

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## HOW AMYAS WAS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

"Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil? Is there any peace  
In always climbing up the climbing wave?  
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease;  
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease."

TENNYSON.

HUMBOLDT has somewhere a curious passage; in which looking on some wretched group of Indians, squatting stupidly round their fires, besmeared with grease and paint, and devouring ants and clay, he somewhat naïvely remarks, that were it not for science, which teaches us that such is the crude material of humanity, and this the state from which we all have risen, he should have been tempted rather to look upon those hapless beings as the last degraded remnants of some fallen and dying race. One wishes that the great traveler had been bold enough to yield to that temptation, which his own reason and common sense presented to him as the real explanation of the sad sight, instead of following the dogmas of a so-called science, which has not a fact whereon to base its wild notion, and must ignore a thousand facts in asserting it. His own good sense, it seems, coincided instinctively with the Bible doctrine, that man in a state of nature is a fallen being, doomed to death—a view which may be a sad one, but still one more honorable to poor humanity than the theory, that we all began as some sort of two-handed apes. It is surely more hopeful to believe that those poor Otomacs or Guahibas were not what they ought to be, than to believe that they were. It is certainly more complimentary to them to think that they had been somewhat nobler and more prudent in centuries gone by, than that they were such blockheads as to have dragged on, the son after the father, for all the thousands of years which have elapsed since man was made, without having had wit enough to discover any better food than ants and clay.

Our voyagers, however, like those of their time, troubled

their heads with no such questions. Taking the Bible story as they found it, they agreed with Humboldt's reason, and not with his science; or, to speak correctly, agreed with Humboldt's self, and not with the shallow anthropologic theories which happened to be in vogue fifty years ago; and their new hosts were in their eyes immortal souls like themselves, "captivated by the devil at his will," lost there in the pathless forests, likely to be lost hereafter.

And certainly facts seemed to bear out their old-fashioned theories; although these Indians had sunk by no means so low as the Guahibas whom they had met upon the lower waters of the same river.

They beheld, on landing, a scattered village of palm-leaf sheds, under which, as usual, the hammocks were slung from tree to tree. Here and there, in openings in the forest, patches of cassava and indigo appeared; and there was a look of neatness and comfort about the little settlement superior to the average.

But now for the signs of the evil spirit. Certainly it was no good spirit who had inspired them with the art of music; or else (as Cary said) Apollo and Mercury (if they ever visited America) had played their forefathers a shabby trick, and put them off with very poor instruments, and still poorer taste. For on either side of the landing-place were arranged four or five stout fellows, each with a tall drum, or long earthen trumpet, swelling out in the course of its length into several hollow balls, from which arose, the moment the strangers set foot on shore, so deafening a cacophony of howls, and groans, and thumps, as fully to justify Yeo's remark, "They are calling upon their devil, sir." To which Cary answered, with some show of reason, that "they were the less likely to be disappointed, for none but Sir Urian would ever come to listen to such a noise."

"And you mark, sirs," said Yeo, "there's some feast or sacrifice toward. I'm not over-confident of them yet."

"Nonsense!" said Amyas, "we could kill every soul of them in half-an-hour, and they know that as well as we."

But some great demonstration was plainly toward; for the children of the forest were arrayed in two lines, right and left of the open space, the men in front, and the women behind; and all bedizened, to the best of their power, with arnotto, indigo and feathers.

Next, with a hideous yell, leapt into the centre of the space a personage who certainly could not have com-



plained if anyone had taken him for the devil, for he had dressed himself up carefully for that very intent, in a jaguar-skin with a long tail, grinning teeth, a pair of horns, a plume of black and yellow feathers, and a huge rattle.

"Here's the Piache, the rascal," says Amyas.

"Ay," says Yeo, "in Satan's livery, and I've no doubt his works are according, trust him for it."

"Don't be frightened, Jack," says Cary, backing up Brimblecombe from behind. "It's your business to tackle him, you know. At him boldly, and he'll run."

Whereat all the men laughed; and the Piache, who had intended to produce a very solemn impression, hung fire a little. However, being accustomed to get his bread by his impudence, he soon recovered himself, advanced, smote one of the musicians over the head with his rattle to procure silence; and then began a harangue, to which Amyas listened patiently, cigar in mouth.

"What's it all about, boy?"

"He wants to know whether you have seen Amalivaca on the other shore of the great water?"

Amyas was accustomed to this inquiry after the mythic civilizer of the forest Indians, who, after carving the mysterious sculptures which appear upon so many inland cliffs of that region, returned again whence he came, beyond the ocean. He answered, as usual, by setting forth the praises of Queen Elizabeth.

To which the Piache replied, that she must be one of Amalivaca's seven daughters, some of whom he took back with him, while he broke the legs of the rest to prevent their running away, and left them to people the forests.

To which Amyas replied, that his queen's legs were certainly not broken; for she was a very model of grace and activity, and the best dancer in all her dominions; but that it was more important to him to know whether the tribe would give them cassava bread, and let them stay peaceably on that island, to rest awhile before they went on to fight the clothed men (the Spaniards), on the other side of the mountains.

On which the Piache, after capering and turning head over heels with much howling, beckoned Amyas and his party to follow him; they did so, seeing that the Indians were all unarmed, and evidently in the highest good humor.

The Piache went toward the door of a carefully closed

hut, and crawling up to it on all-fours in most abject fashion, began whining to some one within.

"Ask what he is about, boy."

The lad asked the old cacique, who had accompanied them, and received for answer, that he was consulting the Daughter of the Sun.

"Here is our mare's nest at last," quoth Cary, as the Piache from whines rose to screams and gesticulations, and then to violent convulsions, foaming at the mouth and rolling of the eyeballs, till he suddenly sank exhausted, and lay for dead.

"As good as a stage play."

"The devil has played his part," says Jack; "and now by the rules of all plays Vice should come on."

"And a very fair Vice it will be, I suspect; a right sweet Iniquity, my Jack! Listen."

And from the interior of the hut rose a low sweet song, at which all the simple Indians bowed their heads in reverence; and the English were hushed in astonishment, for the voice was not shrill or guttural, like that of an Indian, but round, clear and rich, like a European's; and as it swelled and rose louder and louder, showed a compass and power which would have been extraordinary anywhere (and many a man of the party, as was usual in musical old England, was a good judge enough of such a matter, and could hold his part right well in glee, and catch, and roundelay, and psalm). And as it leaped, and ran, and sank again, and rose once more to fall once more, all but inarticulate, yet perfect in melody, like the voice of bird on bough, the wild wanderers were rapt in new delight, and did not wonder at the Indians as they bowed their heads, and welcomed the notes as messengers from some higher world. At last one triumphant burst, so shrill that all ears rang again, and then dead silence. The Piache, suddenly restored to life, jumped upright, and recommenced preaching at Amyas.

"Tell the howling villain to make short work of it, lad! His tune won't do after that last one."

The lad, grinning, informed Amyas that the Piache signified their acceptance as friends by the Daughter of the Sun; that her friends were theirs, and her foes theirs. Whereon the Indians set up a scream of delight, and Amyas, rolling another tobacco leaf up in another strip of plantain, answered,—



"Then let her give us some cassava," and lighted a fresh cigar.

Whereon the door of the hut opened, and the Indians prostrated themselves to the earth, as there came forth the same fair apparition which they had encountered upon the island, but decked now in feather-robcs, and plumes of every imaginable hue.

Slowly and stately, as one accustomed to command, she walked up to Amyas, glancing proudly round on her prostrate adorers, and pointing with graceful arms to the trees, the gardens and the huts, gave him to understand by signs (so expressive were her looks, that no words were needed) that all was at his service; after which, taking his hand, she lifted it gently to her forehead.

At that sign of submission a shout of rapture rose from the crowd; and as the mysterious maiden retired again to her hut, they pressed round the English caressing and admiring, pointing with equal surprise to their swords, to their Indian bows and blowguns, and to the trophies of wild beasts with which they were clothed; while women hastened off to bring fruit and flowers, and cassava, and (to Amyas' great anxiety) calabashes of intoxicating drink; and, to make a long story short, the English sat down beneath the trees, and feasted merrily, while the drums and trumpets made hideous music, and lithe young girls and lads danced uncouth dances, which so scandalized both Brimblecombe and Yeo, that they persuaded Amyas to beat an early retreat. He was willing enough to get back to the island while the men were still sober; so there were many leave-takings and promises of return on the morrow, and the party paddled back to their island-fortress, racking their wits as to who or what the mysterious maid could be.

Amyas, however, had settled in his mind that she was one of the lost Inca race—perhaps a descendant of that very fair girl, wife of the Inca Manco, whom Pizarro, forty years before had, merely to torture the fugitive king's heart, as his body was safe from the tyrant's reach, stripped, scourged and shot to death with arrows, uncomplaining to the last.

They all assembled for the evening service (hardly a day had passed since they left England on which they had not done the same); and after it was over, they must needs sing a Psalm, and then a catch or two, ere they went to

sleep; and till the moon was high in heaven, twenty mel-low voices rang out above the roar of the cataract, in many a good old tune. Once or twice they thought they heard an echo to their song: but they took no note of it, till Cary, who had gone apart for a few minutes, returned and whispered Amyas away.

"The sweet Iniquity is mimicking us, lad."

They went to the brink of the river; and there (for their ears were by this time dead to the noise of the torrent) they could hear plainly the same voice which had so surprised them in the hut, repeating, clear and true, snatchcs of the airs which they had sung. Strange and solemn enough was the effect of the men's deep voices on the island, answered out of the dark forest by those sweet treble notes; and the two young men stood a long while listening and looking out across the eddies, which swirled down golden in the moonlight: but they could see nothing beyond save the black wall of trees. After awhile the voice ceased, and the two returned to dream of Incas and nightingales.

They visited the village again next day; and every day for a week or more; but the maiden appeared but rarely, and when she did, kept her distance as haughtily as a queen.

Amyas, of course, as soon as he could converse somewhat better with his new friends, was not long before he questioned the cacique about her. But the old man made an owl's face at her name, and intimated by mysterious shakes of the head, that she was a very strange personage, and the less said about her the better. She was "a child of the Sun," and that was enough.

"Tell him, boy," quoth Cary, "that we are the children of the Sun by his first wife; and have orders from him to inquire how the Indians have behaved to our step-sister, for he cannot see all their tricks down here, the trees are so thick. So let him tell us, or all the cassava plants shall be blighted."

"Will, Will, don't play with lying!" said Amyas; but the threat was enough for the cacique, and taking them in his canoe a full mile down the stream, as if in fear that the wonderful maiden should overhear him, he told them, in a sort of rhythmic chant, how, many moons ago (he could not tell how many), his tribe was a mighty nation, and dwelt in Papamene, till the Spaniards drove them forth.



And how, as they wandered northward, far away upon the mountain spurs beneath the flaming cone of Cotopaxi, they had found this fair creature wandering in the forest, about the bigness of a seven years' child. Wondering at her white skin and her delicate beauty, the simple Indians worshiped her as a god, and led her home with them. And when they found that she was human like themselves, their wonder scarcely lessened. How could so tender a being have sustained life in those forests, and escaped the jaguar and the snake? She must be under some Divine protection: she must be a daughter of the Sun, one of that mighty Inca race, the news of whose fearful fall had reached even those lonely wildernesses; who had, many of them, haunted for years as exiles the eastern slopes of the Andes, about the Ucalayi and the Maranon; who would, as all Indians knew, rise again some day to power, when bearded white men should come across the seas to restore them to their ancient throne.

So, as the girl grew up among them, she was tended with royal honors, by command of the conjuror of the tribe, that so her forefather the Sun might be propitious to them, and the Incas might show favor to the poor ruined Omaguas, in the day of their coming glory. And as she grew, she had become, it seemed, somewhat of a prophetess among them, as well as an object of fetish-worship; for she was more prudent in council, valiant in war and cunning in the chase, than all the elders of the tribe; and those strange and sweet songs of hers, which had so surprised the white men, were full of mysterious wisdom about the birds, and the animals, and the flowers, and the rivers, which the Sun and the Good Spirit taught her from above. So she had lived among them, unmarried still, not only because she despised the addresses of all Indian youths, but because the conjuror had declared it to be profane in them to mingle with the race of the Sun, and had assigned her a cabin near his own, where she was served in state, and gave some sort of oracular responses, as they had seen, to the questions which he put to her.

Such was the cacique's tale; on which Cary remarked, probably not unjustly, that he "dared to say the conjuror made a very good thing of it:" but Amyas was silent, full of dreams, if not about Manoa, still about the remnant of the Inca race. What if they were still to be found about the southern sources of the Amazon? He must have been

very near them already, in that case. It was vexatious; but at least he might be sure that they had formed no great kingdom in that direction, or he should have heard of it long ago. Perhaps they had moved lately from thence eastward, to escape some fresh encroachment of the Spaniards; and this girl had been left behind in their flight. And then he recollected, with a sigh, how hopeless was any further search with his diminished band. At least, he might learn something of the truth from the maiden herself. It might be useful to him in some future attempt, for he had not yet given up Manoa. If he but got safe home, there was many a gallant gentleman (and Raleigh came at once into his mind) who would join him in a fresh search for the Golden City of Guiana; not by the upper waters, but by the mouth of the Orinoco.

So they paddled back, while the simple cacique entreated them to tell the Sun, in their daily prayers, how well the wild people had treated his descendant; and besought them not to take her away with them, lest the Sun should forget the poor Omaguas, and ripen their manioc and their fruit no more.

Amyas had no wish to stay where he was longer than was absolutely necessary to bring up the sick men from the Orinoco; but this, he well knew, would be a journey probably of some months, and attended with much danger.

Cary volunteered at once, however, to undertake the adventure, if half-a-dozen men would join him, and the Indians would send a few young men to help in working the canoe; but this latter item was not an easy one to obtain; for the tribe with whom they now were, stood in some fear of the fierce and brutal Gaubibas, through whose country they must pass; and every Indian tribe, as Amyas knew well enough, looks on each tribe of different language to itself as natural enemies, hateful and made only to be destroyed wherever met. This strange fact, too, Amyas and his party attributed to delusion of the devil, the divider and accuser; and I am of opinion that they were perfectly right: only let Amyas take care that while he is discovering the devil in the Indians, he does not give place to him in himself, and that in more ways than one. But of that more hereafter.

Whether, however, it was pride or shyness which kept the maiden aloof, she conquered it after awhile; perhaps through mere woman's curiosity; and perhaps, too, from



mere longing for amusement in a place so unspeakably stupid as the forest. She gave the English to understand, however, that though they all might be very important personages, none of them was to be her companion but Amyas. And ere a month was past, she was often hunting with him far and wide in the neighboring forest, with a train of chosen nymphs, whom she had persuaded to follow her example and spurn the dusky suitors around. This fashion, not uncommon, perhaps, among the Indian tribes, where women are continually escaping to the forest from the tyranny of the men, and often, perhaps, forming temporary communities, was to the English a plain proof that they were near the land of the famous Amazons, of whom they had heard so often from the Indians; while Amyas had no doubt that, as a descendant of the Incas, the maiden preserved the tradition of the Virgins of the Sun, and of the austere monastic rule of the Peruvian superstition. Had not that valiant German George of Spires, and Jeronimo Ortal too, fifty years before, found convents of the Sun upon these very upper waters?

So a harmless friendship sprang up between Amyas and the girl, which soon turned to good account. For he no sooner heard that he needed a crew of Indians, than she consulted the Piache, assembled the tribe, and having retired to her hut, commenced a song, which (unless the Piache lied) was a command to furnish young men for Cary's expedition, under a penalty of the sovereign displeasure of an evil spirit with an unpronounceable name—an argument which succeeded on the spot, and the canoe departed on its perilous errand.

John Brimblecombe had great doubt whether a venture thus started by direct help and patronage of the fiend would succeed; and Amyas himself, disliking the humbug, told Ayacanora that it would be better to have told the tribe that it was a good deed, and pleasing to the Good Spirit.

"Ah!" said she naively enough, "they know better than that. The Good Spirit is big and lazy; and he smiles and takes no trouble: but the little bad spirit, he is so busy—here, and there, and everywhere," and she waved her pretty hands up and down; "he is the useful one to have for a friend!" Which sentiment the Piache much approved, as became his occupation; and once told Brimblecombe pretty sharply, that he was a meddle-

some fellow for telling the Indians that the Good Spirit cared for them; "For," quoth he, "if they begin to ask the Good Spirit for what they want, who will bring me cassava and coca for keeping the bad spirit quiet?" This argument, however forcible the devil's priests in all ages have felt it to be, did not stop Jack's preaching (and very good and righteous preaching it was, moreover), and much less the morning and evening service in the island camp. This last, the Indians, attracted by the singing, attended in such numbers, that the Piache found his occupation gone, and vowed to put an end to Jack's Gospel with a poisoned arrow.

Which plan he (blinded by his master, Satan, so Jack phrased it) took into his head to impart to Ayacanora, as the partner of his tithes and offerings; and was exceedingly astonished to receive in answer a box on the ear, and a storm of abuse. After which, Ayacanora went to Amyas, and telling him all, proposed that the Piache should be thrown to the alligators, and Jack installed in his place; declaring that whatsoever the bearded men said must be true, and whosoever plotted against them should die the death.

Jack, however, magnanimously forgave his foe, and preached on, of course with fresh zeal; but not, alas! with much success. For the conjuror, though his main treasure was gone over to the camp of the enemy, had a reserve in a certain holy trumpet, which was hidden mysteriously in a cave on the neighboring hills, not to be looked on by woman under pain of death; and it was well known, and had been known for generations, that unless that trumpet, after fastings, flagellations, and other solemn rites, was blown by night throughout the woods, the palm-trees would bear no fruit; yea, so great was the fame of that trumpet, that neighboring tribes sent at the proper season to hire it and the blower thereof, by payment of much precious trumpetry, that so they might be sharers in its fertilizing powers.

So the Piache announced one day in public, that in consequence of the impiety of the Omaguas, he should retire to a neighboring tribe, of more religious turn of mind; and taking with him the precious instrument, leave their palms to blight, and themselves to the evil spirit.

Dire was the wailing, and dire the wrath throughout the village. Jack's words were allowed to be good words;



but what was the Gospel in comparison of the trumpet? The rascal saw his advantage, and began a fierce harangue against the heretic strangers. As he maddened, his hearers maddened; the savage nature, capricious as a child's, flashed out in wild suspicion. Women yelled, men scowled, and ran hastily to their huts for bows and blowguns. The case was grown critical. There were not more than a dozen men with Amyas at the time, and they had only their swords, while the Indian men might muster nearly a hundred. Amyas forbade his men either to draw or to retreat; but poisoned arrows were weapons before which the boldest might well quail; and more than one cheek grew pale which had seldom been pale before.

"It is God's quarrel, sirs all," said Jack Brimblecombe; "let Him defend the right."

As he spoke, from Ayacanora's hut arose her magic song, and quivered aloft among the green heights of the forest.

The mob stood spellbound, still growling fiercely, but not daring to move. Another moment and she had rushed out, like a very Diana, into the centre of the ring, bow in hand, and arrow on the string.

The fallen "children of wrath" had found their match in her; for her beautiful face was convulsed with fury. Almost foaming in her passion, she burst forth with bitter revilings; she pointed with admiration to the English, and then with fiercest contempt to the Indians; and at last, with fierce gestures, seemed to cast off the very dust of her feet against them, and springing to Amyas' side, placed herself in the forefront of the English battle.

The whole scene was so sudden, that Amyas had hardly discovered whether she came as friend or foe, before her bow was raised. He had just time to strike up her hand, when the arrow flew past the ear of the offending Piache, and stuck quivering in a tree.

"Let me kill the wretch!" said she, stamping with rage; but Amyas held her arm firmly.

"Fools!" cried she to the tribe, while tears of anger rolled down her cheeks. "Choose between me and your trumpet! I am a daughter of the Sun; I am white; I am a companion for Englishmen! But you! your mothers were Guahibas, and ate mud; and your fathers—they were howling apes! Let them sing to you! I shall go to the white men, and never sing you to sleep any more; and

when the little evil spirit misses my voice, he will come and tumble you out of your hammocks, and make you dream of ghosts every night, till you grow as thin as blowguns, and as stupid as aye-ayes!"\*

This terrible counter-threat, in spite of the slight pathos involved, had its effect; for it appealed to that dread of the sleep-world which is common to all savages; but the conjuror was ready to outbid the prophetess, and had begun a fresh oration, when Amyas turned the tide of war. Bursting into a huge laugh at the whole matter, he took the conjuror by his shoulders, sent him with one crafty kick half-a-dozen yards off upon his nose; and then walking out of the ranks, shook hands round with all his Indian acquaintances.

Whereon, like grown-up babies, they all burst out laughing too, shook hands with all the English, and then with each other; being, after all, as glad as any bishops to prorogue the convocation, and let unpleasant questions stand over till the next session. The Piache relented, like a prudent man; Ayacanora returned to her hut to sulk; and Amyas to his island, to long for Cary's return, for he felt himself on dangerous ground.

At last Will returned, safe and sound, and as merry as ever, not having lost a man (though he had had a smart brush with the Guahibas). He brought back three of the wounded men, now pretty nigh cured; the other two, who had lost a leg apiece, had refused to come. They had Indian wives; more than they could eat; and tobacco without end: and if it were not for the gnats (of which Cary said that there were more mosquitoes than there was air), they should be the happiest men alive. Amyas could hardly blame the poor fellows; for the chance of their getting home through the forest with one leg each was very small, and, after all, they were making the best of a bad matter. And a very bad matter it seemed to him, to be left in a heathen land; and a still worse matter, when he overheard some of the men talking about their comrades' lonely fate, as if, after all, they were not so much to be pitied. He said nothing about it then, for he made a rule never to take notice of any facts which he got at by eavesdropping, however unintentional; but he longed that one of them would say as much to him, and he would "give them a

\*Two-toed sloths.



piece of his mind." And a piece of his mind he had to give within the week; for while he was on a hunting party, two of his men were missing, and were not heard of for some days; at the end of which time the old cacique came to tell him that he believed they had taken to the forest, each with an Indian girl.

Amyas was very wroth at the news. First, because it had never happened before: he could say with honest pride, as Raleigh did afterwards when he returned from his Guiana voyage, that no Indian woman had ever been the worse for any man of his. He had preached on this point month after month, and practiced what he preached; and now his pride was sorely hurt.

Moreover, he dreaded offence to the Indians themselves: but on this score the cacique soon comforted him, telling him that the girls, as far as he could find, had gone off of their own free will; intimating that he thought it somewhat an honor to the tribe that they had found favor in the eyes of the bearded men; and, moreover, that late wars had so thinned the ranks of their men, that they were glad enough to find husbands for their maidens, and had been driven of late years to kill many of their female infants. This sad story, common perhaps to every American tribe, and one of the chief causes of their extermination, reassured Amyas somewhat; but he could not stomach either the loss of his men, or their breach of discipline; and look for them he would. Did anyone know where they were? If the tribe knew, they did not care to tell; but Ayacanora, the moment she found out his wishes, vanished into the forest, and returned in two days, saying she had found the fugitives; but she would not show him where they were, unless he promised not to kill them. He, of course, had no mind for so rigorous a method: he both needed the men, and he had no malice against them,—for the one, Ebsworthy, was a plain, honest, happy-go-lucky sailor, and as good a hand as there was in the crew; and the other was that same ne'er-do-well Will Parracombe, his old schoolfellow, who had been tempted by the gypsy-Jesuit at Appledore, and resisting that bait, had made a very fair seaman.

So forth Amyas went, with Ayacanora as a guide, some five miles upward along the forest slopes, till the girl whispered, "There they are;" and Amyas, pushing himself gently through a thicket of bamboo, beheld a scene which.

in spite of his wrath, kept him silent, and perhaps softened, for a minute.

On the farther side of a little lawn, the stream leapt through a chasm beneath overarching vines, sprinkling eternal freshness upon all around, and then sank foaming into a clear rock-basin, a bath for Dian's self. On its farther side, the crag rose some twenty feet in height, bank upon bank of feathered ferns and cushioned moss, over the rich green beds of which drooped a thousand orchids, scarlet, white, and orange, and made the still pool gorgeous with the reflection of their gorgeousness. At its more quiet outfall, it was half-hidden in huge fantastic leaves and tall flowering stems; but near the waterfall the grassy bank sloped down toward the stream, and there, on palm-leaves strewn upon the turf, beneath the shadow of the crags, lay the two men whom Amyas sought, and whom, now he had found them, he had hardly heart to wake from their delicious dream.

For what a nest it was which they had found! the air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and quivering with the murmur of the stream, the humming of the colibris and insects, the cheerful song of birds, the gentle cooing of a hundred doves; while now and then, from far away, the musical wail of the sloth, or the deep toll of the bell-bird, came softly to the ear. What was not there which eye or ear could need? And what which palate could need either? For on the rock above, some strange tree, leaning forward, dropped every now and then a luscious apple upon the grass below, and huge wild plantains bent beneath their load of fruit.

There, on the stream bank, lay the two renegades from civilized life. They had cast away their clothes, and painted themselves like the Indians, with arnotto and indigo. One lay lazily picking up the fruit which fell close to his side; the other sat, his back against a cushion of soft moss, his hands folded languidly upon his lap, giving himself up to the soft influence of the narcotic coca-juice, with half-shut dreamy eyes fixed on the everlasting sparkle of the waterfall—

"While beauty, born of murmuring sound,  
Did pass into his face."

Somewhat apart crouched their two dusky brides, crowned with fragrant flowers, but working busily, like true women,



for the lords whom they delighted to honor. One sat plaiting palm-fibres into a basket; the other was boring the stem of a huge milk-tree, which rose like some mighty column on the right hand of the lawn, its broad canopy of leaves unseen through the dense underwood of laurel and bamboo, and betokened only by the rustle far aloft, and by the mellow shade in which it bathed the whole delicious scene.

Amyas stood silent for awhile, partly from noble shame at seeing two Christian men thus fallen of their own self-will; partly because—and he could not but confess that—a solemn calm brooded above that glorious place, to break through which seemed sacrilege even while he felt it a duty. Such, he thought, was Paradise of old; such our first parents' bridal bower! Ah! if man had not fallen, he too might have dwelt forever in such a home—with whom? He started, and shaking off the spell, advanced sword in hand.

The women saw him, and, springing to their feet, caught up their long pocumas, and leapt like deer each in front of her beloved. There they stood, the deadly tubes pressed to their lips, eyeing him like tigresses who protect their young, while every slender limb quivered—not with terror, but with rage.

Amyas paused, half in admiration, half in prudence; for one rash step was death. But rushing through the canes, Ayacanora sprang to the front, and shrieked to them in Indian. At the sight of the prophetess the women wavered, and Amyas, putting on as gentle a face as he could, stepped forward, assuring them in his best Indian that he would harm no one.

"Ebsworthy! Parracombe! Are you grown such savages already, that you have forgotten your captain? Stand up, men, and salute!"

Ebsworthy sprang to his feet, obeyed mechanically, and then slipped behind his bride again, as if in shame. The dreamer turned his head languidly, raised his hand to his forehead, and then returned to his contemplation.

Amyas rested the point of his sword on the ground, and his hand upon the hilt, and looked sadly and solemnly upon the pair. Ebsworthy broke the silence, half reproachfully, half trying to bluster away the coming storm.

"Well, noble captain, so you've hunted out us poor

fellows; and want to drag us back again in a halter, I suppose?"

"I came to look for Christians, and I find heathens; for men, and I find swine. I shall leave the heathens to their wilderness, and the swine to their trough. Parracombe!"

"He's too happy to answer you, sir. And why not? What do you want of us? Our two years' vow is out, and we are free men now."

"Free to become like the beasts that perish? You are the queen's servants still, and in her name I charge you——"

"Free to be happy," interrupted the man. "With the best of wives, the best of food, a warmer bed than a duke's and a finer garden than an emperor's. As for clothes, why the plague should a man wear them where he don't need them? As for gold, what's the use of it where Heaven sends everything ready-made to your hands? Harken, Captain Leigh. You've been a good captain to me, and I'll repay you with a bit of sound advice. Give up your gold-hunting and toiling and moiling after honor and glory, and copy us. Take that fair maid behind you there to wife; pitch here with us; and see if you are not happier in one day than ever you were in all your life before."

"You are drunk, sirrah! William Parracombe! Will you speak to me, or shall I heave you into the stream to sober you?"

"Who calls William Parracombe?" answered a sleepy voice.

"I, fool!—your captain."

"I am not William Parracombe. He is dead long ago of hunger, and labor, and heavy sorrow, and will never see Bideford town any more. He is turned into an Indian now; and he is to sleep, sleep, sleep for a hundred years, till he gets his strength again, poor fellow——"

"Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light! A christened Englishman, and living thus the life of a beast!"

"Christ shall give thee light?" answered the same unnatural abstracted voice. "Yes; so the parsons say. And they say, too, that He is Lord of heaven and earth. I should have thought His light was as near us here as anywhere, and nearer too, by the look of the place."



Look round!" said he, waving a lazy hand, "and see the works of God, and the place of Paradise, whither poor weary souls go home and rest, after their masters in the wicked world have used them up, with labor and sorrow, and made them wade knee-deep in blood—I'm tired of blood, and tired of gold. I'll march no more; I'll fight no more; I'll hunger no more after vanity and vexation of spirit. What shall I get by it? Maybe I shall leave my bones in the wilderness. I can but do that here. Maybe I shall get home with a few pezos, to die an old cripple in some stinking hovel, that a monkey would scorn to lodge in here. You may go on; it'll pay you. You may be a rich man, and a knight, and live in a fine house, and drink good wine, and go to Court, and torment your soul with trying to get more, when you've got too much already; plotting and planning to scramble upon your neighbor's shoulders, as they all did—Sir Richard, and Mr. Raleigh, and Chichester, and poor dear old Sir Wadham, and all of them that I used to watch when I lived before. They were no happier than I was then; I'll warrant they are no happier now. Go your ways, captain; climb to glory upon some other backs than ours, and leave us here in peace, alone with God and God's woods, and the good wives that God has given us, to play a little like school children. It's long since I've had playhours; and now I'll be a little child once more, with the flowers, and the singing birds, and the silver fishes in the stream, that are at peace, and think no harm, and want neither clothes, nor money, nor knighthood, nor peerage, but just take what comes; and their heavenly Father feedeth them, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these—and will he not much more feed us, that are of more value than many sparrows?"

"And will you live here, shut out from all Christian ordinances?"

"Christian ordinances? Adam and Eve had no parsons in Paradise. The Lord was their priest, and the Lord was their shepherd, and He'll be ours too. But go your ways, sir, and send up Sir John Brimblecombe, and let him marry us here Church fashion (though we have sworn troth to each other before God already), and let him give us the Holy Sacrament once and for all, and then read the funeral service over us, and go his ways, and count us for dead, sir—for dead we are to the wicked worthless world we came out of three years ago. And when the Lord

chooses to call us, the little birds will cover us with leaves as they did the babies in the wood, and fresher flowers will grow out of our graves, sir, than out of yours in that bare Northam churchyard there beyond the weary, weary, weary sea."

His voice died away to a murmur, and his head sank on his breast.

Amyas stood spellbound. The effect of the narcotic was all but miraculous in his eyes. The sustained eloquence, the novel richness of diction in one seemingly drowned in sensual sloth, were, in his eyes, the possession of some evil spirit. And yet he could not answer the Evil One. His English heart, full of the divine instinct of duty and public spirit, told him that it must be a lie: but how to prove it a lie? And he stood for full ten minutes searching for an answer, which seemed to fly farther and farther off the more he sought for it.

His eye glanced on Ayacanora. The two girls were whispering to her smilingly. He saw one of them glance a look toward him, and then say something, which raised a beautiful blush in the maiden's face. With a playful bow at the speaker, she turned away. Amyas knew instinctively that they were giving her the same advice as Ebsworthy had given to him. Oh, how beautiful she was! Might not the renegades have some reason on their side after all.

He shuddered at the thought; but he could not shake it off. It glided in like some gaudy snake, and wreathed its coils round all his heart and brain. He drew back to the other side of the lawn, and thought and thought—

Should he ever get home? If he did, might he not get home a beggar? Beggar or rich, he would still have to face his mother, to go through that meeting, to tell that tale, perhaps, to hear those reproaches, the forecast of which had weighed on him like a dark thunder-cloud for two weary years; to wipe out which by some desperate deed of glory he had wandered the wilderness, and wandered in vain.

Could he not settle here? He need not be a savage. He and his might Christianize, civilize, teach equal law, mercy in war, chivalry to women; found a community which might be hereafter as strong a barrier against the encroachments of the Spaniard, as Manoa itself would have been. Who knew the wealth of the surrounding



forests? Even if there were no gold, there were boundless vegetable treasures. What might he not export down the rivers? This might be the nucleus of a great commercial settlement—

And yet, was even that worth while? To settle here only to torment his soul with fresh schemes, fresh ambitions; not to rest, but only to change one labor for another? Was not your dreamer right? Did they not all need rest? What if they each sat down among the flowers, beside an Indian bride? They might live like Christians, while they lived like the birds of heaven.—

What a dead silence! He looked up and round; the birds had ceased to chirp; the parroquets were hiding behind the leaves; the monkeys were clustered motionless upon the highest twigs; only out of the far depths of the forest, the campanero gave its solemn toll, once, twice, thrice, like a great death-knell rolling down from far cathedral towers. Was it an omen? He looked up hastily at Ayacanora. She was watching him earnestly. Heavens! was she waiting for his decision? Both dropped their eyes. The decision was not to come from them.

A rustle! a roar! a shriek! and Amyas lifted his eyes in time to see a huge dark bar shoot from the crag above the dreamer's head, among the group of girls.

A dull crash, as the group flew asunder; and in the midst upon the ground, the tawny limbs of one were writhing beneath the fangs of a black jaguar, the rarest and most terrible of the forest kings. Of one? But of which? Was it Ayacanora? And sword in hand, Amyas rushed madly forward; before he reached the spot those tortured limbs were still.

It was not Ayacanora, for with a shriek which rang through the woods, the wretched dreamer, wakened thus at last, sprang up and felt for his sword. Fool! he had left it in his hammock! Screaming the name of his dead bride, he rushed on the jaguar, as it crouched above its prey, and seizing its head with teeth and nails, worried it, in the ferocity of his madness, like a mastiff-dog.

The brute wrenched its head from his grasp, and raised its dreadful paw. Another moment and the husband's corpse would have lain by the wife's.

But high in air gleamed Amyas blade; down with all the weight of his huge body and strong arm fell that most

trusty steel; the head of the jaguar dropped grinning on its victim's corpse:

"And all stood still, who saw him fall,  
While men might count a score."

"O Lord Jesus," said Amyas to himself, "Thou hast answered the devil for me! And this is the selfish rest for which I would have bared the rest which comes by working where thou hast put me!"

They bore away the lithe corpse into the forest, and buried it under soft moss and virgin mould; and so the fair clay was transfigured into fairer flowers, and the poor, gentle, untaught spirit returned to God who gave it.

And then Amyas went sadly and silently back again, and Parracombe walked after him, like one who walks in sleep.

Ebsworthy, sobered by the shock, entreated to come too; but Amyas forbade him gently,—

"No, lad, you are forgiven. God forbid that I should judge you or any man! Sir John shall come up and marry you; and then, if it still be your will to stay, the Lord forgive you, if you be wrong; in the meanwhile, we will leave with you all that we can spare. Stay here and pray to God to make you, and me too, wiser men."

And so Amyas departed. He had come out stern and proud; but he came back again like a little child.

Three days after Parracombe was dead. Once in camp he seemed unable to eat or move, and having received absolution and communion from good Sir John, faded away without disease or pain, "babbling of green fields," and murmuring the name of his lost Indian bride.

Amyas, too, sought ghostly counsel of Sir John, and told him all which had passed through his mind.

"It was indeed a temptation of Diabolus," said the simple sage; "for he is by his very name the divider who sets man against man, and tempts one to care only for oneself, and forget kin and country, and duty and queen. But you have resisted him, Captain Leigh, like a true-born Englishman, as you always are, and he has fled from you. But that is no reason why we should not flee from him too; and so I think the sooner we are out of this place and at work again the better for all our souls."

To which Amyas most devoutly said, "Amen!" If Ayacanora were the daughter of ten thousand Incas, he must get out of her way as soon as possible.



The next day he announced his intention to march once more, and to his delight found the men ready enough to move towards the Spanish settlements. One thing they needed: gunpowder for their muskets. But that they must make as they went along—that is, if they could get the materials. Charcoal they could procure, enough to set the world on fire; but nitre they had not yet seen; perhaps they should find it among the hills; while as for sulphur, any brave man could get that where there were volcanoes. Who had not heard how one of Cortes' Spaniards, in like need, was lowered in a basket down the smoking crater of Popocatepetl, till he had gathered sulphur enough to conquer an empire? And what a Spaniard could do an Englishman could do, or they would know the reason why. And if they found none—why clothyard arrows had done Englishman's work many a time already, and they could do it again, not to mention those same blow-guns and their arrows of curare poison, which though they might be useless against Spaniard's armor, were far more valuable than muskets for procuring food, from the simple fact of their silence.

One thing remained; to invite their Indian friends to join them. And that was done in due form the next day.

Ayacanora was consulted, of course, and by the Piache, too, who was glad enough to be rid of the rival preacher, and his unpleasantly good news that men need not worship the devil, because there was a good God above them. The maiden sang most melodious assent; the whole tribe echoed it; and all went smoothly enough till the old cacique observed that before starting a compact should be made between the allies as to their share of the booty.

Nothing could be more reasonable; and Amyas asked him to name his terms.

"You take the gold, and we will take the prisoners."

"And what will you do with them?" asked Amyas, who recollected poor John Oxenham's hapless compact made in like case.

"Eat them," quoth the cacique innocently enough.

Amyas whistled.

"Humph!" said Cary. "The old proverb comes true—'the more the merrier: but the fewer the better fare.' I think we will do without our red friends for this time."

Ayacanora, who had been preaching war like a very Boadicea, was much vexed.

"Do you too want to dine off roast Spaniards?" asked Amyas.

She shook her head, and denied the imputation with much disgust.

Amyas was much relieved; he had shrunk from joining the thought of so fair a creature, however degraded, with the horrors of cannibalism.

But the cacique was a man of business, and held out staunchly.

"Is it fair?" he asked. "The white man loves gold, and he gets it. The poor Indian, what use is gold to him? He only wants something to eat, and he must eat his enemies. What else will pay him for going so far through the forests hungry and thirsty? You will get all, and the Omaguas will get nothing."

The argument was unanswerable; and the next day they started without the Indians, while John Brimblecombe heaved many an honest sigh at leaving them to darkness, the devil and the holy trumpet.

And Ayacanora?

When their departure was determined, she shut herself up in her hut, and appeared no more. Great was the weeping, howling and leave-taking on the part of the simple Indians, and loud the entreaties to come back again, bring them a message from Amalivaca's daughter beyond the seas, and help them to recover their lost land of Papamene; but Ayacanora took no part in them; and Amyas left her, wondering at her absence, but joyful and light-hearted at having escaped the rocks of the Sirens; and being at work once more.