trying to rise, "And where—where is Frank? Frank!"

"Mr. Frank!" cried Evans. There is no answer.

"Dead?" shrieks Amyas. "Look for him, for God's sake, look!" and struggling from under his living load, he peers into each pale and bleeding face.

"Where is he? Why don't you speak; forward there?"

"Because we have nought to say, sir," answered Evans, almost surlily.

Frank was not there.

"Put the boat about! To the shore!" roars Amyas.

"Look over the gunwale, and judge for yourself, sir!"

The waves are leaping fierce and high before a furious land-breeze. Return is impossible.

"Cowards! villains! traitors! hounds! to have left him behind."

"Listen you to me, Captain Amyas Leigh," says Simon Evans, resting on his oar; "and hang me for mutiny, if you will, when we're aboard, if we ever get there. Isn't it enough to bring us out to death (as you knew yourself, sir, for you're prudent enough) to please that poor young gentleman's fancy about a wench; but you must call coward an honest man that have saved your life this night, and not a one of us but has his wound to show?"

Amyas was silent; the rebuke was just.

"I tell you, sir, if we've hove a stone out of this boat since we got off, we've hove two hundredweight, and, if the Lord had not fought for us, she'd have been beat to noggin-staves there on the beach."

"How did I come here, then?"

"Tom Hart dragged you in out of five-feet water, and then thrust the boat off, and had his brains beat out for reward. All were knocked down but us two. So help me God, we thought that you had hove Mr. Frank on board just as you were knocked down, and saw William Frost drag him in."