

## CHAPTER XXI

## HOW THEY TOOK THE COMMUNION UNDER THE TREE AT HIGUEROTE.

"Follow thee? Follow thee? Wha wad na follow thee?  
Lang hast thou lo'ed and trusted us fairly."

AMYAS would have certainly taken the yellow fever, but for one reason, which he himself gave to Cary. He had no time to be sick while his men were sick; a valid and sufficient reason (as many a noble soul in the Crimea has known too well), as long as the excitement of work is present: but too apt to fail the hero, and to let him sink into the pit which he has so often overleapt, the moment that his work is done.

He called a council of war, or rather a sanitary commission, the next morning, for he was fairly at his wits' end. The men were panic-stricken, ready to mutiny; Amyas told them that he could not see any possible good which could accrue to them by killing him, or—(for there were two sides to every question)—being killed by him; and then went below to consult. The doctor talked mere science, or non-science, about humors, complexions and animal spirits. Jack Brimblecombe, mere pulpit, about its being the visitation of God. Cary, mere despair, though he jested over it with a smile. Yeo, mere stoic fatalism, though he quoted Scripture to back the same. Drew, the master, had nothing to say. His "business was to sail the ship, and not to cure calentures."

Whereon Amyas clutched his locks, according to custom, and at last broke forth—

"Doctor, a fig for your humors and complexions! Can you cure a man's humors, or change his complexion? Can an Ethiopian change his skin, or a leopard his spots? Don't shove off your ignorance on God, sir. I ask you what's the reason of this sickness, and you don't know. Jack Brimblecombe, don't talk to me about God's visitation; this looks much more like the devil's visitation, to my mind. We are doing God's work, Sir John, and He is not likely to hinder us. So down with the devil, say I."

Cary, laughing killed the cat, but it won't cure a Christian. Yeo, when an angel tells me that it's God's will that we should all die like dogs in a ditch, I'll call this God's will; but not before. Drew, you say your business is to sail the ship; then sail her out of this infernal poison-trap this very morning, if you can, which you can't. The mischief's in the air, and nowhere else. I felt it run through me coming down last night, and smelt it like any sewer: and if it was not in the air, why was my boat's crew taken first, tell me that?"

There was no answer.

"Then I'll tell you why they were taken first: because the mist, when we came through it, only rose five or six feet above the stream, and we were in it, while you on board were above it. And those that were taken on board this morning, every one of them, slept on the main-deck, and every one of them, too, was in fear of the fever, whereby I judge two things,—keep as high as you can, and fear nothing but God, and we're all safe yet."

"But the fog was up to our round-tops at sunrise this morning," said Cary.

"I know it: but we who were on the half-deck were not in it so long as those below, and that may have made the difference, let alone our having free air. Beside, I suspect the heat in the evening draws the poison out more, and that when it gets cold toward morning, the venom of it goes off somehow."

How it went off Amyas could not tell (right in his facts as he was), for nobody on earth knew, I suppose, at that day; and it was not till nearly two centuries of fatal experience that the settlers in America discovered the simple laws of these epidemics which now every child knows, or ought to know. But common sense was on his side; and Yeo rose and spoke—

"As I have said before, many a time, the Lord has sent us a very young Daniel for judge. I remember now to have heard the Spaniards say, how these calentures lay always in the low ground, and never came more than a few hundred feet above the sea."

"Let us go up those few hundred feet, then."

Every man looked at Amyas, and then at his neighbor.

"Gentlemen, 'Look the devil straight in the face, if you would hit him in the right place.' We cannot get the ship to sea as she is; and if we could, we cannot go home



empty-handed; and we surely cannot stay here to die of fever. We must leave the ship and go inland."

"Inland?" answered every voice but Yeo's.

"Up those hundred feet which Yeo talks of. Up to the mountains; stockade a camp, and get our sick and provisions thither."

"And what next?"

"And when we are recruited, march over the mountains, and surprise St. Yago de Leon."

Cary swore a great oath. "Amyas! you are a daring fellow!"

"Not a bit. It's the plain path of prudence."

"So it is, sir," said old Yeo, "and I follow you in it."

"And so do I," squeaked Jack Brimblecombe.

"Nay, then, Jack, thou shalt not outrun me. So I say yes too," quoth Cary.

"Mr. Drew?"

"At your service, sir, to live or die. I know nought about stockading; but Sir Francis would have given the same council, I verily believe, if he had been in your place."

"Then tell the men that we start in an hour's time. Win over the Pelicans, Yeo and Drew; and the rest must follow, like sheep over a hedge."

The Pelicans, and the liberated galley-slaves, joined the project at once: but the rest gave Amyas a stormy hour. The great question was, where were the hills? In that dense mangrove thicket they could not see fifty yards before them.

"The hills are not three miles to the southwest of you at this moment," said Amyas. "I marked every shoulder of them as we ran in."

"I suppose you meant to take us there?"

The question set a light to a train—and angry suspicions were blazing up one after another, but Amyas silenced them with a countermine.

"Fools! if I had not wit enow to look ahead a little farther than you do, where would you be? Are you mad as well as reckless, to rise against your own captain because he has two strings to his bow? Go my way, I say, or, as I live, I'll blow up the ship and every soul on board, and save you the pain of rotting here by inches."

The men knew that Amyas never said what he did not intend to do; not that Amyas intended to do this, because he knew that the threat would be enough. So they agreed

to go; and were reassured by seeing that the old Pelican's men turned to the work heartily and cheerfully.

There is no use keeping the reader for five or six weary hours, under a broiling (or rather stewing) sun, stumbling over mangrove roots, hewing his way through thorny thickets, dragging sick men and provisions up mountain steep, amid disappointment, fatigue, murmurs, curses, snakes, mosquitoes, false alarms of Spaniards, and every misery, save cold, which flesh is heir to. Suffice it that by sunset that evening they had gained a level spot, a full thousand feet above the sea, backed by an inaccessible cliff which formed the upper shoulder of a mighty mountain, defended below by steep wooded slopes, and needing but the felling of a few trees to make it impregnable.

Amyas settled the sick under the arched roots of an enormous cottonwood tree, and made a second journey to the ship, to bring up hammocks and blankets for them: while Yeo's wisdom and courage were of inestimable value. He, as pioneer, had found the little brook up which they forced their way; he had encouraged them to climb the cliffs over which it fell, arguing rightly that on its course they were sure to find some ground fit for encampment within the reach of water; he had supported Amyas, when again and again the weary crew entreated to be dragged no farther, and had gone back again a dozen times to cheer them upward; while Cary, who brought up the rear, bullied and cheered on the stragglers who sat down and refused to move, drove back at the sword's point more than one who was beating a retreat, carried their burdens for them, sang them songs on the halt; in all things approving himself the gallant and hopeful soul which he had always been: till Amyas, beside himself with joy at finding that the two men on whom he had counted most were utterly worthy of his trust, went so far as to whisper to them both, in confidence, that very night—

"Cortes burnt his ships when he landed. Why should not we?"

Yeo leapt upright; and then sat down again, and whispered.

"Do you say that, captain? 'Tis from above, then, that's certain; for it's been hanging on my mind too all day."

"There's no hurry," quoth Amyas; "we must clear her out first, you know," while Cary sat silent and musing.



Amyas had evidently more schemes in his head than he chose to tell.

The men were too tired that evening to do much: but ere the sun rose next morning Amyas had them hard at work fortifying their position. It was, as I said, strong enough by nature; for though it was commanded by high cliffs on three sides, yet there was no chance of an enemy coming over the enormous mountain-range behind them, and still less chance that, if he came, he would discover them through the dense mass of trees which crowned the cliff, and clothed the hills for a thousand feet above. The attack, if it took place, would come from below; and against that Amyas guarded by felling the smaller trees, and laying them with their boughs outward over the crest of the slope, thus forming an abattis (as every one who has shot in thick cover knows to his cost) warranted to bring up in two steps, horse, dog or man. The trunks were sawn into logs, laid lengthwise, and steadied by stakes and mould; and three or four hours' hard work finished a stockade which would defy anything but artillery. The work done, Amyas scrambled up into the boughs of the enormous ceiba-tree, and there sat, inspecting his own handiwork, looking out far and wide over the forest-covered plains and the blue sea beyond, and thinking, in his simple straightforward way, of what was to be done next.

To stay there long was impossible; to avenge himself upon La Guayra was impossible; to go until he had found out whether Frank was alive or dead seemed at first equally impossible. But were Brimblecombe, Cary and those eighty men to be sacrificed a second time to his private interest? Amyas wept with rage, and then wept again with earnest, honest prayer, before he could make up his mind. But he made it up. There were a hundred chances to one that Frank was dead; and if not, he was equally past their help; for he was—Amyas knew that too well—by this time in the hands of the Inquisition. Who could lift him from that pit? Not Amyas, at least! And crying aloud in his agony, "God help him! for I cannot!" Amyas made up his mind to move. But whither? Many an hour he thought and thought alone, there in his airy nest; and at last he went down, calm and cheerful, and drew Cary and Yeo aside. They could not, he said, refit the ship without dying of fever during the process; an

assertion which neither of his hearers was bold enough to deny. Even if they refitted her, they would be pretty certain to have to fight the Spaniards again; for it was impossible to doubt the Indian's story, that they had been forewarned of the Rose's coming, or to doubt either, that Eustace had been the traitor.

"Let us try St. Yago, then; sack it, come down on La Guayra in the rear, take a ship there, and so get home."

"Nay, Will. If they have strengthened themselves against us at La Guayra, where they had little to lose, surely they have done so at St. Yago, where they have much. I hear the town is large, though new; and besides, how can we get over these mountains without a guide?"

"Or with one?" said Cary, with a sigh, looking up at the vast walls of wood and rock which rose range on range for miles. "But it is strange to find you, at least, throwing cold water on a daring plot."

"What if I had a still more daring one? Did you ever hear of the golden city of Manoa?"

Yeo laughed a grim but joyful laugh. "I have, sir; and so have the old hands from the Pelican and the Jesus of Lubec, I doubt not."

"So much the better;" and Amyas began to tell Cary all which he had learned from the Spaniard, while Yeo capped every word thereof with rumors and traditions of his own gathering. Cary sat half aghast as the huge phantasmagoria unfolded itself before his dazzled eyes; and at last—

"So that was why you wanted to burn the ship! Well, after all, nobody needs me at home, and one less at table won't be missed. So you want to play Cortes, eh?"

"We shall never need to play Cortes (who was not such a bad fellow, after all, Will), because we shall have no such cannibal fiends' tyranny to rid the earth of, as he had. And I trust we shall fear God enough not to play Pizarro."

So the conversation dropped for the time, but none of them forgot it.

In that mountain-nook the party spent some ten days and more. Several of the sick men died, some from the fever superadded to their wounds; some, probably, from having been bled by the surgeon; the others mended steadily, by the help of certain herbs which Yeo administered, much to the disgust of the doctor, who, of course, wanted to bleed the poor fellows all round, and was all but mutinous when Amyas stayed his hand. In the mean-



while, by dint of daily trips to the ship, provisions were plentiful enough,—beside the racoons, monkeys and other small animals, which Yeo and the veterans of Hawkins' crew knew how to catch, and the fruit and vegetables; above all, the delicious mountain cabbage of the Areca palm, and the fresh milk of the cow-tree, which they brought in daily, paying well thereby for the hospitality they received.

All day long a careful watch was kept among the branches of the mighty ceiba-tree. And what a tree that was! The hughest English oak would have seemed a stunted bush beside it. Borne up on roots, or rather walls, of twisted board, some twelve feet high, between which the whole crew, their ammunitions, and provisions, where housed roomily, rose the enormous trunk full forty feet in girth, towering like some tall lighthouse, smooth for a hundred feet, then crowned with boughs, each of which was a stately tree, whose topmost twigs were full two hundred and fifty feet from the ground. And yet it was easy for the sailors to ascend: so many natural ropes had kind Nature lowered for their use, in the smooth lianes which hung to the very earth, often without a knot or a leaf. Once in the tree, you were within a new world, suspended between heaven and earth, and as Cary said, no wonder if, like Jack when he climbed the magic bean-stalk, you had found a castle, a giant, and a few acres of well-stocked park, packed away somewhere amid that labyrinth of timber. Flower-gardens at least were there in plenty; for every limb was covered with pendent cactuses, gorgeous orchises, and wild pines; and while one-half the tree was clothed in rich foliage, the other half, utterly leafless, bore on every twig brilliant yellow flowers, around which humming-birds whirled all day long. Parrots peeped in and out of every cranny, while, within the airy woodland, brilliant lizards basked like living gems upon the bark, gaudy finches flitted and chirruped, butterflies of every size and color hovered over the topmost twigs, innumerable insects hummed from morn till eve; and when the sun went down, tree-toads came out to snore and croak till dawn. There was more life round that one tree than in a whole square mile of English soil.

And Amyas, as he lounged among the branches, felt at moments as if he would be content to stay there forever, and feed his eyes and ears with all its wonders—and then

started sighing from his dream, as he recollected that a few days must bring the foe upon them, and force him to decide upon some scheme at which the bravest heart might falter without shame. So there he sat (for he often took the scout's place himself), looking out over the fantastic tropic forest at his feet, and the flat mangrove swamps below, and the white sheet of foam-flecked blue, and yet no sail appeared; and the men, as their fear of fever subsided, began to ask when they would go down and refit the ship, and Amyas put them off as best he could, till one noon he saw slipping along the shore from the westward, a large ship under easy sail, and recognized in her, or thought he did so, the ship which they had passed upon their way.

If it was she, she must have run past them to La Guayra in the night, and have now returned, perhaps, to search for them along the coast.

She crept along slowly. He was in hopes that she might pass the river's mouth; but no. She lay-to close to the shore; and, after awhile, Amyas saw two boats pull in from her, and vanish behind the mangroves. Sliding down a liane, he told what he had seen. The men, tired of inactivity, received the news with a shout of joy, and set to work to make all ready for their guests. Four brass swivels, which they had brought up, were mounted, fixed in logs, so as to command the path; the musketeers and archers clustered round them with their tackle ready, and half-a-dozen good marksmen volunteered into the cotton-tree with their arquebuses, as a post whence "a man might have very pretty shooting." Prayers followed as a matter of course, and dinner as a matter of course also; but two weary hours passed before there was any sign of the Spaniards.

Presently a wreath of white smoke curled up from the swamp, and then the report of a caliver. Then, amid the growls of the English, the Spanish flag ran up above the trees, and floated—horrible to behold—at the mast-head of the Rose. They were signalling the ship for more hands; and, in effect, a third boat soon pushed off and vanished into the forest.

Another hour, during which the men had thoroughly lost their temper, but not their hearts, by waiting; and talked so loud, and strode up and down so wildly, that Amyas had to warn them that there was no need to betray



themselves; that the Spaniards might not find them after all; that they might pass the stockade close without seeing it; that unless they hit off the track at once, they would probably return to their ship for the present; and exacted a promise from them that they would be perfectly silent till he gave the word to fire.

Which wise commands had scarcely passed his lips, when, in the path below, glanced the headpiece of a Spanish soldier, and then another and another.

"Fools!" whispered Amyas to Cary; "they are coming up in single file, rushing on their own death. Lie close, men!"

The path was so narrow that two could seldom come up abreast, and so steep that the enemy had much ado to struggle and stumble upwards. The men seemed half unwilling to proceed, and hung back more than once; but Amyas could hear an authoritative voice behind, and presently there emerged to the front, sword in hand, a figure at which Amyas and Cary both started.

"Is it he?"

"Surely I know those legs among a thousand, though they are in armor."

"It is my turn for him now, Cary, remember! Silence, silence, men!"

The Spaniards seemed to feel that they were leading a forlorn hope. Don Guzman (for there was little doubt that it was he) had much ado to get them on at all.

"The fellows have heard how gently we handled the Guayra squadron," whispers Cary, "and have no wish to become fellow-martyrs with the captain of the Madre Dolorosa."

At last the Spaniards get up the steep slope to within forty yards of the stockade, and pause, suspecting a trap, and puzzled by the complete silence. Amyas leaps on the top of it, a white flag in his hand but his heart beats so fiercely at the sight of that hated figure, that he can hardly get out the words—

"Don Guzman, the quarrel is between you and me, not between your men and mine. I would have sent in a challenge to you at La Guayra, but you were away; I challenge you now to single combat."

"Lutheran dog, I have a halberd for you, but no sword! As you served us at Smerwick, we will serve you now. Pirate and ravisher: you and yours shall share Oxenham's

late, as you have copied his crimes, and learn what it is to set foot unbidden on the dominions of the King of Spain."

"The devil take you and the King of Spain together!" shouts Amyas, laughing loudly. "This ground belongs to him no more than it does to me, but to the Queen Elizabeth, in whose name I have taken as lawful possession of it as you ever did of Carraccas. Fire, men! and God defend the right!"

Both parties obeyed the order; Amyas dropped down behind the stockade in time to let a caliver bullet whistle over his head; and the Spaniards recoiled as the narrow face of the stockade burst into one blaze of musketry and swivels, raking their long array from front to rear.

The front ranks fell over each other in heaps; the rear ones turned and ran; overtaken, nevertheless, by the English bullets and arrows, which tumbled them headlong down the steep path.

"Out, men, and charge them. See! the Don is running like the rest!" And scrambling over the abattis, Amyas and about thirty followed them fast; for he had hope of learning from some prisoner his brother's fate.

Amyas was unjust in his last words. Don Guzman, as if by miracle, had been only slightly wounded; and seeing his men run, had rushed back and tried to rally them, but was borne away by the fugitives.

However, the Spaniards were out of sight among the thick bushes before the English could overtake them; and Amyas, afraid lest they should rally and surround his small party, withdrew sorely against his will, and found in the pathway fourteen Spaniards, all but dead. For one of the wounded, with more courage than wisdom, had fired on the English as he lay; and Amyas' men, whose blood was maddened both by their desperate situation, and the frightful stories of the rescued galley slaves, had killed them all before their captain could stop them.

"Are you mad?" cries Amyas, as he strikes up one fellow's sword. "Will you kill an Indian?"

And he drags out of the bushes an Indian lad of sixteen, who, slightly wounded, is crawling away like a copper snake along the ground.

"The black vermin has sent an arrow through my leg, and poisoned too, most like."

"God grant not; but an Indian is worth his weight in



gold to us now," said Amyas, tucking his prize under his arm like a bundle. The lad, as soon as he saw there was no escape, resigned himself to his fate with true Indian stoicism, was brought in, and treated kindly enough, but refused to eat. For which, after much questioning, he gave as a reason, that he would make them kill him at once; for fat him they should not; and gradually gave them to understand that the English always (so at least the Spaniards said) fatted and ate their prisoners like the Caribs; and till he saw them go out and bury the bodies of the Spaniards, nothing would persuade him that the corpses were not to be cooked for supper.

However, kind words, kind looks, and the present of that inestimable treasure—a knife, brought him to reason; and he told Amyas that he belonged to a Spaniard who had an "encomienda" of Indians some fifteen miles to the southwest; that he had fled from his master, and lived by hunting for some months past; and having seen the ship where she lay moored, and boarded her in hope of plunder, had been surprised therein by the Spaniards, and forced by threats to go with them as a guide in their search for the English. But now came a part of his story which filled the soul of Amyas with delight. He was an Indian of the Llanos, or great savannahs which lay to the southward beyond the mountains, and had actually been upon the Orinoco. He had been stolen as a boy by some Spaniards, who had gone down (as was the fashion of the Jesuits even as late as 1790) for the pious purpose of converting the savages by the simple process of catching, baptizing, and making servants of those whom they could carry off, and murdering those who resisted their gentle method of salvation. Did he know the way back again? Who could ask such a question of an Indian? And the lad's black eyes flashed fire, as Amyas offered him liberty and iron enough for a dozen Indians, if he would lead them through the passes of the mountains, and southward to the mighty river, where lay their golden hopes. Hernando de Serpa, Amyas knew, had tried the same course, which was supposed to be about one hundred and twenty leagues, and failed, being overthrown utterly by the Wikiri Indians; but Amyas knew enough of the Spaniards' brutal method of treating those Indians, to be pretty sure that they had brought that catastrophe upon themselves, and that he might avoid it well enough by that common justice and mercy toward the

savages which he had learned from his incomparable tutor, Francis Drake.

Now was the time to speak; and, assembling his men around him, Amyas opened his whole heart, simply and manfully. This was their only hope of safety. Some of them had murmured that they should perish like John Oxenham's crew. This plan was rather the only way to avoid perishing like them. Don Guzman would certainly return to seek them; and not only he, but land-forces from St. Yago. Even if the stockade was not forced, they would be soon starved out; why not move at once, ere the Spaniards could return, and begin a blockade? As for taking St. Yago, it was impossible. The treasure would all be safely hidden, and the town well prepared to meet them. If they wanted gold and glory, they must seek it elsewhere. Neither was there any use in marching along the coast, and trying the ports; ships could outstrip them, and the country was already warned. There was but this one chance; and on it Amyas, the first and last time in his life, waxed eloquent, and set forth the glory of the enterprise, the service to the queen, the salvation of heathens, and the certainty that, if successful, they should win honor and wealth, and everlasting fame, beyond that of Cortes or Pizarro, till the men, sulky at first, warmed every moment; and one old Pelican broke out with—

"Yes sir! we didn't go round the world with you for nought; and watched your works and ways, which was always those of a gentleman, as you are—who spoke a word for a poor fellow when he was in a scrape, and saw all you ought to see, and nought that you ought not. And we'll follow you, sir, all alone to ourselves; and let those that know you worse follow after when they're come to their right mind."

Man after man capped this brave speech; the minority, who, if they liked little to go, liked still less to be left behind, gave in their consent perforce; and, to make a long story short, Amyas conquered, and the plan was accepted.

"This," said Amyas, "is indeed the proudest day of my life! I have lost one brother, but I have gained fore-score. God do so to me and more also, if I do not deal with you according to the trust which you have put in me this day!"

We, I suppose, are to believe that we have a right to laugh at Amyas' scheme as frantic and chimerical. It is



easy to amuse ourselves with the premises, after the conclusion has been found for us. We know, now, that he was mistaken: but we have not discovered his mistake for ourselves, and have no right to plume ourselves on other men's discoveries. Had we lived in Amyas' day, we should have belonged either to the many wise men who believed as he did, or to the many foolish men, who not only sneered at the story of Manoa, but at a hundred other stories, which we now know to be true. Columbus was laughed at: but he found a new world, nevertheless. Cortes was laughed at: but he found Mexico. Pizarro: but he found Peru. I ask any fair reader of those two charming books, Mr. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* and his *Conquest of Peru*, whether the true wonders in them described do not outdo all the false wonders of Manoa.

But what reason was there to think them false? One quarter, perhaps, of America had been explored, and yet in that quarter two empires had been already found, in a state of mechanical, military and agricultural civilization superior, in many things, to any nation of Europe. Was it not most rational to suppose that in the remaining three-quarters similar empires existed? If a second Mexico had been discovered in the mountains of Parima, and a second Peru in those of Brazil, what right would any man have had to wonder? As for the gold legends, nothing was told of Manoa which had not been seen in Peru and Mexico by the bodily eyes of men then living. Why should not the rocks of Guiana have been as full of the precious metals (we do not know yet that they are not) as the rocks of Peru and Mexico are known to be? Even the details of the story, its standing on a lake, for instance, bore a probability with them. Mexico actually stood in the center of a lake—why should not Manoa? The Peruvian worship centered round a sacred lake—why not that of Manoa? Pizarro and Cortes, again, were led on to their desperate enterprises by the sight of small quantities of gold among savages, who told them of a civilized gold country near at hand; and they found that those savages spoke truth. Why was the unanimous report of the Carib tribes of the Orinoco to be disbelieved, when they told a similar tale? Sir Richard Schomburgk's admirable preface to Raleigh's *Guiana* proves, surely, that the Indians themselves were deceived, as well as deceivers. It was known, again that vast quantities

of the Peruvian treasure had been concealed by the priests, and that members of the Inca family had fled across the Andes, and held out against the Spaniards. Barely fifty years had elapsed since then; what more probable than that this remnant of the Peruvian dynasty and treasure still existed? Even the story of the Amazons, though it may serve Hume as a point for his ungenerous and untruthful attempt to make Raleigh out either fool or villain, has come from Spaniards, who had with their own eyes seen the Indian women fighting by their husbands' sides, and from Indians, who asserted the existence of an Amazonian tribe. What right had Amyas, or any man, to disbelieve the story? The existence of the Amazons in ancient Asia, and of their intercourse with Alexander the Great, was then an accredited part of history, which it would have been gratuitous impertinence to deny. And what if some stories connected these warlike women with the Emperor of Manoa, and the capital itself? This generation ought surely to be the last to laugh at such a story, at least as long as the Amazonian guards of the King of Dahomey continue to outvie the men in that relentless ferocity, with which they have subdued every neighboring tribe, save the Christians of Abbeokuta. In this case, as in a hundred more, fact not only outdoes, but justifies imagination; and Amyas spoke common sense when he said to his men that day—

"Let fools laugh and stay at home. Wise men dare and win. Saul went to look for his father's asses, and found a kingdom; and Columbus, my men, was called a madman for only going to seek China, and never knew, they say, until his dying day, that he had found a whole new world instead of it. Find Manoa? God only, who made all things, knows what we may find beside!"

So underneath that giant ceiba-tree, those valiant men, reduced by battle and sickness to some eighty, swore a great oath, and kept that oath like men. To search for the golden city for two full years to come, whatever might befall; to stand to each other for weal or woe; to obey their officers to the death; to murmur privately against no man, but bring all complaints to a council of war; to use no profane oaths, but serve God daily with prayer; to take by violence from no man, save from their natural enemies the Spaniards; to be civil and merciful to all savages, and chaste and courteous to all women; to



bring all booty and all food into the common stock, and observe to the utmost their faith with the adventurers who had fitted out the ship; and finally, to march at sunrise the next morning toward the south, trusting in God to be their guide.

"It is a great oath, and a hard one," said Brimblecombe; "but God will give us strength to keep it." And they knelt altogether and received the Holy Communion, and then rose to pack provisions and ammunition, and lay down again to sleep and to dream that they were sailing home up Torridge stream—as Cavendish, returning from round the world, did actually sail home up Thames but five years afterwards—"with mariners and soldiers clothed in silk, with sails of damask, and topsails of cloth of gold, and the richest prize which ever was brought at one time unto English shores."

The Cross stands upright in the southern sky. It is the middle of the night. Cary and Yeo glide silently up the hill and into the camp, and whisper to Amyas that they have done the deed. The sleepers are awakened, and the train sets forth.

Upward and southward ever: but whither, who can tell? They hardly think of the whither; but go like sleep-walkers, shaken out of one land of dreams, only to find themselves in another and stranger one. All around is fantastic and unearthly; now each man starts as he sees the figures of his fellows, clothed from head to foot in golden filigree; looks up, and sees the yellow moonlight through the fronds of the huge tree-ferns overhead, as through a cloud of glittering lace. Now they are hewing their way through a thicket of enormous flags; now through bamboos forty feet high; now they are stumbling over boulders, waist-deep in cushions of club-moss; now they are struggling through shrubberies of heaths and rhododendrons, and woolly incense-trees, where every leaf, as they brush past, dashes some fresh scent into their faces, and

"The winds, with musky wing,  
About the cedarn alleys fling  
Nard and cassia's balmy smells."

Now they open upon some craggy brow, from whence they can see far below an ocean of soft cloud, whose silver billows, girdled by the mountain sides, hide the low-

land from their sight. And from beneath the cloud strange voices rise; the screams of thousand night-birds, and wild howls, which they used at first to fancy were the cries of ravenous beasts, till they found them to proceed from nothing fiercer than an ape. But what is that deeper note, like a series of muffled explosions—arquebuses fired within some subterranean cavern,—the heavy pulse of which rolls up through the depths of the unseen forest? They hear it now for the first time, but they will hear it many a time again; and the Indian lad is hushed, and cowers close to them, and then takes heart, as he looks upon their swords and arquebuses; for that is the roar of the jaguar, "seeking his meat from God."

But what is that glare away to the northward? The yellow moon is ringed with gay rainbows; but that light is far too red to be the reflection of any beams of hers. Now through the cloud rises a column of black and lurid smoke; the fog clears away right and left around it, and shows beneath, a mighty fire.

The men look at each other with questioning eyes, each half suspecting, and yet not daring to confess their own suspicions; and Amyas whispers to Yeo—

"You took care to flood the powder?"

"Ay, ay, sir, and to unload the ordnance too. No use in making a noise to tell the Spaniards our whereabouts."

Yes; that glare rises from the good ship *Rose*. Amyas, like Cortes of old, has burnt his ship, and retreat is now impossible. Forward into the unknown abyss of the New World, and God be with them as they go!

The Indian knows a cunning path: it winds along the highest ridges of the mountains; but the traveling is far more open and easy.

They have passed the head of a valley which leads down to St. Yago. Beneath that long shining river of mist, which ends at the foot of the great Silla, lies (so says the Indian lad) the rich capital of Venezuela; and beyond, the gold-mines of Los Teques and Baruta, which first attracted the founder Diego de Losada; and many a long-ing eye is turned towards it as they pass the saddle at the valley head; but the attempt is hopeless, they turn again to the left, and so down towards the rancho, taking care (so the prudent Amyas had commanded) to break down, after crossing, the frail rope bridge which spans each torrent and ravine.