

They are at the rancho long before daybreak, and have secured there, not only fourteen mules, but eight or nine Indians stolen off the Llanos, like their guide, who are glad enough to escape from their tyrants by taking service with them. And now southward and away, with lightened shoulders and hearts; for they are all but safe from pursuit. The broken bridges prevent the news of their raid reaching St. Yago until nightfall; and in the meanwhile, Don Guzman returns to the river mouth the next day to find the ship a blackened wreck, and the camp empty; follows their trail over the hills till he is stopped by a broken bridge; surmounts that difficulty, and meets a second; his men are worn out with heat, and a little afraid of stumbling on the heretic desperadoes, and he returns by land to St. Yago; and when he arrives there, has news from home which gives him other things to think of than following those mad Englishmen, who have vanished into the wilderness. "What need, after all, to follow them?" asked the Spaniards of each other. "Blinded by the devil, whom they serve, they rush on in search of certain death, as many a larger company has before them, and they will find it, and will trouble La Guayra no more forever." "Lutheran dogs and enemies of God," said Don Guzman to his soldiers, "they will leave their bones to whiten on the Llanos, as may every heretic who sets foot on Spanish soil!"

Will they do so, Don Guzman? Or wilt thou and Amyas meet again upon a mightier battlefield, to learn a lesson which neither of you yet has learned?

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE INQUISITION IN THE INDIES.

My next chapter is perhaps too sad; it shall be at least as short as I can make it; but it was needful to be written, that readers may judge fairly for themselves what sort of enemies the English nation had to face in those stern days.

Three weeks have passed, and the scene is shifted to a long low range of cells in a dark corridor in the city of Carthagená. The door of one is opened; and within stands two cloaked figures, one of whom we know. It is Eustace Leigh. The other is a familiar of the Holy Office.

He holds in his hand a lamp, from which the light falls on a bed of straw, and on the sleeping figure of a man. The high white brow, the pale and delicate features—them too we know, for they are those of Frank. Saved half-dead from the fury of the savage negroes, he has been reserved for the more delicate cruelty of civilized and Christian men. He underwent the question but this afternoon; and now Eustace, his betrayer, is come to persuade him—or to entrap him? Eustace himself hardly knows whether of the two.

And yet he would give his life to save his cousin. His life? He has long since ceased to care for that. He has done what he has done because it is his duty; and now he is to do his duty once more, and wake the sleeper, and argue, coax, threaten him into recantation while "his heart is still tender from the torture," so Eustace's employers phrase it.

And yet how calmly he is sleeping! Is it but a freak of the lamplight, or is there a smile upon his lips? Eustace takes the lamp and bends over him to see; and as he bends he hears Frank whispering in his dreams his mother's name, and a name higher and holier still.

Eustace cannot find the heart to wake him.

"Let him rest," whispers he to his companion. "After all, I fear my words will be of little use."

"I fear so too, sir. Never did I behold a more obdurate heretic. He did not scruple to scoff openly at their holinesses."

"Ah!" said Eustace; "great is the pravity of the



human heart, and the power of Satan! Let us go for the present. Where is she?"

"The elder sorceress, or the younger?"

"The younger—the——"

"The Senora de Soto? Ah, poor thing! One could be sorry for her, were she not a heretic." And the man eyed Eustace keenly, and then quietly added, "She is at present with the notary; to the benefit of her soul, I trust——"

Eustace half stopped, shuddering. He could hardly collect himself enough to gasp out an "Amen!"

"Within there," said the man, pointing carelessly to a door as they went down the corridor. "We can listen a moment, if you like; but don't betray me, Senor."

Eustace knows well enough that the fellow is probably on the watch to betray him, if he shows any signs of compunction; at least to report faithfully to his superiors the slightest expression of sympathy with a heretic; but a horrible curiosity prevails over fear, and he pauses close to the fatal door. His face is all of a flame, his knees knock together, his ears are ringing, his heart bursting through his ribs, as he supports himself against the wall, hiding his convulsed face as well as he can from his companion.

A man's voice is plainly audible within; low, but distinct. The notary is trying that old charge of witchcraft, which the Inquisitors, whether to justify themselves to their own consciences, or to whiten their villainy somewhat in the eyes of the mob, so often brought against their victims. And then Eustace's heart sinks within him as he hears a woman's voice reply, sharpened by indignation and agony—

"Witchcraft against Don Guzman? What need of that, oh, God! what need!"

"You deny it then, Senora? We are sorry for you; but——"

A confused choking murmur from the victim, mingled with words which might mean anything or nothing.

"She has confessed!" whispers Eustace; "saints, I thank you!—she——"

A wail which rings through Eustace's ears, and brain, and heart! He would have torn at the door to open it, but his companion forces him away. Another and another wail, while the wretched man hurries off, stopping his ears in vain against those piercing cries which follow him like avenging angels through the dreadful vaults.

He escaped into the fragrant open air, and the golden tropic moonlight, and a garden which might have served as a model for Eden; but man's hell followed into God's heaven, and still those wails seemed to ring through his ears.

"Oh, misery, misery, misery!" murmured he to himself through grinding teeth; "and I have brought her to this! I have had to bring her to it! What else could I? Who dare blame me? And yet what devilish sin can I have committed, that requires to be punished thus? Was there no one to be found but me? No one! And yet it may save her soul. It may bring her to repentance!"

"It may, indeed; for she is delicate, and cannot endure much. You ought to know as well as I, Senor, the merciful disposition of the Holy Office."

"I know it, I know it," interrupted poor Eustace, trembling now for himself. "All in love—all in love.—A paternal chastisement——"

"And the proofs of heresy are patent, beside the strong suspicion of enchantment, and the known character of the elder sorceress. You yourself, you must remember, Senor, told us that she had been a notorious witch in England, before the Senor brought her hither as her attendant."

"Of course she was; of course. Yes; there was no other course open. And though the flesh may be weak, sir, in my case, yet none can have proved better to the Holy Office how willing is the spirit!"

And so Eustace departed; and ere another sun had set, he had gone to the principal of the Jesuits; told him his whole heart, or as much of it, poor wretch, as he dare tell to himself; and entreated to be allowed to finish his novitiate, and enter the order, on the understanding that he was to be sent at once back to Europe, or anywhere else; "Otherwise," as he said frankly, "he should go mad, even if he were not mad already." The Jesuit, who was a kindly man enough, went to the Holy Office, and settled all with the Inquisitors, recounting to them, to set him above all suspicion, Eustace's past valiant services to the Church. His testimony was no longer needed; he left Carthagen for Nombre that very night, and sailed the next week I know not whither.

I say, I know not whither. Eustace Leigh vanishes henceforth from these pages. He may have ended as General of his Order. He may have worn out his years