

locket from his bosom; and I heard him speak, Will, and he said: 'Here's the picture of my fair and true lady; drink to her, Señors all.' Then he spoke to me, Will, and called me, right up through the oar-weed and the sea: 'We have had a fair quarrel, Señor; it is time to be friends once more. My wife and your brother have forgiven me: so your honor takes no stain.' And I answered, 'We are friends, Don Guzman; God has judged our quarrel, and not we.' Then he said, 'I sinned, and I am punished.' And I said, 'And, Señor, so am I.' Then he held out his hand to me, Cary; and I stooped to take it, and awoke."

He ceased: and they looked in his face again. It was exhausted, but clear and gentle, like the face of a newborn babe. Gradually his head dropped upon his breast again; he was either swooning or sleeping, and they had much ado to get him home. There he lay for eight and forty hours, in a quiet doze; then arose suddenly, called for food, ate heartily, and seemed, saving his eyesight, as whole and sound as ever. The surgeon bade them get him home to Northam as soon as possible, and he was willing enough to go. So the next day the Vengeance sailed, leaving behind a dozen men to seize and keep in the queen's name any goods which should be washed up from the wreck.

"Then I saw the cliff beneath me, and the Gulf-rock, and the shunter, and the ledge; I saw them, William Cary, and the weeds beneath the merry pine tree. And I saw the grand old gallies, Will; she has righted with the weeping of the tide. She lies in three nations at the edge of the rocks, upon the sand; and her men are all gone, and she is asked 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 they knew that he was blind. His voice was ringing, and 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 vibrant god, human of Spain; and his officers were sitting round him with their swords upon the table at the door. And the flames and the cry of the sea, and the shouting, they swam in and out round their heads, but Don Guzman he never looked, but sat still, and drank his wine. Then he looked

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## HOW AMYAS LET THE APPLE FALL.

"Would you hear a Spanish lady,  
How she woo'd an Englishman?  
Garments gay and rich as may be,  
Deck'd with jewels had she on."

*Elizabethan Ballad.*

It was the first of October. The morning was bright and still; the skies were dappled modestly from east to west with soft gray autumn cloud, as if all heaven and earth were resting after those fearful summer months of battle and of storm. Silently, as if ashamed and sad, the Vengeance slid over the bar, and passed the sleeping sand-hills and dropped her anchor off Appledore, with her flag floating half-mast high; for the corpse of Salvation Yeo was on board.

A boat pulled off from the ship, and away to the western end of the strand; and Cary and Brimblecombe helped out Amyas Leigh, and led him slowly up the hill toward his home.

The crowd clustered round him, with cheers and blessings, and sobs of pity from kind-hearted women; for all in Appledore and Bideford knew well by this time what had befallen him.

"Spare me, my good friends," said Amyas, "I have landed here that I might go quietly home, without passing through the town, and being made a gazing-stock. Think not of me, good folks, nor talk of me; but come behind me decently, as Christian men, and follow to the grave the body of a better man than I."

And, as he spoke, another boat came off, and in it, covered with the flag of England, the body of Salvation Yeo.

The people took Amyas at his word; and a man was sent on to Burrough, to tell Mrs. Leigh that her son was coming. When the coffin was landed and lifted, Amyas and his friends took their places behind it as chief mourners, and the crew followed in order, while the crowd fell in behind them, and gathered every moment; till ere they were half-



way to Northam town, the funeral train might number full five hundred souls.

They had sent over by a fishing-skiff the day before to bid the sexton dig the grave; and when they came into the churchyard, the parson stood ready waiting at the gate.

Mrs. Leigh stayed quietly at home; for she had no heart to face the crowd; and though her heart yearned for her son, yet she was well content (when was she not content?) that he should do honor to his ancient and faithful servant; so she sat down in the bay-window, with Ayacanora by her side; and when the tolling of the bell ceased, she opened her Prayer-book, and began to read the Burial-service.

"Ayacanora," she said, "they are burying old Master Yeo, who loved you, and sought you over the wide, wide world, and saved you from the teeth of the crocodile. Are you not sorry for him, child, that you look so gay today?"

Ayacanora blushed, and hung down her head; she was thinking of nothing, poor child, but Amyas.

The Burial-service was done; the blessing said; the parson drew back; but the people lingered and crowded round to look at the coffin, while Amyas stood still at the head of the grave. It had been dug by his command, at the west end of the church, near by the foot of the tall gray wind-swept tower, which watches for a beacon far and wide over land and sea. Perhaps the old man might like to look at the sea, and see the ships come out and in across the bar, and hear the wind, on winter nights, roar through the belfry far above his head. Why not? It was but a fancy; and yet Amyas felt that he too should like to be buried in such a place; so Yeo might like it also.

Still the crowd lingered; and looked first at the grave and then at the blind giant who stood over it, as if they felt, by instinct, that something more ought to come. And something more did come. Amyas drew himself up to his full height, and waved his hand majestically as one about to speak; while the eyes of all men were fastened on him.

Twice he essayed to begin; and twice the words were choked upon his lips; and then,—

"Good people all, and seamen, among whom I was bred, and to whom I come home blind this day, to dwell with you till death—Here lieth the flower and pattern of all bold mariners; the truest of friends, and the most terrible of foes; unchangeable of purpose, crafty of council, and swift of execution; in triumph most sober, in failure (as

God knows I have found full many a day) of endurance beyond mortal man. Who first of all Britons helped to humble the pride of the Spaniard at Rio de la Hacha and Nombre, and first of all sailed upon those Southern Seas, which shall be hereafter, by God's grace, as free to English keels as is the bay outside. Who having afterwards been purged from his youthful sins by strange afflictions and torments unspeakable, suffered at the hands of the Popish enemy, learned therefrom, my masters, to fear God, and to fear nought else; and having acquitted himself worthily in his place and calling as a righteous scourge of the Spaniard, and a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, is now exalted to his reward, as Elijah was of old, in a chariot of fire unto heaven; letting fall, I trust and pray, upon you who are left behind the mantle of his valor and his godliness, that so these shores may never be without brave and pious mariners, who will count their lives as worthless in the cause of their Country, their Bible, and their Queen. Amen."

And feeling for his companions' hands he walked slowly from the churchyard, and across the village street, and up the lane to Burrough gates; while the crowd made way for him in solemn silence, as for an awful being, shut up alone with all his strength, valor and fame, in the dark prison-house of his mysterious doom.

He seemed to know perfectly when they had reached the gates, opened the lock with his own hands, and went boldly forward along the gravel path, while Cary and Brimblecombe followed him trembling, for they expected some violent burst of emotion, either from him or his mother, and the two good fellows' tender hearts were fluttering like a girl's. Up to the door he went, as if he had seen it; felt for the entrance, stood therein, and called quietly, "Mother!"

In a moment his mother was on his bosom.

Neither spoke for awhile. She sobbing inwardly, with tearless eyes, he standing firm and cheerful, with his great arms clasped around her.

"Mother!" he said at last, "I am come home, you see, because I needs must come. Will you take me in and look after this useless carcass? I shall not be so very troublesome, mother,—shall I?" and he looked down and smiled upon her, and kissed her brow.

She answered not a word, but passed her arm gently round his waist and led him in.



"Take care of your head, dear child, the doors are low." And they went in together.

"Will! Jack!" called Amyas, turning round: but the two good fellows had walked briskly off.

"I'm glad we are away," said Cary; "I should have made a baby of myself in another minute, watching that angel of a woman. How her face worked and how she kept it in!"

"Ah, well!" said Jack, "there goes a brave servant of the queen's cut off before his work was a quarter done. Heigho! I must home now, and see my old father, and then—"

"And then home with me," said Cary. "You and I never part again! We have pulled in the same boat too long, Jack; and you must not go spending your prize-money in riotous living. I must see after you, old Jack ashore, or we shall have you treating half the town in taverns for a week to come."

"Oh, Mr. Cary!" said Jack, scandalized.

"Come home with me, and we'll poison the parson, and my father shall give you the rectory."

"Oh, Mr. Cary!" said Jack.

So the two went off to Clovelly together that very day.

And Amyas was sitting all alone. His mother had gone out for a few minutes to speak to the seamen who had brought up Amyas' luggage, and set them down to eat and drink; and Amyas sat in the old bay-window, where he had sat when he was a little tiny boy, and read King Arthur, and Fox's Martyrs, and The Cruelties of the Spaniards. He put out his hand and felt for them; there they lay side by side, just as they had lain twenty years before. The window was open, and a cool air brought in as of old the scents of the four-season roses, and rosemary, and autumn gilliflowers. And there was a dish of apples on the table: he knew it by their smell; the very same old apples which he used to gather when he was a boy. He put out his hand, and took them, and felt them over, and played with them, just as if the twenty years had never been: and as he fingered them, the whole of his past life rose up before him, as in that strange dream which is said to flash across the imagination of a drowning man; and he saw all the places which he had ever seen, and heard all the words which had ever been spoken to him—till he came to that fairy island on the

Meta; and he heard the roar of the cataract once more, and saw the green tops of the palm-trees sleeping in the sunlight far above the spray, and stepped amid the smooth palm-trunks across the flower-fringed boulders, and leaped down to the gravel beach beside the pool; and then again rose from the fern-grown rocks the beautiful vision of Ayacanora—where was she? He had not thought of her till now. How he had wronged her! Let be; he had been punished, and the account was squared. Perhaps she did not care for him any longer. Who would care for a great blind ox like him, who must be fed and tended like a baby for the rest of his lazy life? Tut! How long his mother was away! And he began playing again with his apples, and thought about nothing but them, and his climbs with Frank in the orchard years ago.

At last one of them slipped through his fingers, and fell on the floor. He stooped and felt for it: but he could not find it. Vexatious! He turned hastily to search in another direction, and struck his head sharply against the table.

Was it the pain, or the little disappointment? or was it the sense of his blindness brought home to him in that ludicrous commonplace way, and for that very reason all the more humiliating? or was it the sudden revulsion of overstrained nerves, produced by that slight shock? or had he become indeed a child once more? I know not; but so it was, that he stamped on the floor with pettishness, and then checking himself, burst into a violent flood of tears. A quick rustle passed him; the apple was replaced in his hand, and Ayacanora's voice sobbed out,—

"There! there it is! Do not weep! Oh, do not weep! I cannot bear it! I will get you all you want! Only let me fetch and carry for you, tend you, feed you, and lead you, like your slave, your dog! Say that I may be your slave!" and falling on her knees at his feet, she seized both his hands, and covered them with kisses. "Yes!" she cried, "I will be your slave! I must be! You cannot help it! You cannot escape from me now! You cannot go to sea! You cannot turn your back upon wretched me. I have you safe now! Safe!" and she clutched his hands triumphantly. "Ah! and what a wretch I am, to rejoice in that! to taunt him with his blindness! Oh, forgive me! I am but a poor wild girl—a wild Indian savage, you know; but—but—" and she burst into tears.

A great spasm shook the body and soul of Amyas Leigh;



he sat quite silent for a minute, and then said solemnly—  
“And is this still possible? Then God have mercy upon me a sinner!”

Ayacanora looked up in his face inquiringly; but before she could speak again, he had bent down, and lifting her as the lion lifts the lamb, pressed her to his bosom, and covered her face with kisses.

The door opened. There was the rustle of a gown; Ayacanora sprang from him with a little cry, and stood, half-trembling, half-defiant, as if to say—“He is mine now; no one dare part him from me!”

“Who is it?” asked Amyas.

“Your mother.”

“You see that I am bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, mother,” said he with a smile.

He heard her approach. Then a kiss and a sob passed between the women; and he felt Ayacanora sink once more upon his bosom.

“Amyas, my son,” said the silver voice of Mrs. Leigh, low, dreamy, like the far-off chimes of angels’ bells from out the highest heaven, “fear not to take her to your heart again, for it is your mother who has laid her there.”

“It is true after all,” said Amyas to himself. “What God has joined together, man cannot put asunder.”

From that hour Ayacanora’s power of song returned to her; and day by day, year after year, her voice rose up within that happy home, and soared, as on a skylark’s wings, into the highest heaven, bearing with it the peaceful thoughts of the blind giant back to the Paradises of the West, in the wake of the heroes who from that time forth sailed out to colonize another and a vaster England, to the heaven prospered cry of *Westward Ho!*



