

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW AMYAS THREW HIS SWORD INTO THE SEA.

"Full fathoms deep thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls which were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange;
Fairies hourly ring his knell,
Hark! I hear them. Ding dong bell,"

The Tempest.

YES, it is over; and the great Armada is vanquished. It is lulled for awhile, the everlasting war which is in heaven, the battle of Iran and Turan, of the children of light and of darkness, of Michael and his angels against Satan and his fiends: the battle which slowly and seldom, once in the course of many centuries, culminates and ripens into a day of judgment, and becomes palpable and incarnate; no longer a mere spiritual fight, but one of flesh and blood, wherein simple men may choose their sides without mistake, and help God's cause not merely with prayer and pen, but with sharp shot and cold steel. A day of judgment has come, which has divided the light from the darkness, and the sheep from the goats, and tried each man's work by the fire; and, behold, the devil's work, like its maker, is proved to have been, as always, a lie, and a sham, and a windy boast, a bladder which collapses at the merest pin-prick. Byzantine empires, Spanish Armadas, triple-crowned Papacies, Russian Despotisms, this is the way of them, and will be to the end of the world. One brave blow at the big bullying phantom, and it vanishes in sulphur-stench; while the children of Israel, as of old, see the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore,—they scarce know how, save that God has done it,—and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

And now, from England and the Netherlands, from Germany and Geneva, and those poor Vaudois shepherd-saints, whose bones for generations past

"Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;"

to be, indeed, the seed of the Church, and a germ of new

life, liberty, and civilization, even in these very days returning good for evil to that Piedmont which has hunted them down like the partridges on the mountains;—from all of Europe, from all of mankind, I had almost said, in which lay the seed of future virtue and greatness, of the destinies of the new-discovered world, and the triumphs of the coming age of science, arose a shout of holy joy, such as the world had not heard for many a weary and bloody century; a shout which was the prophetic birth pæan of North America, Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, of free commerce and free colonization over the whole earth.

"There was in England, by the commandment of her Majesty," says Van Meteran; and likewise in the United Provinces, by the direction of the States, "a solemn festival day publicly appointed, wherein all persons were solemnly enjoined to resort unto ye Church, and there to render thanks and praises unto God, and ye preachers were commanded to exhort ye people thereunto." The aforesaid solemnity was observed upon the 29th of November; which day was wholly spent in fasting, prayer, and giving of thanks.

"Likewise the Queen's Majesty herself, imitating ye ancient Romans, rode into London in triumph, in regard of her own and her subjects' glorious deliverance. For being attended upon very solemnly by all ye principal Estates and officers of her Realm, she was carried through her said City of London in a triumphant Chariot, and in robes of triumph, from her palace unto ye said Cathedral Church of St. Paul, out of ye which ye Ensigns and Colors of ye vanquished Spaniards hung displayed. And all ye Citizens of London, in their liveries, stood on either side ye street, by their several Companies, with their ensigns and banners, and the streets were hanged on both sides with blue Cloth, which, together, with ye foresaid banners, yielded a very stately and gallant prospect. Her Majesty being entered into ye Church together with her Clergy and Nobles, gave thanks unto God, and caused a public Sermon to be preached before her at Paul's Cross; wherein none other argument was handled, but that praise, honor, and glory might be rendered unto God, and that God's Name might be extolled by thanksgiving. And with her own princely voice she most Christianly exhorted ye people to do ye same; wherunto ye people, with a loud acclamation, wished her a most long and happy life to ye confusion of her foes."

Yes, as the medals struck on the occasion said. "It came, it saw, and it fled!" And whither? Away and northward, like a herd of frightened deer, past the Orkneys and Shetlands, catching up a few hapless fishermen as guides; past the coast of Norway, there, too, refused water and food by the brave descendants of the Vikings: and on northward ever towards the lonely Faroes, and the everlasting dawn which heralds round the Pole the mid-night sun.

Their water is failing; the cattle must go overboard; and the wild northern sea echoes to the shrieks of drowning horses. They must homeward at least, somehow, each as best he can. Let them meet again at Cape Finisterre, if indeed they ever meet. Medina Sidonia, with some five-and-twenty of the scundest and best victualled ships, will lead the way, and leave the rest to their fate. He is soon out of sight; and forty more, the only remnant of that mighty host, come wandering wearily behind, hoping to make the south-west coast of Ireland, and have help, or, at least, fresh water there, from their fellow Romanists. Alas for them!

"Make Thou their way dark and slippery,
And follow them up ever with Thy storm."

For now comes up from the Atlantic, gale on gale; and few of that hapless remnant reached the shores of Spain.

And where are Amyas and the Vengeance all this while?

At the fifty-seventh degree of latitude, the English fleet, finding themselves growing short of provision, and having been long since out of powder and ball, turned southward toward home, "thinking it best to leave the Spaniard to those uncouth and boisterous northern seas." A few pin-naces are still sent onward to watch their course: and the English fleet, caught in the same storms which scattered the Spaniards, "with great danger and industry reached Harwich port, and their provided themselves of victuals and ammunition," in case the Spaniards should return; but there is no need for that caution. Parma, indeed, who cannot believe that the idol at Halle, after all his compliments to it, will play him so scurvy a trick, will watch for weeks on Dunkirk dunes, hoping against hope for the Armada's return, casting anchors, and spinning rigging to repair their losses.

"But lang lang may his ladies sit,
With their fans intill their hand,

Before they see St. Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the land."

The Armada is away on the other side of Scotland, and Amyas is following in its wake.

For when the Lord High Admiral determined to return, Amyas asked leave to follow the Spaniard; and asked, too, of Sir John Hawkins, who happened to be at hand, such ammunition and provision as could be afforded him, promising to repay the same like an honest man, out of his plunder if he lived, out of his estate if he died; lodging for that purpose bills in the hands of Sir John, who, as a man of business, took them, and put them in his pocket among the thimbles, string and tobacco; after which Amyas, calling his men together, reminded them once more of the story of the Rose of Torridge and Don Guzman de Soto, and then asked—

"Men of Bideford, will you follow me? There will be plunder for those who love plunder; revenge for those who love revenge; and for all of us (for we all love honor) the honor of having never left the chase as long as there was a Spanish flag in English seas."

And every soul on board replied, that they would follow Sir Amyas Leigh around the world.

There is no need for me to detail every incident of that long and weary chase; how they found the Sta. Catharina, attacked her, and had to sheer off, she being rescued by the rest; how when Medina's squadron left the crippled ships behind they were all but taken or sunk, by thrusting into the midst of the Spanish fleet to prevent her escaping with Medina; how they crippled her, so that she could not beat to windward, out into the ocean, but was fain to run south, past the Orkneys, and down through the Minch, between Cape Wrath and Lewis; how the younger hands were ready to mutiny, because Amyas, in his stubborn haste, ran past two or three noble prizes which were all but disabled, among others one of the great galliasses, and the two great Venetians, La Ratta and La Belanzara—which were afterwards, with more than thirty other vessels, wrecked on the west coast of Ireland; how he got fresh water, in spite of certain "Hebridean Scots" of Skye, who, after reviling him in an unknown tongue, fought with him awhile, and then embraced him and his men with howls of affection, and were not much more decently clad, nor more civil-

ized than his old friends of California; how he pacified his men by letting them pick the bones of a great Venetian which was going on shore upon Islay (by which they got booty enough to repay them for the whole voyage), and offended them again by refusing to land and plunder two great Spanish wrecks on the Mull of Cantire (whose crews, by-the-by, James tried to smuggle off secretly into Spain in ships of his own, wishing to play, as usual, both sides of the game at once; but the Spaniards were stopped at Yarmouth till the council's pleasure was known—which was, of course, to let the poor wretches go on their way, and be hanged elsewhere); how they passed a strange island, half black, half white, which the wild people called Raghary, but Cary christened it "the drowned magpie;" how the Sta. Catharina was near lost on the Isle of Man, and then put into Castleton (where the Manx-men slew a whole boat's crew with their arrows), and then put out again, when Amyas fought with her a whole day, and shot away her main-yard; how the Spaniard blundered down the coast of Wales, not knowing whither he went; how they were both nearly lost on the Holyhead, and again on Bardsey Island; how they got on a lee shore in Cardigan Bay, before a heavy westerly gale, and the Sta. Catharina ran aground on Sarn David, one of those strange subaqueous pebble-dykes which are said to be the remnants of the lost land of Gwalior, destroyed by the carelessness of Prince Seithen in the drunkard, at whose name each loyal Welshman spits; how she got off again at the rising of the tide, and fought with Amyas a fourth time; how the wind changed, and she got round St. David's Head;—these, and many more moving incidents of this eventful voyage, I must pass over without details, and go on to the end; for it is time that the end should come.

It was now the sixteenth day of the chase. They had seen, the evening before, St. David's Head and then the Welsh coast round Milford Haven, looming out black and sharp before the blaze of the inland thunder-storm; and it had lightened all round them during the forepart of the night, upon a light south-western breeze.

In vain they had strained their eyes through the darkness to catch by the fitful glare of the flashes, the tall masts of the Spaniard. Of one thing at least they were certain,

that with the wind as it was, she could not have gone far to the westward; and to attempt to pass them again, and go northward, was more than she dare do. She was probably lying-to ahead of them, perhaps between them and the land; and when, a little after midnight, the wind chopped up to the west, and blew stiffly till daybreak, they felt sure that unless she had attempted the desperate expedient of running past them, they had her safe in the mouth of the Bristol Channel. Slowly and wearily broke the dawn, on such a day, as often follows heavy thunder; a sunless, drizzly day, roofed with low dingy cloud, barred and netted, and festooned with black, a sign that the storm is only taking breath awhile before it bursts again; while all the narrow horizon is dim and spongy with vapor drifting before a chilly breeze. As the day went on, the breeze died down, and the sea fell to a long glassy foam-flecked roll, while overhead brooded the inky sky, and round them the leaden mist shut out alike the shore and the chase.

Amyas paced the sloppy deck fretfully and fiercely. He knew that the Spaniard could not escape; but he cursed every moment which lingered between him and that one great revenge which blackened all his soul. The men sat sulkily about the deck, and whistled for a wind; the sails flapped idly against the masts; and the ship rolled in the long troughs of the sea, till her yard-arms almost dipped right and left.

"Take care of those guns. You will have something loose next," growled Amyas.

"We will take care of the guns, if the Lord will take care of the wind," said Yeo.

"We shall have plenty before night," said Cary, "and thunder too."

"So much the better," said Amyas. "It may roar till it splits the heavens, if it does but let me get my work done."

"He's not far off, I warrant," said Cary. "One lift of the cloud, and we should see him."

"To windward of us, as likely as not," said Amyas. "The devil fights for him, I believe. To have been on his heels sixteen days, and not sent this through him yet!" And he shook his sword impatiently.

So the morning wore away, without a sign of living thing, not even a passing gull; and the black melancholy

of the heaven reflected itself in the black melancholy of Amyas. Was he to lose his prey after all? The thought made him shudder with rage and disappointment. It was intolerable. Anything but that.

"No, God!" he cried, "let me but once feel this in his accursed heart, and then—strike me dead, if Thou wilt!"

"The Lord have mercy on us," cried John Brimblecombe. "What have you said?"

"What is that to you, sir? There, they are piping to dinner. Go down. I shall not come."

And Jack went down, and talked in a half-terrified whisper of Amyas' ominous words.

All thought that they portended some bad luck, except old Yeo.

"Well, Sir John," said he, "and why not? What better can the Lord do for a man, than take him home when he has done his work? Our Captain is wilful and spiteful, and must needs kill his man himself; while for me, I don't care how the Don goes, provided he does go. I owe him no grudge, nor any man. May the Lord give him repentance, and forgive him all his sins; but if I could but see him once safe ashore, as he may be ere nightfall, on the Mortestone or the back of Lundy, I would say, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,' even if it were the lightning which was sent to fetch me."

"But, master Yeo, a sudden death?"

"And why not a sudden death, Sir John? Even fools 'long for a short life, and a merry one, and shall not the Lord's people pray for a short death and a merry one? Let it come as it will to old Yeo. Hark! there's the captain's voice!"

"Here she is!" thundered Amyas from the deck; and in an instant all were scrambling up the hatchway as fast as the frantic rolling of the ship would let them.

Yes. There she was. The cloud had lifted suddenly, and to the south a ragged bore of blue sky let a long stream of sunshine down on her tall masts and stately hull, as she lay rolling some four or five miles to the eastward: but as for land, none was to be seen.

"There she is; and here we are," said Cary; "but where is here? and where is there? How is the tide, master?"

"Running up Channel by this time, sir."

"What matters the tide?" said Amyas, devouring the

ship with terrible and cold blue eyes. "Can't we get at her?"

"Not unless some one jumps out and shoves behind," said Cary. "I shall down again and finish that mackerel, if this roll has not chucked it to the cockroaches under the table."

"Don't jest, Will! I can't stand it," said Amyas, in a voice which quivered so much that Cary looked at him. His whole frame was trembling like an aspen. Cary took his arm, and drew him aside.

"Dear old lad," said he, as they leaned over the bulwarks, "what is this! You are not yourself, and have not been these four days."

"No. I am not Amyas Leigh. I am my brother's avenger. Do not reason with me, Will: when it is over I shall be merry old Amyas again," and he passed his hand over his brow.

"Do you believe," said he, after a moment, "that men can be possessed by devils?"

"The Bible says so."

"If my cause were not a just one, I should fancy I had a devil in me. My throat and heart are as hot as the pit. Would to God it were done, for done it must be! Now go."

Cary went away with a shudder. As he passed down the hatchway he looked back. Amyas had got the hilt out of his pocket, and was whetting away again at his sword-edge, as if there was some dreadful doom on him, to whet, and whet forever.

The weary day wore on. The strip of blue sky was curtained over again, and all was dismal as before, though it grew sultrier every moment; and now and then a distant mutter shook the air to westward. Nothing could be done to lessen the distance between the ships, for the Vengeance had had all her boats carried away but one, and that was much too small to tow her; and while the men went down again to finish dinner, Amyas worked on at his sword, looking up every now and then suddenly at the Spaniard, as if to satisfy himself that it was not a vision which had vanished.

About two Yeo came up to him.

"He is ours safely now, sir. The tide has been running to the eastward for this two hours."

"Safe as a fox in a trap. Satan himself cannot take him from us!"

"But God may," said Brimblecombe simply.

"Who spoke to you, sir? If I thought that He—There comes the thunder at last!"

And as he spoke an angry growl from the westward heavens seemed to answer his wild words, and rolled and loudened nearer and nearer, till right over their heads it crashed against some cloud cliff far above, and all was still.

Each man looked in the other's face: but Amyas was unmoved.

"The storm is coming," said he, "and the wind in it. It will be Eastward-ho now, for once, my merry men all!"

"Eastward-ho never brought us luck," said Jack in an undertone to Cary. But by this time all eyes were turned to the northwest, where a black line along the horizon began to define the boundary of sea and air, till now all dim in mist.

"There comes the breeze."

"And there the storm, too."

And with that strangely accelerating pace which some storms seem to possess, the thunder, which had been growling slow and seldom far away, now rang peal on peal along the cloudy floor above their heads.

"Here comes the breeze. Round with the yards, or we shall be taken aback."

The yards creaked round; the sea grew crisp around them; the hot air swept their cheeks, tightened every rope, filled every sail, bent her over. A cheer burst from the men as the helm went up, and they staggered away before the wind, right down upon the Spaniard, who lay still becalmed.

"There is more behind, Amyas," said Cary. "Shall we not shorten sail a little?"

"No. Hold on every stitch," said Amyas. "Give me the helm man. Boatswain, pipe away to clear for fight."

It was done, and in ten minutes the men were all at quarters, while the thunder rolled louder and louder overhead, and the breeze freshened fast.

"The dog has it now. There he goes!" said Cary.

"Right before the wind. He has no liking to face us."

"He is running into the jaws of destruction," said Yeo.

"An hour more will send him either right up the Channel, or smack on shore somewhere."

"There! he has put his helm down. I wonder if he sees land?"

"He is like a March hare beat out of his country," said Cary, "and don't know whither to run next."

Cary was right. In ten minutes more the Spaniard fell off again, and went away dead down wind, while the Vengeance gained on him fast. After two hours more, the four miles had diminished to one, while the lightning flashed nearer and nearer as the storm came up; and from the vast mouth of a black cloud-arch poured so fierce a breeze that Amyas yielded unwillingly to hints which were growing into open murmurs and bade shorten sail.

On they rushed with scarcely lessened speed, the black arch following fast, curtained by one flat, gray sheet of pouring rain, before which the water was boiling in a long white line; while every moment behind the watery veil, a keen blue spark leapt down into the sea, or darted zigzag through the rain.

"We shall have it now, and with a vengeance; this will try your tackle, master," said Cary.

The functionary answered with a shrug, and turned up the collar of his rough-frock, as the first drops flew stinging round his ears. Another minute and the squall burst full upon them, in rain, which cut like hail—hail which lashed the sea into froth, and wind which whirled off the heads of the surges, and swept the waters into one white seething waste. And above them, and behind them, and before them, the lightning leapt and ran, dazzling and blinding, while the deep roar of the thunder was changed to sharp ear-piercing cracks.

"Get the arms and ammunition under cover, and then below with you all," shouted Amyas from the helm.

"And heat the pokers in the galley fire," said Yeo, "to be ready if the rain puts our linstocks out. I hope you'll let me stay on deck, sir, in case—"

"I must have some one, and who better than you? Can you see the chase?"

No; she was wrapped in the gray whirlwind. She might be within half a mile of them, for aught they could have seen of her.

And now Amyas and his old liegeman were alone. Neither spoke; each knew the other's thoughts, and knew that they were his own. The squall blew fiercer and fiercer, the rain poured heavier and heavier. Where was the Spaniard?

"If he has laid-to, we may overshoot him, sir!"

"If he has tried to lay-to, he will not have a sail left in the bolt-ropes, or perhaps a mast on deck. I know the stiff-neckedness of those Spanish tubs. Hurrah! there he is, right on our larboard bow!"

There she was indeed, two musket-shots off, staggering away with canvas split and flying.

"He has been trying to hull, sir, and caught a buffet," said Yeo, rubbing his hands. "What shall we do now?"

"Range alongside, if it blow live imps and witches, and try our luck once more. Pah! how this lightning dazzles!"

On they swept, gaining fast on the Spaniard.

"Call the men up, and to quarters; the rain will be over in ten minutes."

Yeo ran forward to the gangway; and sprang back again, with a face white and wild—

"Land right ahead! Port your helm, sir! For the love of God, port your helm!"

Amyas, with the strength of a bull, jammed the helm down, while Yeo shouted to the men below.

She swung round. The masts bent like whips; crack went the fore-sail like a cannon. What matter? Within two hundred yards of them was the Spaniard; in front of her, and above her, a huge dark bank rose through the dense hail, and mingled with the clouds; and at its foot, plainer every moment, pillars and spouts of leaping foam.

"What is it, Morte? Hartland?"

It might be anything for thirty miles.

"Lundy!" said Yeo. "The south-end! I see the head of the Shutter in the breakers! Hard a-port yet, and get her close-hauled as you can, and the Lord may have mercy on us still! Look at the Spaniard!"

Yes, look at the Spaniard!

On their left hand, as they broached-to, the wall of granite sloped down from the clouds towards an isolated peak of rock, some two hundred feet in height. Then a hundred yards of roaring breaker upon a sunken shell, across which the race of the tide poured like a cataract; then, amid a column of salt smoke, the Shutter, like a huge black fang, rose waiting for its prey; and between the Shutter and the land, the great galleon loomed dimly through the storm.

He, too, had seen his danger, and tried to broach-to. But his clumsy mass refused to obey the helm; he struggled

a moment, half hid in foam; fell away again, and rushed upon his doom.

"Lost! lost! lost!" cried Amyas madly, and throwing up his hands, let go the tiller. Yeo caught it just in time.

"Sir! sir! What are you at? We shall clear the rock yet."

"Yes!" shouted Amyas in his frenzy; "but he will not!"

Another minute. The galleon gave a sudden jar, and stopped. Then one long heave and bound, as if to free herself. And then her bows lighted clean upon the Shutter.

An awful silence fell on every English soul. They heard not the roaring of wind and surge; they saw not the blinding flashes of the lightning; but they heard one long ear-piercing wail to every saint in heaven rise from five hundred human throats; they saw the mighty ship heel over from the wind, and sweep headlong down the cataract of the race, plunging her yards into the foam, and showing her whole black side even to her keel, till she rolled clean over, and vanished forever and ever.

"Shame!" cried Amyas, hurling his sword far into the sea, "to lose my right, my right! when it was in my very grasp. Unmerciful!"

A crack which rent the sky, and made the granite ring and quiver; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast, and sail, and rock, and Salvation Yeo as he stood just in front of Amyas the tiller in his hand. All red-hot, transfigured into fire; and behind, the black, black night.

A whisper, a rustling close beside him, and Brimblecombe's voice said softly,—

"Give him more wine, Will; his eyes are opening."

"Hey day!" said Amyas faintly, "not past the Shutter yet! How long she hangs in the wind!"

"We are long past the Shutter, Sir Amyas," said Brimblecombe.

"Are you mad? Cannot I trust my own eyes?"

There was no answer for awhile.

"We are past the Shutter, indeed," said Cary very gently, "and lying in the cove at Lundy."

"Will you tell me that that is not the Shutter, and that the Devil's-limekiln, and that the cliff—that villain Spaniard only gone—and that Yeo is not standing here by me,

and Cary there forward, and—why, by-the-by, where are you, Jack Brimblecombe, who were talking to me this minute?"

"Oh, Sir Amyas Leigh, dear Sir Amyas Leigh," blubbered poor Jack, "put out your hand, and feel where you are, and pray the Lord to forgive you for your wilfulness!"

A great trembling fell upon Amyas Leigh; half fearfully he put out his hand; he felt that he was in his hammock, with the deck beams close above his head. The vision which had been left upon his eye-balls vanished like a dream.

"What is this? I must be asleep? What has happened? Where am I?"

"In your cabin, Amyas," said Cary.

"What? And where is Yeo?"

"Yeo is gone where he longed to go, and as he longed to go. The same flash which struck you down, struck him dead."

"Dead? Lightning? Any more hurt? I must go and see. Why, what is this?" and Amyas passed his hand across his eyes. "It is all dark—dark, as I live!" And he passed his hand over his eyes again.

There was another dead silence. Amyas broke it.

"Oh, God!" shrieked the great proud sea-captain, "oh, God, I am blind! blind! blind!" And writhing in his great horror, he called to Cary to kill him and put him out of his misery, and then wailed for his mother to come and help him, as if he had been a boy once more; while Brimblecombe and Cary, and the sailors who crowded round the cabin-door, wept as if they too had been boys once more.

Soon his fit of frenzy passed off, and he sank back exhausted.

They lifted him into their remaining boat, rowed him ashore, carried him painfully up the hill to the old castle, and made a bed for him on the floor, in the very room in which Don Guzman and Rose Salterne had plighted their troth to each other, five wild years before.

Three miserable days were passed within that lonely tower. Amyas, utterly unnerved by the horror of his misfortune, and by the over-excitement of the last few weeks, was incessantly delirious; while Cary, and Brimblecombe, and the men, nursed him by turns, as sailors and wives only can nurse; and listened with awe to his piteous self-reproaches and entreaties to Heaven to remove that woe,

which, as he shrieked again and again, was a just judgment on him for his wilfulness and ferocity. The surgeon talked, of course; learnedly about melancholic humors, and his liver's being "adust by the over-pungency of the animal spirits," and then fell back on the universal panacea of blood-letting, which he effected with fear and trembling during a short interval of prostration; encouraged by which he attempted to administer a large bolus of aloes, was knocked down for his pains, and then thought it better to leave Nature to her own work. In the meanwhile, Cary had sent off one of the island skiffs to Clovelly, with letters to his father, and to Mrs. Leigh, entreating the latter to come off to the island: but the heavy westerly winds made that as impossible, as it was to move Amyas on board, and the men had to do their best, and did it well enough.

On the fourth day his raving ceased: but he was still too weak to be moved. Toward noon, however, he called for food, ate a little, and seemed revived.

"Will," he said, after awhile, "this room is as stifling as it is dark. I feel as if I should be a sound man once more if I could but get one snuff of the sea-breeze."

The surgeon shook his head at the notion of moving him; but Amyas was peremptory.

"I am captain still, Tom Surgeon, and will sail for the Indies, if I choose. Will Cary, Jack Brimblecombe, will you obey a blind general?"

"What you will in reason," said they both at once.

"Then lead me out, my masters, and over the down to the south end. To the point at the south end I must go; there is no other place will suit."

And he rose firmly to his feet, and held out his hands for theirs.

"Let him have his humor," whispered Cary. "It may be the working off of his madness."

"This sudden strength is a note of fresh fever, Mr. Lieutenant," said the surgeon, "and the rules of the art prescribe rather a fresh blood-letting."

Amyas overheard the last word, and broke out,—

"Thou pig-sticking Philistine, wilt thou make sport with blind Samson? Come near me to let blood from my arm, and see if I do not let blood from thy coxcomb. Catch him, Will, and bring him me here!"

The surgeon vanished as the blind giant made a step

forward; and they set forth, Amyas walking slowly, but firmly, between his two friends.

"Whither?" asked Cary.

"To the south end. The crag above the Devil's-limekiln. No other place will suit."

Jack gave a murmur, and half-stopped, as a frightful suspicion crossed him. "That is a dangerous place!"

"What of that?" said Amyas, who caught his meaning in his tone. "Dost think I am going to leap over cliff? I have not heart enough for that. On, lads, and set me safe among the rocks."

"So slowly and painfully they went on, while Amyas murmured to himself,—

"No, no other place will suit; I can see all thence."

So on they went to the point where the cyclopean wall of granite cliff which forms the western side of Lundy ends sheer in a precipice of some three hundred feet, topped by a pile of snow white rock, bespangled with golden lichens. As they approached, a raven, who sat upon the topmost stone, black against the bright blue sky, flapped lazily away, and sank down the abysses of the cliff, as if he scented the corpses underneath the surge. Below them from the Gull-rock rose a thousand birds, and filled the air with sound; the choughs cackled, the hacklets wailed, the great blackbacks laughed querulous defiance at the intruders, and a single falcon, with an angry bark, dashed out from beneath their feet, and hung poised high aloft, watching the sea-fowl which swung slowly round and round below.

It was a glorious sight upon a glorious day. To the northward the glens rushed down toward the cliff, crowned with gray crags, and carpeted with purple heather and green fern; and from their feet stretched away to the westward the sapphire rollers of the vast Atlantic, crowned with a thousand crests of flying foam. On their left hand, some ten miles to the south, stood out against the sky the purple wall of Hartland cliffs, sinking lower and lower as they trended away to the southward along the lonely iron-bound shores of Cornwall, until they faded, dim and blue, into the blue horizon forty miles away.

The sky was flecked with clouds, which rushed toward them fast upon the roaring south-west wind; and the warm ocean-breeze swept up the cliffs, and whistled through the heather-bells, and howled in cranny and in crag,

"Till the pillars and clefts of the granite
Rang like a God-sweet lyre;"

while Amyas, a proud smile upon his lips, stood breasting that genial stream of airy wine with swelling nostrils and fast-heaving chest, and seemed to drink in life from every gust. All three were silent for awhile; and Jack and Cary, gazing downward with delight upon the glory and the grandeur of the sight, forgot for awhile that their companion saw it not. Yet when they started sadly, and looked into his face, did he not see it? So wide and eager were his eyes, so bright and calm his face, that they fancied for an instant that he was once more even as they.

A deep sigh undeceived them. "I know it is all here—the dear old sea, where I would live and die. And my eyes feel for it; feel for it—and cannot find it; never, never will find it again forever! God's will be done!"

"Do you say that?" asked Brimblecombe eagerly.

"Why should I not? Why have I been raving in hell-fire for I know not how many days, but to find out that, John Brimblecombe, thou better man than I?"

"Not that last: but Amen! Amen! and the Lord has indeed had mercy upon thee!" said Jack, through his honest tears.

"Amen!" said Amyas. "Now set me where I can rest among the rocks without fear of falling—for life is sweet still, even without eyes, friends—and leave me to myself awhile."

It was no easy matter to find a safe place, for from the foot of the crag the heathery turf slopes down all but upright, on one side to a cliff which overhangs a shoreless cove of deep dark sea, and on the other to an abyss even more hideous, where the solid rock has sunk away, and opened inland in the hillside a smooth-walled pit some sixty feet square and some hundred and fifty in depth, aptly known then as now, as the Devil's-limekiln; the mouth of which, as old wives say, was once closed by the Shutter-rock itself, till the fiend in malice hurled it into the sea, to be a pest to mariners. A narrow and untrodden cavern at the bottom connects it with the outer sea; they could even then hear the mysterious thunder and gurgle of the surge in the subterranean adit, as it rolled huge boulders to and fro in darkness, and forced before it gusts of pent-up air. It was a spot to curdle weak

blood, and to make weak heads reel: but all the fitter on that account for Amyas and his fancy.

"You can sit here as in an arm-chair," said Cary, helping him down to one of those square natural seats so common in the granite tors.

"Good; now turn my face to the Shutter. Be sure and exact. So. Do I face it full?"

"Full," said Cary.

"Then I need no eyes wherewith to see what is before me," said he, with a sad smile. "I know every stone and every head-land, and every wave too, I may say, far beyond aught that eye can reach. Now go, and leave me alone with God and with the dead!"

They retired a little space and watched him. He never stirred for many minutes; then leaned his elbows on his knees, and his head upon his hands, and so was still again. He remained so long thus, that the pair became anxious, and went towards him. He was asleep, and breathing quick and heavily.

"He will take a fever," said Brimblecombe, "if he sleeps much longer with his head down in the sunshine."

"We must wake him gently, if we wake him at all." And Cary moved forward to him.

As he did so, Amyas lifted his head, and turning it to right and left, felt round him with his sightless eyes.

"You have been asleep, Amyas."

"Have I? I have not slept back my eyes, then. Take up this great useless carcass of mine, and lead me home. I shall buy me a dog when I get to Burrough, I think, and make him tow me in a string, eh? So! Give me your hand. Now march!"

His guides heard with surprise this new cheerfulness.

"Thank God, sir, that your heart is so light already," said good Jack; "it makes me feel quite upraised myself, like."

"I have reason to be cheerful, Sir John; I have left a heavy load behind me. I have been wilful, and proud, and a blasphemer, and swollen with cruelty and pride; and God has brought me low for it, and cut me off from my evil delight. No more Spaniard-hunting for me now, my masters. God will send no such fools as I upon His errands."

"You do not repent of fighting the Spaniards?"

"Not I; but of hating even the worst of them. Listen

to me, Will and Jack. If that man wronged me, I wronged him likewise. I have been a fiend when I thought myself the grandest of men, yea, a very avenging angel out of heaven. But God has shown me my sin, and we have made up our quarrel forever."

"Made it up?"

"Made it up, thank God. But I am weary. Set me down awhile, and I will tell you how it befell."

Wondering, they set him down upon the heather, while the bees hummed round them in the sun; and Amyas felt for a hand of each, and clasped it in his own hand, and began,—

"When you left me there upon the rock, lads, I looked away and out to sea to get one last snuff of the merry sea-breeze, which will never sail me again. And as I looked, I tell you truth, I could see the water and the sky; as plain as ever I saw them, till I thought my sight was come again. But soon I knew it was not so; for I saw more than man could see; right over the ocean, as I live, and away to the Spanish Main. And I saw Barbados, and Grenada, and all the isles that we ever sailed by; and La Guayra in Carracas, and the Silla, and the house beneath it where she lived. And I saw him walking with her on the barbeque, and he loved her then. I saw what I saw; and he loved her; and I say he loves her still."

"Then I saw the cliffs beneath me, and the Gull-rock, and the Shutter, and the Ledge; I saw them, William Cary, and the weeds beneath the merry blue sea. And I saw the grand old galleon, Will; she has righted with the sweeping of the tide. She lies in fifteen fathoms, at the edge of the rocks, upon the sand; and her men are all lying around her, asleep until the judgment-day."

Cary and Jack looked at him, and then at each other. His eyes were clear, and bright, and full of meaning; and yet they knew that he was blind. His voice was shaping itself into a song. Was he inspired? Insane? What was it? And they listened with awe-struck faces, as the giant pointed down into the blue depths far below, and went on.

"And I saw him sitting in his cabin, like a valiant gentleman of Spain; and his officers were sitting round him, with their swords upon the table at the wine. And the prawns and the crayfish and the rockling, they swam in and out above their heads; but Don Guzman he never heeded, but sat still, and drank his wine. Then he took a