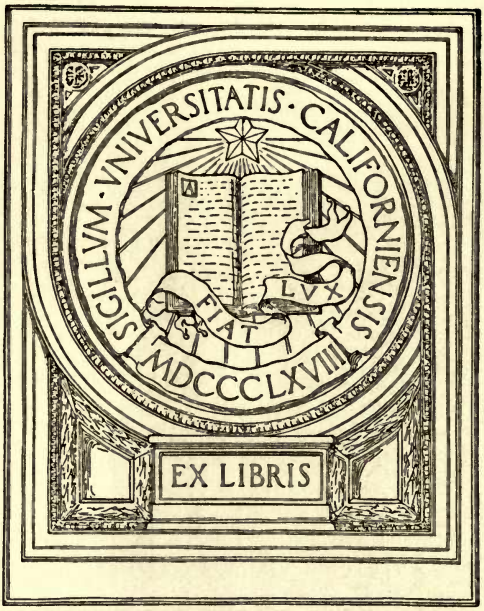
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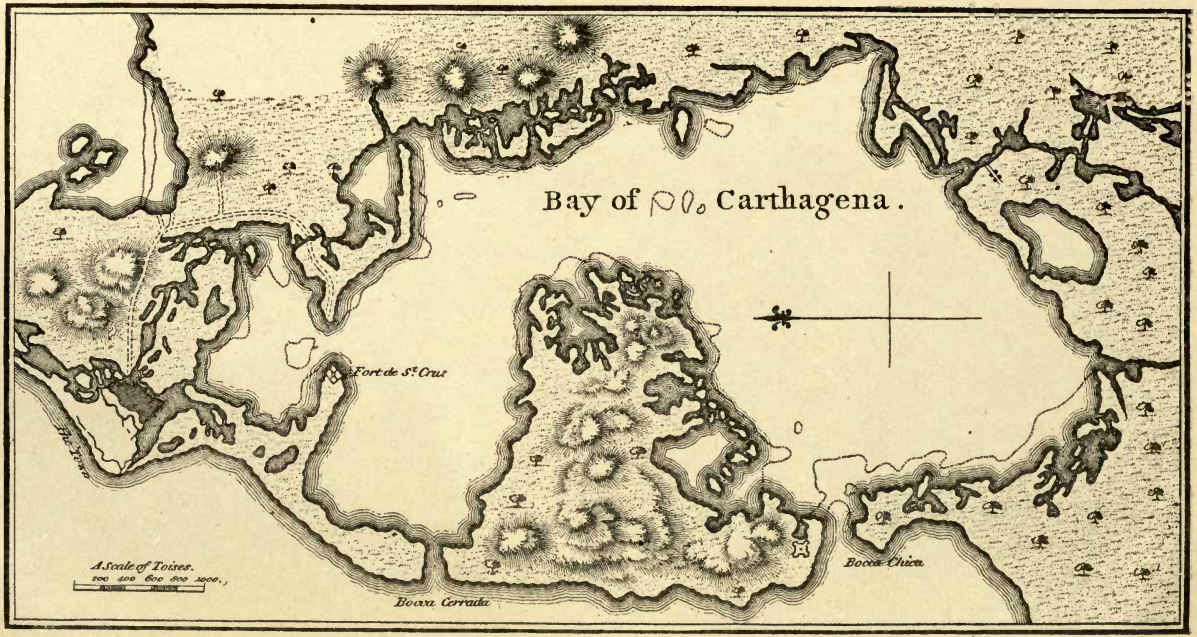
CHARLES W HALL

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Cartagena


Bay of Carthagena.
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A Scale of Toises.
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Cartagena

or

The Lost Brigade

A story of Heroism in the British War with Spain, 1740–1742

By

CHARLES W. HALL

Author of

"Drifting Round the World," "Adrift in the Icefields," "Twice Taken," etc.



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TO
THE BRAVE AND DEVOTED
AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS

Who, for nearly three centuries, have defended our coasts,
advanced our frontiers, repulsed our invaders,
and carried our country's flag beyond
its borders to honorable victory on sea and land,
Who have never sought war, or accepted a
dishonorable peace,
Who have always scorned cruelty to a fallen foe, or arrogance and inhumanity to the vanquished,
Who, however terrible in battle, or successful in conquest,
have ever willingly laid aside the sword, choosing
rather to be good citizens than that perpetual menace to popular government,
a standing army,
This book is dedicated by the Author.

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PROLOGUE.

On the 19th of October, 1739, war was declared between England and Spain, and the following year was one of constant warfare both on the European continent and in the New World.

In the succeeding year a vast armada was fitted out in England to conquer the Spanish dependencies of the West Indies and Central and South America, and the flower of the British army were re-enforced by a Jamaican contingent, and by volunteers from all the loyal colonies of North America, to the number, it is said, of some five thousand men.

Of that ill conducted and fatal enterprise I propose to tell the story, and have chosen rather to attempt to embody these shreds of history in a tale, than to make a matter of dry details of one of the least known and most interesting epochs of our colonial history.

Cartagena

Chapter I.

On the Ledges

Early on the forenoon of a foggy June morning, in the year of our Lord 1740, two dories strained heavily at their grapnels, amid the surges that swept over "the Cod Ledge," then a favorite fishing-ground opposite the eastern portion of the ancient town of S——.

The dense seafogs, sweeping shoreward before the increasing gale, had not as yet shrouded from view the long high barrier of sandy bluffs, which, crowned with a scanty verdure of coarse beach-grass, marks the curving shore of "the right arm of Massachusetts"; although it was evident that they would soon hide from the fishermen both the shores of the cape, and the narrow entrance of the shallow creek from whence they had set out at sunrise.

While one dory had but a single occupant, the other, of larger and heavier build, held three. These sat quietly watching their lines, heedless of the tossing and veering of their light skiff, save when some combing billow covered them with spray, in which case the recipient of the most water became the laughing stock of his companions.

In the seat nearest the bow, sat "Black Bill," the

Indian apprentice boy of Elisha Hay, who was the largest land holder of the district, and the father of his two companions. He was barely twenty years of age, tall, slender, and finely formed, with handsome, but slightly aquiline features, whose habitual expression was one of quiet good humor, although at times he was subject to fits of melancholy, lasting for days together. For the rest he was a faithful servant, a perfect master of woodcraft, and the lore of fisherman and fowler, a skilful sailor, and ready to do anything for either of the brothers, who treated him rather as a kinsman than an inferior.

Amidships sat the younger brother, Elisha (commonly called "Lish") Hay, notorious as the greatest madcap of the whole quiet district, and the darling of every one who recognized the warm impulsive heart, whose superabundant life, and no meaner motive, was the mainspring which set in motion half the mischief devised in the whole county. Of medium size, but strongly built, and possessing a good figure, brown hair, black eyes, and a naturally fair complexion, he was beyond doubt a handsome man, and his constant good humor lent a double charm to his beauty.

But Stephen Hay, his elder brother, was esteemed both the handsomest and strongest man of the county, measuring, at twenty-five, six feet four inches in his stocking feet, and finely proportioned from head to heel. His features were regular, their expression firm and noble, and his clear blue eyes, at times dark and tender, at others had a steely glint, which told of fearless courage, and an indom-

itable will. His high, white forehead, and massive shoulders, were swept by a torrent of golden hair, whose heavy curling masses gave a lion-like majesty to his features, despite the worn slouched hat and ancient clothes he had put on for the occasion. In him seemed realized the dream of the idealist, the perfect man, the microcosmos in whose person the universe is reproduced, and to whose rule and use all things earthly are created and subject.

Yet now, as he sat in his well-worn homespun suit, surmounted by a venerable hat, his splendid beauty could not save him from the good-natured ridicule of his brother, who, from his seat amidships, watched the abstracted look with which Stephen gazed into the wild waste of white-capped waves and drifting mists before him.

"Bill! do look at Steve, dreamin' wide awake! He looks as wise as Parson Giddings himself, if we could but fancy that the good man had changed clothes with some last year's scarecrow."

The half-civilized Indian's face grew grave as he answered: "It's very funny, sir, but *he* looked so, the old people say, when he sat by the fire of council, and saw through its smoke the faces he should meet in battle"; and Black Bill's dusky face became almost as rapt as that of Stephen, who, hearing not, and seeing nothing of this by-play, saw only in the wild chaos of mist and wave a reflex of thoughts and passions which battled within him.

Lish knew well to whom the Indian had alluded in his answer—the ill-fated chieftain of Manomet, the ally of Philip of Mount Hope; and even his care-

less levity shrank from farther question on such a topic. But he turned readily enough on his brother, who almost started to his feet at the laughing query, "What are you dreaming of, brother?"

"Of many things, but, most of all, of that strange text Parson Giddings read last Sunday."

"What text was that, pray?—for I'm afraid I slept through the whole sermon, in spite of catnip and flagroot."

"He was talking of the vanity of all human acquisitions, and even of human renown; and the sight of the fog-banks brought it to mind." And he repeated, with a strangely sad undertone in his voice, a verse or two of that weird book of the Apocrypha styled "The Wisdom of Solomon:"

" 'And our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as the mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof.

" 'For our time is a very shadow, that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed, so that there is no returning.' "

"And why so sad, brother?" asked the younger man, lightly. " 'Tis our common fortune, and such measure as we deal others. I'm sure, I don't know half the names on the tombstones that stand by the town pond yonder, let alone what they who owned to them in life did in the flesh; and as to Bill, here, I doubt if he could find even the graves of the great men of his people."

The native answered with something of scorn in his tone, "There are stones which bear no letters, and trees too old to shed leaves on the graves from which they grew, and yet the deeds of those who sleep beneath them are not forgotten among their people."

"You are right," said Stephen, gravely, "and yet you too, Lish, speak but the truth, for in this new world we eat, drink, die and are forgotten, almost as surely as the sheep that range our woods, or the cattle of our pastures. And yet although I know I have no right to better luck than my neighbors, I can't bear the thought of being forgotten."

"Well, what will you do to become famous? There's no chance that I know of except you go out against the Spaniard, as you have done already before now."

"That's just what I think of doing," said Stephen, quietly. "The papers came two nights ago I hear, and Captain Timothy Ruggles is to raise a company in Barnstable county. He will drum up recruits next week I suppose, and I'm going with him."

"I'll go too, sir," said the Indian gravely, "I'm out of my time tomorrow night, and I don't like farming."

Lish, suddenly grew grave, and when he spoke there was a half sullen ring to a voice usually merry and carelessly *insouciant.* "And I will make the third; I've never been off of the farm hardly, and I want to see something of the world before I die."

"We can't all go," said Stephen hurriedly, "for father is too feeble to manage alone. Bill here has a

motive for wishing to go that neither of us can have, and you or I must stay at home, that's certain. Now which shall it be?"

"You've been out cruising twice in a privateer," said Lish hotly, "and I've never left the Cape but once and that was on a three days' trip in the wood-sloop. I'm bound to go off on my own hook once at least, before I settle down to live and die on Ploughed Neck."

"But mother will never hear of it," said Stephen, earnestly. "You are her youngest and best loved, and it would kill her should anything happen to you."

"I don't care," said the young man; "this time I'll have my way. I'm no baby to stay at home, slaving away with axe and hoe, when you and Bill are filling yourselves with oranges and pine-apples, and your pockets with doubloons. But what's Uncle Zene wanting now?"

A stentorian halloo came struggling against the freshening breeze, from the occupant of the other dory, Capt. Zenas Freeman, a retired shipmaster. Called "Uncle Zenas" by every one in the village, small and great; at sixty, still hale and vigorous; with keen, pleasant gray eyes, and hair which silvered but refused to desert its post; he was held to be a well-to-do farmer, a keen hunter and fisherman, and "the best hearted man in the world."

"Steve! Steve! I say, Steve!"

"What say, uncle?" went down the wind in full clear tones.

"I'm goin' in. There's a heavy gale comin' in from

the eastward and it's rough on the bar now. Ye'd better up anchor an' go in too!"

"All right! We'll be with you!"

"Come, boys," he added in a lower tone, "reel up your lines, trim the fish, and get ready to row without hindrance."

The lines were drawn in and wound on the reels; the fish properly disposed, the rowlocks carefully examined, the oars laid ready to hand, and soon all was ready for the passage over the intervening surges, which swept between them and the quiet inlet, which custom has dignified with the title of Scorton Harbor.

"Bill! up with the grapnel! Lish! keep her head to until Bill gets his oars out! I'll sit aft and steer."

The anchor was soon aboard, and as a surge lifted the dory high in air the oarsmen, with a quick sweep of their starboard oars, swung her deftly round before the next sea could strike her sides, and then as she shot shoreward with the send of the sea, and the sharp, regular strokes of his stalwart crew, Stephen scanned with restless glances the half-hidden surges before him, and in low, quick tones, directed the efforts of his companions.

"Easy, Bill! the wind blows hard and you pull too strong with your left. It won't do to let her broach to and run the risk of shipping a sea."

"Not too deep, Lish, or you'll hamper your oar. Pull quick, boys, or that sea'll be over us."

The extra effort carried them beyond the danger and the roller breaking behind them swept them on its crest of foam a score of yards shoreward.

"Ain't this glorious?" exclaimed Lish, as wave after wave swept them to leeward like leaves before the winds of autumn.

"Yes! but not safe, by long odds," exclaimed his more cautious brother, as, rising to his feet, he surveyed the breakers on the bar close before them.

"Where is Uncle Zenas?" said he, at length.

"Help! Halloo-oo!—help!" The half-despairing cry caught his ear, and through blinding mists and flying spray the youth saw the capsized dory, and a beseeching face amid the foam, and then the succeeding surge hid the old man's struggle with the cruel waves from all eyes save those of the All-Seeing.

"Pull her around, head to the sea—quick! That's right. Back water! So—steady!" said Stephen, as he drew in his steering-oar, and peered steadily shoreward. "There he is! Back water! Look out for the dory! Hold on, uncle, a second—all right! Pull, boys, or we shall strike her. Thank God!"

He had good reason to thank God, for he had caught the arm of the exhausted man as he was sinking for the last time, and with a tremendous effort had dragged him aboard the dory. There was still enough of peril to be encountered, and so Uncle Zenas sat resting his listless head on Stephen's knees, while the stout oarsmen backed cautiously in through the surf, past the hidden rocks and sheltering sand-point, until upon the new flood they rowed swiftly up the narrow creek to the landing.

"You have saved my life, Stephen, and I shall never forget it," faltered the old man, chilled by the

cold seas and exhausted with his efforts. "I broke my rullock, an' she broached to an' filled. My poor Maggie would have been indeed an orphan but for you."

"Never mind that, uncle," said Stephen, kindly; "we must get you home now. Can you walk between us two?"

"Oh, yes! I can get along alone well enough, I reckon."

But, after a few steps, Uncle Zenas was glad enough to lean on the strong men, of whom he had so often spoken as the boy-babies he had taken on his knee in the prime of his own manhood; and it was with joy that he at last emerged from the locust-shaded lane, and entered the open door of his own homestead.

They supported his feeble steps to the huge fireplace, and seated him in a softly-cushioned chair, brought by an elderly little woman whose sharp, nervous questionings did not prevent her from making herself generally useful.

"Been upset, ain't ye? I knew ye would, an' now it's come true. Well, I won't scold ye now, brother, for ye look a'most beat out. What can I do fer ye?"

"Some Santa Cruz, Luciny, quick! I am so cold," said the old man, feebly.

"Senserble to the last," remarked the little woman, grimly, as she brought a large square glass bottle, covered with gaily-painted figures and flowers. "I do believe that ef ye were dyin' a leetle Santy Cruz would bring ye too."

Whatever might have been the effect of Santa

Cruz on Uncle Zene in a moribund state, its virtues were certainly fully shown in his rapid improvement, in the case in hand. The generous liquid quickly stirred the sluggish blood of the veteran, who, assisted by Stephen, soon repaired to his chamber, where under the combined influences of fatigue, warm blankets and Santa Cruz, he fell into a deep refreshing sleep.

As Stephen silently descended from the old man's chamber, he was met in the room below by the veteran's only daughter, Margaret.

Panting with exertion, the flush of overheated blood striving with the pallor of ill-defined fear; her tiny coral lips half open to ask the question her large, dark, spirituelle eyes had asked already; and with her graceful figure set off to advantage by its spotless muslin drapery in strong contrast to her dark beauty and jetty locks, she seemed to Stephen the embodiment of some heavenly vision rather than a mortal maiden.

"O, Stephen! will my father live? Is he better now?"

"Yes, Margaret, he sleeps soundly and has regained the warmth he lost in the waves."

"And you saved him, Stephen, they tell me. How shall we ever repay you?" she continued.

Stephen, tall and manly as he was, blushed like a girl as he hastened to disavow any peculiar merit, saying not without a tinge of solemnity in his tone,

"God saved him, but we who were his instruments alike risked what little danger we ran, and Lish and Bill are as worthy of praise as I."

She shook her pretty head incredulously. "But they did not bend down into the cold waves as you did to grasp and save my father, nor could they like you, have raised him into the dory unassisted."

"Who told you that I did?"

"William, your father's apprentice, and he says no man living in the Bay plantation could have done as you have done to-day."

"Then it is enough Margaret, that I have saved your father, and heard your kind words of praise. He will soon awake and then you can see him. We must go now, for it is Saturday, and much remains to be done before nightfall."

"It will be pleasant tomorrow, for it is breaking up in the west. Come over tomorrow and see us—I mean my father—for he will be anxious to see and thank you for his life and my happiness."

With a gladness born of the warm thanks of one whom he had long admired in secret, Stephen set out on his way homewards, full of hope and of golden visions, such as men have in the flush of youthful vigor and inexperience.

What if the drizzling rain still fell, and the seafogs hung over the barren sand-dunes that overlooked the raging surges? the sunshine of the heart illumined his way, and he lived in the summer of successful love and limitless ambition.

Suddenly he looked up, and saw near the winding pathway a rude enclosure, the burial place of the fathers of his hamlet, and within many a sunken mound was destitute of the poor slabs of thin slate-stone, which once bore in rude letters and ruder

sculpture the brief record of earthly pilgrimages long since finished, and even those standing were often so corroded by frost and weather, that the inscriptions were illegible.

And again over the bright skies of his dream-summer of fame and love, came the haunting words of the sagest and greatest of Judah's princes, who more than all men, having drank of earthly power and pleasure, has also left us the saddest testimony to the insufficiency of earthly blessings.

"And our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have us in remembrance; and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun and overcome with the heat thereof."

"So speaks the text," said Stephen to himself, "but must all the high resolves and fair ambition of mortals end thus? Cannot unselfish deeds for others' weal; the service of the State, or a life untinged with selfishness or shame, save from oblivion the name of a man, beyond the scanty measure of existence vouchsafed him here?"

His eyes flashed, his form dilated, as his thoughts proceeded with the theme. "Strong of limb and above others in stature am I, and my life and spirit shall not be unworthy of their dwelling here. Strong of body, I will dare all that man may dare, do all that man may do; and strong of soul, I will bear the ills of life not only for myself, but as much as may be for others weaker than I. My deeds shall be brave without cruelty, my pride unbending to man,

but humbled before God, and my love and friendship capable of any sacrifice. So shall I live, if not in history, yet in the hearts and traditions of my family and village, when my spirit shall have long since returned to the God who gave it."

As he spoke, he heard the tinkling bells of the kine as they came leisurely homeward from the oaken coverts of the "Brush pasture," the bleating of the sheep, as they gathered around the almost empty stackyard, and as he entered he saw his mother's gentle face welcome him with a loving smile to the huge fireplace, glowing with oaken logs, and the table laden with rural dainties.

And when the daily round of labor was over and the sun sank slowly in the cloudless west, the members of the household of Ploughed Neck sat quietly and unemployed around the hearth, for with them the holy Sabbath had begun.

Chapter II.

The Household at Ploughed Neck

Although the legislative enactment of the earlier colonial days that "the Lord's day should be observed from three of the clock on Saturday afternoon" had lost its force with the lapse of nearly five generations, still custom and family discipline strongly preserved the feeling of reverence, which made the evening before the Sabbath, part of, and a preparation for the same.

And so the household at Ploughed Neck, as the sun sank slowly behind the purple cliffs of Manomet, laid aside the implements of husbandry, and all labor of spindle and loom, and silently gathered by the hearth or at door and window, noting the shadow of the long northern twilight as it deepened into night.

By the dying fire sat Elisha Hay the elder, enjoying the evening pipe which he had invariably smoked for nearly half a century except on such rare occasions of sickness, accident or great mental disturbance, as had for a time altered the even current of his life. Of rather moderate stature but strongly and even actively proportioned, he had preserved unimpaired by sixty years of temperate life his white even teeth and the sight of his pleasant blue eyes. He had acquired in early years, a local reputation as a scholar, had held various offices of trust in the State and county, and his lands marched

many a rood from the surf-beaten sands of the sea-beach, across marsh, meadow, swamp and upland, to the ponds which lay like hidden gems, amid the oak-shadowed forest lands to the south and west. Faultlessly moral, a devoted husband and kind father, and respected for his piety in the church, he nevertheless had a strong tinge of that Puritan spirit of self repression, which even to this day, takes out of the life of many New Englanders all color and beauty, and much of contentment and pleasure; leaving little to be admired save the strength of purpose which so staunchly endures and directs a life, sternly limited to the performance of duty and the accumulation of wealth. It is but just however, to aver that none went hungry or naked from his door, or lay in want or sickness without proving his bounty; neither could any man say with truth that he had oppressed the poor, or cheated the ignorant who trusted in him.

His blood, unmixed for generations, was derived from a poor, but noble family of English ancestry from the borders of Wales, and early in life he had chosen a wife descended like himself from one of the earliest settlers of "the Plymouth Colony."

Pretty Deliverance Clarke brought him little dower in gold or silver, save the string of massive gold beads around her white neck, and a few quaintly fashioned spoons, small and great, with the tiny silver porringer whence her infant lips had taken that first meal, which presaged the yearly widening separation between mother and child. But she brought a goodly trousseau in chests of snowy linen

and soft woollen fabrics, spun, woven, bleached and colored by her own hands, and with them beauty, health and a love which labor could not lessen or care diminish. Many children had been born to them, to receive the old scriptural names in baptism, and to grow up in the simple school of ceaseless labor and "godly living," which, while it has given place to wider learning and more liberal views, doubtless in its day produced men of sterner integrity and simpler purity of soul.

The house itself was then new, framed from the slow-growing, tough, close-grained oaks of the interior belt of woodland, which still shelters the red deer, fox and partridge, although over two centuries have passed since first the sachem of Manomet saw his hunting grounds invaded by the men of Plymouth.

It was large for a farm-house of that epoch, and not over-low in the walls, although the great beams everywhere showed their unpolished, rudely painted surfaces amid the rough plaster.

Huge fireplaces yawned in three of the lower rooms, and two chambers boasted of a like convenience and luxury, in all of which gleamed curiously wrought andirons surmounted by huge brazen balls.

In all the rooms but one the furniture was heavy, and even costly, wrought, as was the fashion, in massive mahogany, ironwood and oak, and embellished with fittings of brass. A few shells, whale's teeth curiously worked, with the sword and half-pike carried by the elder Hay as lieutenant in the colonial militia, together with some little display of

china, pewter and silver on the beaufet, were the only indications of an attempt at ornament.

The kitchen, however, (often in those days styled "the living room") was by far the largest room, running across the rear of the house, and forming with its huge fireplace, an apartment over a score of feet in length, by nearly as many in breadth. A long, narrow mantel bordered the wainscotting above the fireplace, and was set with candlesticks, trays and snuffers of iron and brass, above which, on deer's horns, hung several heavy musquets, with rude leathern shot pouches, bullet bags and powder horns. A massive table, a large settle capable of forming a bed upon occasion, with chairs seated with leather and plaited rushes, simply furnished the apartment.

Here, then, all were gathered—Deacon Hay in his great arm chair, reading by the flickering light of the hearth the last issue of the Boston Newsletter. Opposite him, his wife caressed with one motherly hand the golden curls of her youngest daughter "Tempie," for even Puritan hearts felt that Temperance was no fitting name to be used in terms of endearment. Joshua, the first born, and his father's chief reliance upon the farm, with Stephen, "Lish" and Black Bill sat by the windows in silence, until their father, finishing his perusal of the little sheet at last laid it on the light stand by his side, and igniting a pine splinter at the fire lit one of the long "tallow dips" which gave light to our forefathers.

"Is there any news of the great expedition, father?" asked Joshua, quietly.

"Little to note, save that Col. Spotswood, of Virginia, who was to have commanded our men, died suddenly at Annapolis on the seventh. A strange providence, and a sad one at such a time, but even thus uncertain is human life."

"Who is spoken of as his successor?"

"The Hon. Col. Gooch, now lieutenant governor of Virginia. A brave and gallant gentleman 'tis said, but fond of worldly display, and foolish pleasures. I would that worthier men were to take charge of the lives of our young men, and essay the defence of our rights, and the king's honor and glory."

"Are the officers appointed for this colony?" continued Stephen, with the bearing of one who in this last question had exhausted all his interest in the subject.

"Not yet, my son, although the men should soon be ready for sea, but 'tis said at New York, I hear, that already the king's officers begrudge our colonists commissions, even over our own troops."

"There's a horse coming down the lane," said Bill, suddenly raising his head. "'Tis on the grass now and coming round to the west door."

As he spoke the beat of the animal's hoofs became audible to all, and a black stallion, bearing the saddle and accoutrements of a colonel of militia, and covered with flecks of white foam, curvetted angrily for a moment under the restraining hand of its rider, and then halted, trembling in every limb, but motionless as a statue of black marble.

The rider, an athletic and dark haired man, grace-

ful as Apollo, and almost gigantic in stature, leapt from the saddle, and threw reins and wand to a huge deerhound, who gravely seating himself by the horse's head, caught the loose reins in his mouth and placed one huge forepaw upon the fallen rod.

Mr. Hay met the new comer at the open door, and with somewhat cold civility asked him to enter.

"Nay, not so, friend Hay, for, as all men know, you love not to receive guests on the eve of the Sabbath, nor would I now trouble you, save that I am pressed with urgent affairs both public and private. I must start to go back to Boston tomorrow night, however, and would speak for a moment with your son, Stephen. 'Tis upon the king's business, and I may not tarry for courtesy, or compliment."

"It shall not need, Mr. Timothy Ruggles," said Elisha Hay coldly, "for the lad is of age and shall act his own pleasure, and even I, in such case as yours, would not hinder if I might, for, if I judge aright, you are about to raise the Barnstable company for the great expedition."

The somewhat scornful features of Ruggles relaxed first into wonder and then into a smile, which lit up his usually saturnine face with a genial glow.

"Even old Molly Pognet, whom the charitable call 'witch,' and the fearful 'sorceress,' could scarcely guess better than thou hast done. But what has given you such power of divination, I confess I should be glad to discover."

"That a company of the ten would be raised here,

none could doubt, and it needed no conjurer to divine on whom the lot would fall, when the governor chose according to his pleasure. To few has it been given to become lawyer, landlord and representative to the General Court, aye, and husband of a fair widow, within the short space which you have spent among us, and I doubted not of the result if military glory was another of your aspirations. But here is Stephen, who is anxious to hear you, and ready—"

"To do his duty, neighbor Hay, I doubt not," interrupted Ruggles heartily enough, although his lips had worked angrily more than once, during Hay's somewhat cynical review of his not uneventful life. "But come, Stephen, let us talk while Beelzebub is drinking," and, followed by the young man, the future general, chief justice, mandamus councillor, loyalist and refugee partisan, walked his steed to the horse trough beside the curb of the ancient well.

"Your father likes me not, Stephen Hay," said the landlord of Newcomb's tavern, after a short pause, "but his dislike is honest and comes rather from old prejudices and old time ideas than malice, and I will not count him an enemy. Let him know from me that it were not well to forestall the governor's proclamation, in which, within ten days, my name will be found as one of the captains of the new regiment. You are the first man whom I have asked to go with me, and you shall have the colors, if I can compass it, and the first sergeant's stripes at worst."

Although he had had no hope of such prospect of

comparative rank and distinction, expecting to carry a musket in the ranks as a simple private, or rather "gentleman volunteer," as it was still the custom to call such as entered the ranks from a sense of duty and love of adventure, Stephen hesitated a moment ere he answered.

"Come, man!" said his companion almost angrily, "What sayest thou? Yes or no? Or are my offers too low to tempt you to leave Ploughed Neck, and its promises of wealth and renown?"

"I thought not of such matters," said Stephen simply, and I thank you for your good will. But I fear to take such responsibility as you offer me. It were better that you had rated me as a simple private and chose as officers those of more experience than I."

Ruggles burst into a laugh, checked suddenly as he glanced at the open windows of the homestead where in silence almost unbroken the descendants of the Pilgrims awaited the coming darkness and the day of rest.

"Truly," said he, "I am scant of courtesy, and you must pardon my rudeness. Nevertheless your over-modesty is strange in the hero of half a dozen perilous conflicts with Spanish corsair and Indian savage, and did I not know your father, and the integrity in which you were nurtured, I should have deemed it but a false show of feigned humility. I know you to be shrewd, brave and true, and it is no boy's play, but hard, bitter, earnest that lies before us, and one such man as I shall find in you, is worth a dozen of the fine gentlemen who are trying to se-

cure commissions. So once for all, will you go? or rather will you come?"

"Bear with me a moment," said Stephen, gravely, "and tell me, if you will, why you would go on this expedition, knowing as you must know that he who adventures in this matter, may scarce in anywise hope to bring away his life. You have spoken openly to me, and you are not wont, men say, to venture aught for empty show or without hope of advantage. Tell me, therefore, frankly, if you will, why you are ready to leave a good business, a fair wife, your young children and the comfortable tavern yonder on such a desperate errand as ours."

The last dull belt of lurid color had faded out of the western sky, and the stars were beginning to glimmer above in the darkening heavens. Ruggles gathered the reins of his grazing steed, and stepped beside him as if ready to leap into the saddle, while the great dog gambolled and barked around him. There was a strange sadness in the clear, manly voice, and unwonted trembling about the firmly set lips as he answered:

"I have doubtless done much that may be questioned to secure success, and it may be that men may hereafter blame, and Heaven punish me therefor, for in poverty I was nurtured, and early I swore that I would yet possess both wealth and fame, if only in friendship and loyalty to my word I might be true, and blameless in devotion to my king. Yet truly in this matter I have little to gain and much to lose, and I go upon this expedition only from loyalty, and for the public weal,—unless," added he in

a lighter tone, "the love of adventure may count somewhat heavily in the balance. What say you then, Stephen, do you go with me?"

"I will go," said Stephen briefly.

His tall companion sprang to the saddle, whistled to his hound, and with a gay "good night," was gone. Stephen watched horse and rider until they were lost in the darkness, and re-entered the house.

"Have you promised, my son?" asked his father quietly.

"I have promised," said Stephen, gently adding as he saw his mother's lips quiver, and his sister's starting tears, "it may be that I may not go, after all, but at the worst little will be done before fall; so it is best not to borrow trouble."

"It is not well to dissemble even in kindness," said the sterner father, "neither must we shrink, even though, like Abraham, we are called upon to offer our first born. So let us have the truth even if we sorrow therefor."

"I am not wont to lie," said Stephen, a little hurt, "but no man knows when the governor's message will be issued, and we are not to tell of tonight's visit to any. Moreover, I know that no man in his senses will land on the Spanish Main before late in the fall, and now it lacks many weeks to the end of summer."

As he finished speaking his father arose, and taking the family Bible, put on his glasses, seated himself by the dying embers of the hearth, and drew the candle-stick nearer as he chose out, as was his custom, a chapter fitting the occasion and the especial

needs of the hour, while the others, without a word, gathered around the high priest of the family altar. From the 20th chapter of Deuteronomy he read that last wonderful and final counsel of the dying prophet, to the people he had led out of bondage and to the borders of their inheritance.

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is with thee which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

"And it shall be when ye come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people.

"And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel; ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies; let not your hearts faint; fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.

"For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you to fight for you, against your enemies, to save you."

With a strange, grave enthusiasm, the simply dressed, gray haired farmer, who had never seen a blow struck in mortal strife, read the assuring promises of Jehovah to his people, as if doubting nothing that they were as applicable to the wars of the eighteenth century and the new world, as to the conquest of Canaan and the destruction of the sons of Anak. And kneeling, he prayed 'that the Lord would protect his servant going forth against the enemies of his king and the foes of true religion dwelling afar off; that the battle might spare and the pestilence pass him by in its wrath, and the ter-

rible storms and fearful wonders of the mighty deep might not prevail against him.'

"And now, O Lord," the petitioner concluded, "we leave him in thy hands, knowing that with thee naught can harm or make afraid, and confessing that as we have received our lives of thee, so thou hast a right to take them of us again, and especially for thy honor and glory. Yet, if it be thy will, return thy servant unto us in health and strength again; and if not, reunite us forever in heavenly kingdoms, where we shall no more go out, but rejoice in the mercy and love of thy crucified son forever and ever. Amen."

And as mother, sisters and brother rose from their knees, all felt that their best and bravest had been offered as an acceptable sacrifice to advance the glory of God and king and country, and with a tender good night they separated, and peaceful repose enthralled the household at Ploughed Neck.

Chapter III.

The Sabbath

The next morning broke clear and balmy, with the sun the cattle were afield, the pigs and poultry fed, and the family horse stood harnessed under the wagon shed, while the household, after prayers, sat down to breakfast on such viands as time and custom have almost universally established as the Sunday breakfast of the children of the Pilgrims unto this day.

A huge pot of nicely browned baked beans, surmounted by its cube of delicately cooked pork, a loaf of true brown bread, composed of two parts of corn and one of rye meal kneaded with hot water and salt, and baked in the great oven until its crust was nearly an inch thick; with plenty of sweet, yellow butter, rich home-made cheese, and the invariable plate of yellow molasses gingerbread, formed a meal whose counterpart, it might have been safely wagered, could be found in every house in sight of the chimney of Deacon Hay's homestead.

After breakfast, Joshua and Stephen, Elisha and Bill, the Indian apprentice, set out on foot across the fields towards the town, some three miles distant, knowing that there would be but scant room in the old-fashioned, two-seated wagon for "father, mother and the girls," for save old "Buff," the watch dog, none were left to guard the house, left with unlocked doors and unfastened windows, untenanted for the day.

And, as they proceeded over the sparse herbage, whose coarse, scant grasses and sapless "poverty weed" told of the ocean origin of the sterile soil, they walked for the most part silently and soberly, as became men in whose eyes the Sabbath was God's day, sacred only to his service, and consecrating all the universe for the time being as a temple for His worship and for that alone; and, therefore it was, that there was no wonder experienced by any that, during the greater part of their journey, nothing was said to break the current of their several trains of thought.

On their left, not half a mile away, the higher ridge of wooded land lay in all the fresh beauty of perfect leafage and the freshness of spring, and between it and the party were dense swamps, redolent of brier, vinebuds, swamp pink, sweet flag, and honeysuckle, amid which hovered and built the purple grakle, redwing blackbird, robin and bluebird, whose soft sweet love notes mingled with the spring voices of other songsters of the wood and plain.

The quail called mournfully from hill to hill and cover to cover; the bittern boomed amid the lily-pads of "the Springs" at the headwaters of Naomet creek; the wary crows even seemed less fearful of man, and their harsh cawing came, softened by the distance, from the tall saplings of "the Brush swamp," while the jocund frogs from amid their innumerable haunts kept up their monotonous yet not unpleasing chorus, with which all other sounds blended like the variations of a time-honored melody.

Yet it should be confessed that none of the four could keep out of mind all sublunary thoughts and worldly considerations, although all, in a certain sense, tried to, and on the whole flattered themselves that they succeeded in so doing. Joshua, for instance, wondered if Holway's meadow would cut as much hay as his heavily-dressed mowing land below the orchard, and recollected with something of self-reproach that half a score of cords of oaken wood still remained piled up in the wood-lot, though needed to swell the huge family wood-pile; while the tumultuous rush of a flock of silly sheep in a field near the road recalled the sheep-washing, now near at hand, and he opened his lips to speak, when the distant church bell warned him of his forgetfulness of holy things, and he held his peace.

The vivacious Lish was less self-contained, and several times "broke bounds," to the evident distress of Joshua, whose moderate but grave reproof was answered only by a careless laugh, but was generally acquiesced in so far as a momentary gravity of demeanor and staid carriage were concerned. But he leapt a fence to draw from the swamp border a root of sweet calamus, which he washed and trimmed with his knife as the party proceeded; he stopped at the brook to peer under the rude bridge, and regretted greatly that he had no line at hand to beguile a great trout which lay, just moving his scarlet-tipped fins, under its shadow, and in fact at every moment showed how much the self repression, habitual to his companions, confined and galled his superabundant and versatile nature.

The Indian walked gravely along a little behind the others, as was his wont, but it was evident that nothing of the grand prospect around him, nor the lightest sound that struck the ear, the most trivial remark of the brothers, nor even those slight facial shadows and changes which to the experienced betray the workings of the mind within, passed unnoticed by the keen, dark, restless eyes, or the small ears, almost erectile and tremulous, as philosophers say the organs of hearing, now fixed from generations of confinement and disuse, were intended to be by their Almighty designer.

As for Stephen, his thoughts were too busy for speech, for the scenes around him brought by association and contrast, a flood of meditation of deep and varied interest. Across yonder bay, lying tranquil and waveless in the sunlight, where he had sailed as fisherman, coasting captain and roving privateer, he was soon to sail again on a more dangerous errand; for umbrageous oak, lithe hickory, spreading orchards and harmless shrubbery, amid which he had labored and hunted, he was soon to behold the gigantic, fantastic and wonderful forms of that tropical vegetation, which, like the tree of the garden, bore alike the fruit of life and destruction. And, as he was passed by the heavy chaise in which uncle Zenas and his sister, with smiling, blushing Margaret, drove by toward the church, the whole vision of wonder, glory and high emprise was for a moment lost in softer hopes, and momentary regrets that the path of duty ran far apart from the rosy parterres of love.

But now, the weather-beaten, square-belfried church was close at hand, standing on a little rise of ground, not far removed from the village street and near a deep, clear, sinuous pond, bordered with overhanging trees and shrubbery, on whose opposite bank the founders of the town, with the dead of an hundred years, slept under the feathery foliage of the locusts, and the long, rank grass their ashes had nourished.

Entering, they sat down in the huge, square pew, which, as one of the deacons of the church and the substantial landowners of the district, the father of Elisha Hay had occupied before him.

The son, now gray haired, sat in "the deacon's seat," under the huge unornamented pulpit, above which the sounding board hung suspended by its iron rods, and around the walls on either side to the door the border pews held the assembled yeomen of the district. In front, "the middle aisle" was bordered on either side by three long pews, the first on the right of the minister for deaf and aged men and on the left for females thus afflicted, while the others were free pews for the poor and strangers, the male and female occupants being assigned separate seats and divided by the middle aisle. Three large pews, like the one above spoken of, on either side of the aisle, took up the remainder of the body of the house.

In the rear gallery sat the choir, for whose benefit a huge bass viol, violoncello, several violins and a bassoon discoursed the music of the old, time-honored psalm tunes, while the ancient leader of the

choir, pitchpipe in hand, faced a long array of gray haired men, stout young farmers and blooming lasses, who, we regret to say, too often shot bewildering glances across the dividing aisle or down into the pews below. And in either corner to right and left, in seats especially allotted, sat negro slaves and Indian apprentices, for the freedom desired by our ancestors was, in both its religious and civil aspect, far from catholic in its application, and Black Bill, whatever he may have thought, would never have dreamed of seating himself at church with those who worked beside him in the fields and ate with him at the same table.

The sermon was long, scholarly and exhaustive, "reaching tenthly," as the old people expressed it, but none the less vital and interesting, for the text was taken from the book of Nehemiah, and his narrative of the building of the second temple:

"And it came to pass from that time forth that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields and the bows and the habergeons, and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

"They which builded on the wall and they that bare burdens with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a weapon.

"For the builders every one had his sword girded by his side and so builded; and he who sounded the trumpet was by me."

The argument related of course to the building up of New England by the descendants of the Pil-

grims, and in his artificial yet strong and manly way the minister told of the dark days of the past and the wars with Narragansett, Pequot, Tarratine and Frenchman, in which the men of Massachusetts Bay had readily perilled life and limb for the safety of their firesides, the freedom of the seas and the honor of the king.

And although Samuel Jennings, the town clerk and treasurer, looked ruefully at his maimed leg, cut off by a huge shark in a West Indian port, as he essayed to desert from a British man-of-war on board of which he had been cruelly impressed, and Goodman Gibbs, blinded by an Indian arrow, and homeless in his old age, groaned audibly at the mention of "the savage enemy," nevertheless the clarion voice of the earnest preacher rang in the ears of the young like a trumpet, and Squire Ruggles, as he rose in his seat to receive the final benediction, felt that his company would not lack brave men, ready to fill up the ranks and to do their duty.

An hour's nooning was allotted to luncheon, after which another discourse, on less interesting topics, ended the day's services, greatly to the relief of Elisha, whom neither the frowns of his father nor the fear of the tithing man's rod of office could keep awake, so sultry was the heat, and so monotonously did the voice of the minister mingle with the hum of insect life in the sunlight out of doors.

Then followed the walk homeward, the hearty early supper, to atone for long fasting save for the slight lunch eaten on the shore of the pond, under the shade of a huge willow, and then the cattle were

called to the milking, the other stock cared for and fed, and as the sun set the Sabbath ended, and worldly cares and earthly hopes again engrossed the thoughts of the household at Ploughed Neck.

Then Stephen walked again across the fields as the sun's last beams gilded the distant cliffs of Manomet, and this time little thought of military glory, or fear of coming oblivion, mingled with his meditations. Often before he had threaded the narrow footpath that led to the sunny dwelling of the retired sea captain, but without such hopes as now cheered him on his lover's errand, for the goddess he had worshipped was a fickle, merry-hearted little deity, whom he had often deemed more propitious and accessible to the careless merriment and heedless gallantries of his mischievous brother, than to his own deep and unpresuming devotion.

But to-night his eyes caught the shimmer of her white dress beside the well curb, and his heart leaped like a charging war horse as he caught the sweet words of her welcome.

"I have waited for you," she said simply, "though I feared you would not come, for I owe you so much and I have deserved so little," and as in a dream he clasped her proffered hand, and beneath the late-blossoming trees passed down through to the grass-bordered pathway.

At the door sat Uncle Zenas, enjoying his evening pipe; and Aunt Lucina, quietly knitting, sprang up to welcome the young man, and led the way into the keeping-room, odorous of camphor and sandal wood, covered as to the floor with Canton mattings and

wonderful rugs of home-made woolen, and ornamented with souvenirs of many an adventurous voyage.

Teeth of the whale, "scrimshawed" or etched with rude but spirited pictures of the death throes of the huge animal from whose terrible lower jaw they had been taken, canes curiously made of the spinal column of the shark, or of tropical woods and whale ivory, and slender riding wands of baleen or whalebone, with beautiful feather flowers from the Azores, wonderful lacework from the convents of Manila, rare shells from desert islands of the Pacific, curious weapons and a few bits of silversmith's work, covered the long, narrow mantel-shelf, and the ironwood teapoys and heavy brass-mounted writing desk.

"Sit down, Stephen, and make yerself to home, for there ain't no livin' man more welcome than you be," and, giving a wonderfully shining chair a superfluous rub with her apron, the little woman caught up a small waiter, drew the other corner of her apron across her eyes and left the apartment.

"Thet's so, Steve," said Uncle Zenas, giving the young man's hand a grip that nearly brought the tears to his eyes. "The old man came very near losing the number of his mess, as the reg'lar old sea dogs say, an' I ain't goin' to forget it."

"There, there!" said the young man, hastily. "Don't talk of it, Uncle Zenas. You've often done as much for strangers, and would have done as much for us had our boat capsized on the bar. By the way, Black Bill will go down to the creek and

bail your dory out to-morrow, for while we helped you home he got her as she came in with the tide."

"Wal, wal! you're certainly right about one thing, an' thet is thet I've tried to do my duty when any poor mortal was strugglin' with the waves; an', ah's me! how many despairin' wretches I've seen go to leeward when none could help an' even a parting cry could not be heard. But thet don't change the matter between us, or lessen my debt; an' I'm your debtor, boy, henceforrad, an' shel be glad to begin to pay up any time thet you want anything I hev to give, lend or bestow."

At this juncture Miss Lucina entered with the little tray, on which were arrayed a curiously cut and gilded decanter of Dantzic liqueur, with tiny French glasses, and a plate of cake, which latter she was famed for making throughout the county.

In those days no one refused such refreshment, and they sipped the oily, honey-like cordial, and ate the rich cake, heavy with fruit and frosting, while Aunt Lucina kept up a running commentary on the viands:

"Now, don't stent yeself on thet cake, Stephie, fer ef I say it as shouldn't say it, there's no better made in the county; an' when Squire Ruggles married she thet was Bathsheba Newcomb, nothin' would do but I must mix the big cake an' I do think thet this same cake we are eatin' is ruther the best of the two."

"It's good enough for the king," said the young man, warmly "and I hope, if ever I'm married, that you'll make one just like it for me."

"Thet she shell," said her brother heartily. "An'

ez fer the cordial, thet shan't be wantin' either, fer I've a half a dozen cases thet never was opened. I bought them down to Jamaiky out of a French brig brought in by a privateer, an' the gov'nor hasn't a drop like it in the cellars of the Province House, I'll be bound."

Thus the old people gossiped until the clock struck nine, when uncle Zenas and his sister retired, for such were the early hours kept by our forefathers in the rural settlements.

Half an hour later, Stephen parted from Margaret at the porch door, for the dews were falling heavily and he would not permit her to go with him to the gate beside the ancient well sweep. Her eyes were bright with tears and her lips trembled, as she smilingly twined her slight arms around Stephen's neck and laid her darks locks against the golden curls of her lover.

"You are not sorry that you have promised me, are you, dearest?" asked the young man simply. "If you are, I shall never hold you to your promise, and you are free."

"Why do you ask?" she said in surprise. "You cannot surely love me since you could part with me so easily."

"Do not mistake me, darling," he answered, with a faint tremor in his deep, low tones, "I prize you above all earthly things, and death alone shall part us, unless you so will it. But I love you better than myself; yes, even enough to lose you, should your happiness demand it."

"That can never be," said Margaret gently, "for I

could never hope to find one so handsome and brave and generous, and I know that I shall never regret my loving you. Only I do feel that you are too good and noble for me."

And therein she spake the truth, but the time had not yet come for either to realize that between the pretty, spoiled child and the grand, passionate, yet self-devoted nature she had enthralled, there could never be perfect union, or the well-founded and mutual appreciation and sympathy, which alone can strengthen and develop that wonderful germ of mutual attraction, whose perfect growth is love.

But Stephen went homeward, looking longingly behind him, as long as he could see through the foliage the white-robed form in the sumach-shaded porch; while Margaret, when her lover's receding figure was lost in the darkness, went to her room and, seated by the open window, thought over the events of the last two days, and the change her engagement of an hour ago would work in her life.

"Father will be delighted," she soliloquized, as the murmur of the distant sea came up across the inundated marshes. "Aunt Lucina has always teased me to take Stephen, and all the other girls will be as jealous as can be; but what will Lish say now?" and the fair speaker, as she rose to retire for the night, sighed as if her joy was not altogether unmingled with doubts for the future.

Chapter IV.

Beating Up Recruits

A fortnight later, the governor's proclamation had been promulgated by press and pulpit, and the following gentlemen appointed captains of as many companies to be raised in their respective sections, each company to consist of one hundred and one rank and file, with four commissioned officers; a captain, first and second lieutenants, and ensign to each.

Major Ammi Ruhamah Wise of Ipswich, Colonel John Prescott of Concord, Daniel Goffe, Stephen Richards, Thomas Philips, John Furney and Dr. George Stewart of Boston, Wm. Phipps of Cambridge, Joshua Barker of Pembroke, and as Deacon Hay had never doubted, Timothy Ruggles, the landlord-lawyer of Newcomb's tavern, were the men chosen to receive the commissions, which his gracious majesty King George the Second, had been pleased to send in blank to the royal governors and other influential personages, who were to raise in America a contingent of at least 3000 men.

Of this large force the legislators, influenced by the executive of the "Province of Massachusetts Bay," determined to raise one third, and to that end offered a bounty of five pounds of the somewhat depreciated currency of the colony, and sundry other provisions for the comfort of its soldiers, unknown in the more frugal administration of the regular service.

The news reached the quiet household at Ploughed Neck even before its announcement from the pulpit, and the tardy coming of the Newsletter; for at least two days before the arrival of the mail, the family just then about to retire for the night, heard the hoofs of the galloping steed as he emerged from the sandy lane upon the level sward before the house.

"It is Squire Ruggles' Beelzebub," said the Indian apprentice.

The hoofbeats, suddenly interrupted, stopped close to the door, as the rough-rider's hand bore too heavily on the strong curb, and the black stallion rearing almost upright, planted his fore feet heavily on the rough walk of flat stones, and Ruggles, lowering his bridle hand, relaxed the pressure and flung himself out of the saddle just as the elder Hay and the male members of the family appeared at the door.

"Your pardon, Deacon Hay, for a second untimely visit, but this business of the West Indian expedition is ever vexatious at every turn, and I have come since last night from Boston; yet have not even staid at home for needful refreshments, for I would press the raising of my company as fast as may be without loss of a day."

"But wherefore such haste?" said the senior Hay, in his deliberate, sententious way. "You have doubtless the appointment of the governor and the approval of the general court."

"There may be no trouble," said the captain, quietly, "but there were but three thousand men re-

quired, and the governor seems determined that the Massachusetts Bay shall furnish one-third thereof. I know that they of New York, Virginia and the Jerseys will not readily let ten commissions issue among us; and he who first raises his company will outrank the others, and be surest of receiving his captaincy."

While he was speaking Black Bill (or William Untequit, as we shall henceforth call him) had brought out a measure of grain for the horse, a service which Ruggles, as he smilingly relinquished the loose rein, would have rewarded by the gift of a silver pistareen, but Untequit shook his head gravely and said, "Not now, for you are my captain henceforward."

"Well said, man," said Ruggles, earnestly. "Would I had an hundred such now on my list. Stephen, you of course are still of the same mind? Nay, friend Hay, trouble not the women with getting refreshment at this late hour. Give me but a slice of bread and cheese and a draught of milk, and I shall do as well as the good steed yonder until I am at home again."

"I am at your service, captain," said Stephen, "and to-morrow will begin to beat up for recruits if you command. Untequit goes with me, and if you would have Indians, can get you a score that can shoot to a hand's breadth, and trail as subtly as the Tarratines themselves."

"And I will go too," said Elisha, coming forward.

"Oh no! my son," said his mother sadly; "surely two of our household, and one of our blood, are

enough to risk in so long and dangerous an adventure, and then your father needs your aid, for the farm work must suffer sadly even as it is."

"Do not be hasty, my son," said his father in tones that, despite his habitual self-repression, showed that he was both astonished and grieved at his son's determination; "I will not stand in the way of whatsoever seemeth to be duty, but all are not called to do battle, and some must stay by the stuff and labor, that the soldier faint not for want of food."

"I ought not to discourage so promising a recruit, I confess," said Ruggles sympathetically, "but I do think, madam, that two men are more than your share of those set apart to serve His Majesty, the King. It may be that Elisha will think differently on the morrow, and, in that case, I shall not think of him any less worthily, for I know, if he feels in this matter as I do, it will be greater hardship to stay than to go; and I will not try to induce him to act against your wishes. Nevertheless, friend Hay, you should have been wiser than to have trained up such sons, all willing and able to worthily serve and honor the king."

"You are kind, Esquire Ruggles," said Hay with sudden warmth, "and I repent me of past coldness and uncharitable thought. What I may, I will do to help you, for you can feel for a father's anxieties and a mother's tears. Yet the will of God be done," he added resolutely; "for I will never stand in the way, when we must needs fight against the enemies of the king and the bloody persecutors of the Protestant church."

Ruggles produced an ample wallet, from which he drew a roll of the paper "bills of credit," current at that day, and, selecting a roll, handed them with a receipt ready for signature to the young volunteer. "There, friend Stephen (lieutenant I hope to call you ere long), are thirty pounds. Each man is to have five pounds for bounty, in addition to arms, clothing and accoutrements, such as are issued to the royal army, and the subsistence of the men begins on the day of enlistment. Spare not for labor of man or beast, and, if you will, take Untequit with you to Mashpee, and send the men to me at Sandwich town as soon as may be."

The receipt was duly signed and Ruggles sprang into the saddle, but suddenly drew rein and beckoned to Stephen to draw near; as he did so, he said in tones so low that no one else could hear, "I want not any who are weak of body or cowardly at heart, neither would I tempt any with strong liquors to do that which they may hereafter repent of. Still it has been the custom to suitably refresh and treat such as are loyal enough to proffer their lives in the king's service, and I would not be thought ungenerous or mean. But you will know how to act best in this matter, so good night and God speed you in your errand," and setting spurs to his horse he was soon out of sight and hearing.

"He spares not himself or his horse either," said Hay slowly, "and I see well that whosoever marches under him will not lack service."

"That is the best kind to serve under," said Stephen joyously, "for such dare not let their men

suffer, lest when they would do more than others, they lack support by reason of neglect, sickness or poor equipment; but your easy good-natured man is a curse to any service."

The next day was spent among the neighboring farmers and the sailors of the little port, two of whom added their names to the roll already headed by Stephen and his servant, for in such capacity Untequit chose to serve. In the next week seventeen more were added, and a day later Stephen and his servant took horse and rode into the forest toward the Indian settlement at Mashpee.

The woods of mingled pine, oak and hickory were in their full beauty, and as they rode slowly along in the cool shadows of the narrow forest roads they talked much of the future, and their coming soldier life.

"Why is it, Bill, that you do not enlist as a volunteer, and not as a servant?" asked Stephen, as they rode along.

"Master Stephen," said the Indian, with some emotion, "you have always treated me like a man; yes, as if I were of your own blood, and I would go to the war for your sake, even if I had no other end to serve. As a servant I can be with you more, and serve you better, but I will never be such to any other were it the king himself."

"We are all servants of the king," said Stephen, gently, "and there are at all times those whom every man must, for the time, respect and obey. Nevertheless I shall never forget your love, and if we seem to others master and servant, it shall be

only that we may be nearer and truer comrades," and each took the hand of the other in token of fealty.

"But what is this mysterious matter that you spoke of a moment ago? What else but the king's service urges you to go with us?"

As Stephen spoke, Untequit suddenly halted by the wood-side, and pointed to a mossy boulder a little away under the shadow of some saplings, which appeared to have sprung, for the most part, from a large stump already far gone in decay, and as he spoke his voice was broken, and a variety of emotions seemed striving for utterance.

"That I may not tell, even to you master Stephen, except on one condition, and that, I fear, you would think foolish or worse; yet chiefs have stood under yonder oak, and thus promised friendship and aid to each other."

"What do you mean, Will?" asked Stephen, in surprise.

"You whites," said the Indian, with some bitterness, "think illy of us because we cannot change the traditions and customs of our race, and, taking up those of the white man, add land to land, and cattle to cattle: and, indeed, as we see the game grow scarcer, and even the rivers and sea plundered of their fish, we grow fewer, poorer, and lose heart, until many believe us not only poor white men, but poorer Indians, spiritless, and ignorant even of the history and traditions of our fathers.

"But there is no Indian so low, that the stories told by our old people do not move him; none so ignorant,

that they do not carry in their minds the words spoken to them in childhood, for we who for the most part know little of books, carry all that we learn in our hearts. But you are not like other white men, and you wish to know why I would go yonder, do you not?" and as he spoke the red man pointed to the south.

"I confess I would like to know, and I think you can trust me to keep your secret," said Stephen, confidently.

"I would trust you with my life, but the secret is not mine to give, except you will bind yourself as I have been bound, by the bond of blood."

"What do you mean, Untequit?" asked Stephen, sternly. "What old time sorcery would you teach a Christian man; or has some unhappy witch-wife of your people deluded you into forbidden practices?"

"Master," said Untequit, coldly, "come with me to yonder stone, and I will explain to you the nature of what our fathers called the bond of blood. It is nearly noon and the sun is hot. It will not hurt the horses to cool a moment after that steep hill and sandy level, and I should like to show you some thing that no white man every knew or saw before."

Stephen acceded, and alighting the men penetrated the intervening underbrush and stood in the little natural alcove, overhung by arched saplings, beside the mossgrown rock, one of those worn and water-rounded boulders which some ancient sweep of glacier or drift of iceberg had left there ages before. Untequit removed his hat and bowed his head above it, saying something unintelligible to his com-

panion the while, but the words ran in a wild but regular rhythm, and Stephen rightly judged that they constituted a part or the whole of some formula of Indian invocation, adjuration or worship.

"Beneath this stone," said Untequit, "lie the bones of a great chief, a friend of the whites, but the victim of their hasty anger; who died of exposure and want of food, sick and a fugitive, and was buried far from the ashes of his village and his wasted cornfields. Over his grave, his descendants have plighted their faith in love and friendship, and the secrets of his house can be known to those only who are of our race, or become of it by the 'bond of blood' of which I spoke."

"And what do you mean by the 'bond of blood'? Methinks, Untequit, to a Christian man it savors, as I said before, somewhat of sorcery or the like."

"We have little faith in witches," said the Indian disdainfully, "unless those are witches, who by vigil and fasting attain to a closer knowledge of those things which most people overlook. But to be brief, what I would have of you, is this. Let us exchange blood, and I can then tell you the secrets of the living and the purposes I hold."

"Exchange blood," said Stephen, wonderingly, "how can that be done?"

As he spoke, he felt a slight puncture in his arm, and raising it saw that a thorn had wounded his wrist, on which stood a few drops of blood; and the next moment felt it seized by his companion, who with his lips cleansed the wound and bound it up with his neckerchief.

"I am of your blood now, master," said the Indian exultingly, as he drew from his side a keen knife and with its point scored his own fore-arm, until the red drops chased each other over the rounded muscles like raindrops on a blade of grass. "Taste but one drop of this blood, and we are one in race, for our veins will have mingled, and who can prove false to his own blood?"

For a moment Stephen hesitated. A natural repugnance to so savage a rite almost nauseated him, and he was about to refuse peremptorily and forever. The Indian read his look, a deep dejection replaced his former exulting attitude and, before Stephen could answer, he swept away the drops and with a bandage stopped the flow of blood.

"Forgive me, master," said he sadly, "if I have offended. Your traditions are not ours, and neither should be angry at the other for holding the belief of his fathers. Nevertheless, believe me, I would almost that I were dead, since we cannot be in all things of one mind and knowledge, that you may help me as I will serve you."

"Untequit," said his companion, much moved, "I would not be unkind; nay, I will help you blindly in all things you may ask, if I wrong no one thereby, but this thing seems to me unnatural, and beyond what a man may do even for his friend. Is it necessary this should be done now and done here, or can I please you in this matter hereafter, if that I see reason to repent of my refusal?"

"It matters not," said the Indian, sadly, "when promises are made, or rather uttered, but it would

have advantaged us and you much, had you been willing to please me in this matter. Still you are not of those who will turn from belief because of gain, and perhaps it may be that you will not lose by your refusal. Certainly it will not be by my choice if you do; so let us go to Mashpee and forget the cloud that has come between us."

So in amity they resumed their journey, and rode by copses of sassafras, thickets of brier and whortleberry, ponds shaded by vine-hung woods and clumps of sweet flowered elder and climbing clematis, until from a higher ridge they caught a glimpse of the "Southern Sea," and found themselves in the Indian settlement of Mashpee.

Here the remainder of the tribes, once ruled by the luckless Iyanough, had for over a generation been gathered, and although sadly diminished in numbers from the thronging hundreds who in the earlier part of the seventeenth century had fought with Champlain and Poitrincourt at Chatham and Nauset, still formed a community which in every war had furnished many staunch warriors to the forces of Massachusetts.

Here they parted, Stephen to keep on to Falmouth and Edgartown, where Captain Ruggles had already commenced the enlistment of recruits; and on his return the next day came into S—— with half a dozen fishermen and young farmers, although be it said, each could be either farmer or sailor, as is still the manner of men among the amphibious people of those shores.

But Untequit, late on the night of his arrival, sat

by the hearth of a small log cabin, opposite a woman whose whitened hair, fleshless limbs, hollow features, and corrugated skin, gave evidence of an existence long protracted beyond the ordinary life of mortals.

As he finished his story of the events of the past few days, his hostess raised her head and revealed a countenance noble even in its wreck of beauty, and lit up by keen black eyes which seemed to pierce into the very soul of her companion. "He refused then? And you have not told him all? Are our young men to leave life, and home, and friends, and return no more for his sake?"

"What mean you, grandmother?" asked Untequit, "who but God knows the future?"

"None, boy! none!" said the aged sybil with flashing eyes; "yet those who live until all they knew and loved in youth are long dead have strange fancies that are not always dreams, and I feel my heart grow faint within me as I think of the men you will lead southward to their death. But your master is true, think you, nevertheless?"

"I would lay my life on his word," said the young man vehemently.

"Then he must have the men, that is those who have no wives or children to weep for their loss; but, had he done as we wished, he should have a score more that would have been missed sadly in the coming time."

"And I, shall I—" The young man hesitated, but the woman took up the question before he could finish.

"Do you ask in fear, or from curiosity to know what most men shrink from knowing?" she asked keenly.

"I do not fear death," was the answer, "but I would know if I shall live to bring him back to his home and his mother."

"I cannot tell," she said, after a pause, "but I feel no fear but that I shall live to hear from your lips how you have fared in your search. Oh, Untequit! grandchild of my son, last of all the race of Caneotus, do not forget what you have sworn by the bond of blood and the graves of your fathers; only promise me this and your white master shall not want braves to stand before him in battle."

"I will not forget it," said the young Indian. And, by the end of that week, ten dusky rangers of Mashpee had added to the roll of the company such surnames as Iawannut, Mantwammuch, Quaron, Pometuck, Webquish, Cottowaw and Suonish, names which, for the most part, no longer appear on the slate tombstones around the ancient forest church at Mashpee.

So, day by day, the indefatigable Captain Ruggles and his assistants beat up recruits, from Eastham to Plymouth until the tale was nearly completed and the company ordered to Boston.

And, in spite of his father's entreaties and his mother's and sister's tears, Elisha Hay had still persisted in his purpose to take part in the Great Expedition, against the King of Spain's dominions in the West Indies.

Chapter V.

"Old Hewson"

It was about the middle of August, and only a few days before the final muster of the enlisted men at S——, preparatory to their march to Boston, that Stephen, after a long day of wearisome endeavor, was on the way homeward in the early twilight, and having looked in vain for any neighbor going in his direction, set out on foot.

Diverging from the main road he turned into a rustic byway, winding along the base of a sandy eminence, on whose summit stood a large building with many square windows and an unornamental porch, into which two doors gave access, and on either side of which a long row of horse-sheds, forming the eastern boundary of a rural burying ground, told that the edifice, although plain and unornamental even to the point of ugliness, was nevertheless a house of worship and erected in honor of the Most High.

As he came nearer, the road wound along the verge of a large swamp, from whose tangled vegetation came the confused chattering of many birds, and on its western side upon a slope shaded by apple trees and bordered by a luxuriant meadow stood a small dwelling, even at that day bearing the marks of decay on the cedar shingles which covered roof and walls.

The occupant of the cottage sat alone on the broad

flat stone which served as a doorstep, a man whose age showed itself in the whiteness of his unkempt hair and shaggy beard, but could not render venerable the still burly, long armed and short limbed body and fiery visage of a man, whose antecedents to say the least were questionable, and whose mysterious, unsocial and eccentric mode of life had made him a veritable hermit, a source of fear to child and maiden, and the subject of much invidious discourse throughout the country.

He had suddenly appeared one night in the little hamlet, accompanied by a huge negro, whose gay neckerchief, gold ear-rings and unutterable profanity told unmistakably of a seafaring life, and had sought to hire the cottage of its owner, a mild, staid man, whose rustic curiosity and prudent inquiries as to references had been answered by irreverent blasphemy, and a proposition characteristic of all the after-carriage of his eccentric visitor.

"Look ye here, sir," concluded the stranger, "there's enough of this backing and filling about a small matter. My name you shall know if we trade together, but if not it's no man's business, though a ship has sailed before now under more names than she had masts, hey, Scip," and here master and man indulged in a singular smile of almost sinister import. "But here's my offer; name a price for yon house and bit of ground, an' so the price be fair you shall have your money in true Spanish doubloons, or we part an' there's an end."

The offer was made, and accepted, the papers signed and delivered, and the price told out in for-

eign gold coin with this brief but compendious declaration: "Well, old man, our business is done, and I hope that yonder papers are as good as my gold, but if not, God help the man who shall try to make me quit yonder anchorage by force of arm, or sheriff's warrant.

"You may call me John Hewson," he added, as he turned to go, and that night the windows of the long unoccupied cottage were ablaze with light, and from within the notes of a violin, the rhythm of dancing feet, and the sound of oaths, boisterous laughter and coarse sea songs were heard until long after midnight, to the utter and unspeakable horror and discomfort of the sedate and pious inhabitants of the hamlet.

The next morning the house was closed and tenantless, the windows hopelessly obscured by heavy inner shutters, and some had even begun to talk of foul play, or the especial judgment of God on such unhallowed revelry, when late at night man and master were met by several, coming up the mail road with a wagon laden with sea chests and heavy furniture, and driven by a stranger who was almost as close mouthed as his employers, but claimed to hail from the vicinity of a small inlet on the southern shore of the cape.

That night the house was again illuminated, and again the evidences of unholy revelry were but too patent to all dwelling near by; but the night ended at last and with it passed away all traces of the presence of teamster, equipage and negro, and only a large and savage hound, evidently of tropical

origin, remained to serve as companion to the veteran who lived henceforth alone, suffering neither man, woman or child to cross his threshold on any pretext or errand whatever.

He paid liberally and in coin for all supplies, and evidently lived well, cooking but two meals a day, with no mean skill, judging from the savory odors distinguishable by the passers by, and spent much of his time angling in the trout brook, which wound through the swamp, or hunting with a long barreled Spanish gun, of marvelous accuracy and range, whose stock was wondrously inlaid with plates and tracery of sterling silver and gold.

A retired sea-captain, from a hill to the westward, had with a powerful ship's glass discovered a hammock in the attic window, and a curious youth of the neighborhood had once taken advantage of the old man's absence, and peeping through the open window had seen a brace of pistols and cutlass over the door, a few mahogany chairs filled up with cast-off clothing and various tackle, a heavy table on which a silver flagon and crystal decanter stood beside the pewter platter and porringer from whence Hewson had eaten the morning meal, and last, but not least, a great oaken chest banded with massive yet curiously wrought braces of iron.

Only this and nothing more, yet even this was dearly purchased, for the next time he passed that way the great dog, leaping the fence at a bound, threw him to the earth, and crouching upon his body gave a deep hollow bay which called his master to the spot.

"Many thanks for your call, younker," said the master grimly, as at a word the great hound allowed the terrified boy to arise, "but next time 'twould be better to come when I'm to home, for the dog knows I don't want people looking into my windows, an' no one can come here day or night but he'll find him out."

This story, added to all else that seemed strange and unaccountable, had given to this man, as years went by, the only privilege he seemed to claim of humanity, almost complete isolation from his species.

It was therefore to his great surprise that Stephen, as he approached, saw the old man rise from his seat, advance to the close-shut wicket, and extending his hand as if in greeting, address him as follows:

"Welcome, younker. I've been wantin' to see you for some time, an' had made up my mind to go down to your father's house. Come in! come in, man, for your time is short, an' so is mine, but in different ways, I reckon, for you're bound south again; but poor old Jack Hewson has only one more voyage to take, and that up yonder," and he pointed with his thumb over his shoulder to the graveyard behind the Quaker meeting house.

Stephen, although almost speechless with astonishment, followed the old man toward the house, while the great dog, which had given a single hoarse growl, at a word from his companion quietly turned away and crouched beside the door step.

"Don't be afraid, younker," said Hewson, with

rough courtesy, "the brute's a true Afrikin bloodhound and wud tear ye limb from limb, if I said the word; but he isn't quick to use his strength unless it's wanted, an' it's me that tells him so."

"But how do you know my name?" asked Stephen curiously. "I've seen you anytime for these last ten years and never even spoken to you until now. What can you know or want of me?"

"Come in man," said his strange companion quietly, opening the door so long shut to everyone else in the hamlet. "I've kept out the curious and malicious that call me pirate and murderer behind my back, and don't dare to say their soul's their own to my face; but there's different metal in you, boy, an' if I had fewer years and more men like you, I would like well to go to the Spanish main with you myself."

Stephen entered the mysterious dwelling, and found himself in a room plainly but amply furnished, in very much the same way as had been described by the luckless youth before spoken of. The chairs were of carved mahogany, the table of inlaid woods, the pistols and cutlass, with a rifle and the long barreled gun before mentioned, hung from a brace of deer's antlers above the fireplace, and the iron-banded chest was not wanting, but stood in the corner furthest from the door.

"It looks pretty much as he said, doesn't it?" asked his singular host somewhat sardonically. "Well, he did get a bad scare, and it served the rascal right. But it didn't need any of the devil's help to find him out, for I saw him with my glass

from the grove of hickory up yonder, although Pointis here would have trailed him out for me if I hadn't, for he knows nothing is to come in here without my asking. But sit down, and if a little of the true south side Madeira will suit you, say the word and you are welcome."

"I thank you heartily," said Stephen, simply, "but I am in a hurry, and care little for wine while my blood runs as freely in my veins as now. So, let me know what I can do for you; for you surely have not broken your long habit of living by yourself for naught."

"I was told that you were brave and honest, lad," said Hewson, with a gratified smile, "and I have but a simple thing to ask of you; but, before I can ask it, you must promise to keep a secret. Nay, man—don't refuse," he said, bitterly; "I've no fear of priest or sheriff, but I won't have every old woman in the town chewing over my history with her tea and shortcake."

Stephen laughed at his vehemence, but as suddenly grew grave, and said, "Your pardon, sir. You are right, and your wishes shall be respected. I shall be happy to hear whatever you may please to tell me, without further question."

"Well, then, younker, to be brief, I have a brother somewhere in the West Indies, who was born in the same hour as myself, and who, as boy and man, was as like me as one bullet is like another. He was, when I last heard of him, at Cartagena, where I have no doubt you also are bound; but since we parted, forty years since, he married there, and when I came

here ten years ago was well-to-do, and in favor among the Dons as interpreter in the courts. But I am old, and would at least send him one more message before I die, and that message must be by word of mouth; for if it were written, he would be shot or garroted without mercy should it fall into the hands of the Spaniard!"

"I will take your message if I can," said Stephen, "but how am I to know him, for of course he no longer bears an English name among the Spaniards."

"He was called Carlos de Olivera when last I heard from him, young sir, and stood in high favor with priest and people, or else I had not been here this day. But the hour grows late and you have far to go. I must look into yonder chest, whose secrets would be cheap to any old woman in the district at the loss of an eye, an' I don't know but some on 'em would give both, an' they could still keep the use of their tongues to tell what was in it. But come, you must hold the candle, for my eyes are poor, and one must be careful how he opens this chest of mine."

As he spoke he drew from his pocket a small key and knelt by the chest, one of those curious masterpieces of Flemish art, whose thick oaken sides are but the background for wondrous tracery in deftly wrought steel and iron. The great hasp, formed like a dragon's head, seemed to descend into the cavernous keyhole below it, but Hewson touched a knob to the right and disclosed a smaller aperture, into which he inserted the small key he had produced. In a shallow recess lay disclosed the large,

cunningly wrought key of the coffer, and some curious mechanism to which the old man called the attention of his guest.

"The old smith who made this key," and he pointed to the involved and delicate wards as he spoke, "knew that the robber's skill might well undo what he had fastened, and so he set a watch on yonder lock which should hold all fast and catch the thief as well," and turning a button he unlocked the chest, and raising the hasp showed a small slit by which the lid might be lifted. Then touching a concealed spring a sharp shock was heard; a hidden bolt secured the lid and several sharp needles barred the aperture, and would certainly have transfixed the hand of any one attempting to open the box. He also showed him that any attempt to lift the lid by the hasp would bear on the same spring and relock the coffer.

"They say," said the old man, coolly, "that the needles are pisoned, but 'tis a good hundred years since that bit of deviltry was done, and 'tis like its vartue is long since lost; but we lose time over such matters."

So saying with the handle of the large key he wound up the secret machinery, releasing the bolt, and setting the safety catch, heaved up the heavy lid and revealed, not treasures of price, but a strange melange of articles, carefully packed in curious juxtaposition to each other.

A box of rare woods, roughly inlaid with bits of gold and silver coin, was evidently but the old man's "ditty box," or receptacle for pins, thread, needles

and other small necessaries, for the ends of a few threads protruded from between box and lid, and the style of ornamentation was of the figures formed of circles and diamonds known to every seaman, though the materials might be worth a score of pounds or more.

"There's a deal of work in this," said the old sailor as he opened it, "an' ev'ry bit tells of some long calm or hot day under the palm trees among the islands, an' thar isn't a bit of wood or metal in the whole but has its history, an' some of it none of the pleasantest either."

"But here's what we want," said he, opening the box; and producing from amid its odds and ends a small parcel done up in soft cotton, he extracted therefrom a curious ring, evidently the product of some unskilled artisan, but representing in virgin gold a rattlesnake with emerald eyes, two of whose coils encircled the finger, while the third held enclosed a large, roughly-cut garnet.

"There, boy!" continued Hewson; "ther' were two of them rings taken when we took Cartagena in 1697, when De Pointis, the French admiral, summoned the buccaneers of the Gulf to help France against the Spaniards. These I found in the commandant's house; I gave one to my brother, and we agreed that they should be tokens by which we might send help or seek assistance in all straits an' peril whatsoever. But he who carries it may well be in peril should he be a prisoner in the city from which it was taken, for no common man ever made such a ring as that."

"But why do you send to your brother?" asked

Stephen. "If you are in want of anything, there are many ready to help who will not make charity a pretext for curiosity."

"Charity!" said the old man, sneeringly—"charity! —it shall never be spoken of me that I lived by the bounty of others, as long as death is so near that I can seek him by bullet, steel or cord; and though there seems to be but little here beside such matters as an old sailor picks up here and there, there are more shot in the locker than will last out my cruise. But, never mind! Take this ring; and if you enter the city of Cartagena, and Don Carlos be not dead or departed elsewhere, tell him"—and the old man's voice grew husky—"tell him for me, that, if he will, I have a home for him and his, and that I wax old and weak, and would see him before I die."

"I will tell him," said Stephen, kindly—"that is, if I may; for there are many chances that we may never meet, even if, as men seem to think, we go to make our first attack on Cartagena."

"And why should I not trust to such chance?—which, indeed, so long as the war lasts, may well be my only hope of again hearing from him. 'Twas a less likely chance which separated us two young lads when but twenty-three or ther'about, an' made him a Spanish officer an' left me with the brethren of the coast."

"And are you then indeed a—" The young man hesitated to speak the word so fearfully significant of the terrible scourge of the ocean, in those days infested in every part of the world by relentless robbers and murderers of their kind; and more than

one had in his hearing, hinted that his companion had doubtless amassed the gold he had from time to time exhibited by piracy.

"No, young man; I am not a pirate, although I have known—aye, have messed and slept with many who afterward became pirates accursed of God and man. But I was a buccaneer or filibustier, as we were called thirty years ago; and if you care to stay an hour or so into the night, I can tell you something of the country you are going to, and of how the brethren of the coast took Cartagena, now some forty-odd years agone."

And, Stephen gladly acceding, the old man opened the low windows, took from a cupboard a bottle of wine, some choice tobacco, and several long-stemmed clay pipes, and, having with some difficulty pressed his guest to partake of his hospitality, drew from the chest a small pennon of crimson, on which was emblazoned a black raven. "It was the pennant of my yawl," said he, proudly, "and a larger one hung at the mainmast-head of my old vessel, 'Le Corbeau,' forty years since."

Chapter VI.

The Sack of Cartagena

"It was forty-three years ago, lad, that I, a stout buccaneer of three and twenty, with my brother, rendezvoused at Hispaniola, where twelve hundred of the brethren of the coast had been gathered by Governor Du Casse to join the Baron de Pointis, commander of the king's fleet, after whom yonder hound is called, because he holds so well whatever he gets between his teeth, as the baron held to prize money and plunder.

"It was the greatest gathering of the buccaneers for many years, and we who were still but young in experience met there with men who had cruised with Sharp and fought under Morgan, and even one or two who had known Pierre le Grand; Montbars, whose sword never spared a Spaniard; Bartolomeo Portaguez, sly as a fox, who more than once made his cunning save him from steel and cord; L'Olonnois, the butcher of whole ship's crews, and Mansvelt, whose buccaneers first settled New Providence.

"We were to set out by the middle of February at farthest, but March was well begun when De Pointis' fleet made Cape St. Francois, and began to refit at Tiburon.

"There were about seven hundred of us, who were true buccaneers, in seven vessels of from eight to twenty and twenty-four guns, but Du Casse took from his forts about two hundred regulars, and

enough of our relations and connections, who were planters; and others with their slaves came in to make our force twelve hundred men, all trained to seamanship and hunting, and keen marksmen with their long buccaneer guns.

"De Pointis had seven ships and four frigates, with bomb-ketches, storeships and transports, and about three thousand eight hundred men of all grades, and we thought that with six thousand men we could conquer San Domingo City, and gain thereby much booty and a fort which we could hold forever against the bloody Spaniards.

"But De Pointis, although he scorned the very name of buccaneer, was at heart as greedy a dog as the most cowardly filibuster that ever robbed periaguas around the river mouths, or plundered farmers of a few pesos, and he from the first gave little heed to our entreaties or the counsels of Du Casse, and chose rather to plunder a city he could not hope to hold for the king, than to spend blood and life for the safety of the French colonists and the glory of France; and so on the first part of April we sailed for Cartagena, having with much pains got De Pointis to promise that we should share in all plunder, on the same terms as the men of the king's ships.

"Du Casse, although governor and a captain in the French navy, was allowed to share only as a captain and, indeed, so hard and overbearing was De Pointis to us all, that many times our men murmured and threatened to turn back, but the captains told them of the silver and gold of Cartagena, and by the middle of the month we lay off the city."

"And what is the city like?" asked Stephen with much interest.

" 'Twas in those days, and I dare say is now, the next richest city to Mexico of all the Spanish king's possessions on this side the sea, and stands almost surrounded by lagoon and sea on a sandy plain, so low that less than two fathoms brings the digger to springs of sweet water. An hundred and eighty brass guns were mounted on its walls and bastions, and the forts around it were as well provided as to number. The walls and works are of limestone filled in with earth, and over the great gate of the city hangs, in Spanish, the legend 'Defiance to the World.'

"Well, lad, first we tried to land to the east'ard, hoping to cut off all way of escape on the land side, but, in spite of all we could say, we of the coast were told off to land about four miles from the city; and, after we, with great pains, had got suitable rations of sea biscuit from the admiral, De Pointis himself tried to find us a place fit for landing, but he was nearly lost in the surf, and we had to land after all on the island which commands Boca Chica, where stands the castle which covers the entrance of the harbor. And here some few of us, the despised buccaneers, did what the cannon of the ships could not do; for, with our long guns, we so swept the Spaniards from their guns that, with little loss, the French soldiers carried the works and the fleet entered the harbor.

"On the seventeenth we had taken the convent of De la Popa, whose nuns must have known more of

war than of praying, for the place was a perfect fortress, and covered the road inland by which a few days before all the rich ladies of Cartagena, with a great train of mules laden with valuables including no less than one hundred and ten carrying gold, had fled inland at our approach.

"Then we moved upon St. Lazar, our musketeers keeping the gunners under cover until De Pointis and his grenadiers were close upon their works, although, as I heard since, he spared not to call us cowardly dogs because we did not set pistols and cutlass against bayonet and pike. De Pointis himself fell wounded by grape from the last cannon fired by the Spaniards ere they fled into Xexemani, that part of the city lying without the walls and separated from it by a marsh crossed by a causeway scarce a musket shot in length. There batteries had to be thrown up, and the heaviest guns of the squadron landed, which soon dismounted the light cannon of the Spaniards, and made a breach in the works of Xexemani.

"Then again we were sent to cover the storming party with our fire, and many of our bravest men fell under the grape shot that searched our slight cover of paling, hedge, and garden wall, but we kept closing in, as we saw opportunity until the grenadiers and marines of Marolles, Du Roullon and Marigny rushed on to the assault.

"Marolles fell, shot through and through, at the foot of the ragged wall. Du Roullon and a score of his men went down under the grape that swept the breach, as a hurricane dismasts a lugger; but they were brave men who followed, and young Marolles

led his arquebusiers past his dying father, and swept the Spaniards from their flankers, and through the streets and gardens of Xexemani. But when the Spaniards came to the sally ports beyond the causeway, those in the inner works would not open; and in despair they turned again upon us, and charged, broken and without order as they were, in the teeth of a storm of bullets and the bombs of the grenadiers, who, when the last shell was gone, headed a charge that swept them back across the causeway, under the guns of the city wall.

"The next day the causeway was covered with dead bodies, which we had to have removed, when, on the 3d of May, the white flag flew above the forts, and De Pointis made his own terms with the governor of the port. He allowed the garrison to march out with flying colors, their drums beating, and their arms, baggage and personal effects, always excepting plate, jewels and money, save only a small amount per man, for personal expenses. Four guns they were allowed to take, but those they chose were small, dragged only by men, and two they soon left by the way, rough with the ruins of their walls, and the houses shattered by the bombardment. 'Twas a long procession and a motley; for there were many women, children, priests and nuns, laborers and merchants, all anxious to get away from the terrible brethren of the coast and the tender mercies of the French infantry.

"Once inside the city, De Pointis soon showed the cloven foot more openly than ever; for, although the silver came in faster than M. Tilleul could weigh it,

neither Du Casse nor our captains were allowed to take accompt of the same, or in any way to satisfy themselves that the interests of their men would be fairly consulted. Even the convents were plundered; in which matter one Father Paul, who for many years had consorted with us of the coast, was very useful and full of zeal until De Pointis came to seize the plate of the convent of St. Dominic, and then our ghostly father turned upon him, and threatened his sacrilege with the judgment of heaven, notwithstanding he himself had had no pity for the fat prior of the house of St. Francis of Assisi; but, then, Father Paul had been bred a Dominican.

"We soon found that we had little chance of fingering any of the booty so diligently sought by De Pointis, and every man soon set himself to secure all that he could lay his hands upon, even the regular troops joining in the pillage; and De Pointis gave little heed to the inhabitants, but in his jealousy of the buccaneers got us outside the city, on a report that a vast army of Indians were coming to attack our outposts.

"But we after much pains found none to trouble us and, marching back, found the gates closed, the walls guarded and the French troops with matches lighted and guns pointed, as if we were the enemy and about to attack them. We who were leaders had gathered to consult when we came in sight of the city, when one of our number who had been left behind came forth with a message from the general, which requested us to stay in the suburbs, as he was afraid of some disturbance if we returned into the

city, and this, when our men knew it, enraged them almost beyond restraint.

"Even Pierre, an old freebooter, and Blou, who never spoke twice to give an order, were unheeded in the tumultuous rush toward the causeway, and the men unslung their long guns or threw them down, and with their long knives between their teeth, and cutlass and boarding pistol in hand, rushed down to the narrow road across the slimy marsh. But once there the boldest faltered, for the breach had been repaired, the guns replaced and pointed to sweep the causeway; and we knew that only death and certain defeat would come of a charge in the face of such odds.

"Nevertheless De Pointis himself trembled at our rage, and sent out a second message asking us to remain outside but a few days, and with many fair promises assured us of an equal distribution of the booty. He paid to each captain among us large sums, as he said, in reward of our conduct, and also to a number of our best marksmen, whose services had saved him many men; and to every one of the wounded he ordered sums of money, according to the injury each had suffered.

"But nearly two weeks passed before we marched again into the city, and then most of the treasure was on board of the Sceptre, the flagship of the fleet.

"Then a vast amount of merchandise was put up at auction and sold to any who would buy, and the money thus received went on board the ships, until De Pointis, who had hitherto given out that the city was to be held for France, with Du Casse as gov-

ernor, gave out that owing to the losses of the fleet by the fevers of the country, he should abandon the place and began to take on board the fleet the brass cannon on the walls; and on the 25th of May suddenly embarked without notice to Du Casse, with whom he had had some discourse but a few moments before, and as his ships began to move down the harbor sent orders to Du Casse to embark his people.

"Again we sent to know when the distribution would be made, but the old answer was given 'that accounts were not ready,' and there was much anxiety among our men, which was with difficulty appeased until the men were all aboard, and our little frigates were following De Pointis out the harbor of Cartagena.

"Then Du Casse called the officers on board of his vessel, the Ponchartrain, and informed us of the admiral's last perfidy. He had taken treasure by his own confession to the amount of 9,000,000 livres, and M. Du Casse had estimated it at double the amount, but M. De Tilleul's accompt gave us as our share but 40,000 crowns to repay us for our services and dangers.

"Many proposed that we should board the Sceptre and turn her guns upon the fleet, for her crew was weak with sickness, and had lost half their number, but a single broadside would have sunk us, and between rage and helplessness we knew not what to do.

"Suddenly McCary, an Irish rover, spoke out: 'Let us leave De Pointis, and no longer trouble ourselves about a villain without sense of honor or truth. He

has left us our share yonder at Cartagena; let us go back and get it.' The counsel seemed good, and by next morning, despite the orders and promises of Du Casse, we were back and in the city.

"Then we seized and imprisoned the merchants, shutting them up in the great cathedral, until, by dint of threats and close search, we had raised a sum which, upon division, gave us nearly a thousand crowns per man; and then, with our ships laden with goods and slaves, we sailed for Hispaniola, but, on the second day out, met the English and Dutch fleets sent from Barbadoes to save Cartagena from capture.

"Of our nine vessels, two were taken, and of three vessels commanded by Blou, my brother and myself, two were driven ashore, and one of them close to Cartagena, whose crew I had to leave to their fate; but mine with four others came at last to Isle a Vache, and from thence to Hispaniola.

"But, after some years, I learned through certain of our brotherhood, that our friends, although at first forced to labor at rebuilding the walls, had many of them married into wealthy and influential families, and among them my brother, the captain, who, as it turned out, espoused a connection of the same Don Sancho Ximenez whose arquebusiers he had so unmercifully fusilladed at Boca Chica.

"Since then I spent some years in smuggling, and once received, through an Indian canoeman, word that a guarda costa had sure information, through one of my own men, of my whereabouts, and that no prisoners would be taken. There was no signa-

ture, but the boatman gave me this ring and I sent back my own in exchange.

"And now, again Cartagena will be taken, and he will be plundered, as he has plundered others; for none can doubt that Lord Vernon must take any port on this side of the ocean, with such force of men and ships, and all men feel that 'tis against that city that you are to go. So, carry my message; and when you set out, I will see that you lack not gold to help the only relative I have on earth."

The hour was late when they parted, for much good counsel was imparted concerning the natural features of the surrounding country, its dangers, diseases and insect plagues, and the best means of preserving health and securing personal comfort, to all of which Stephen listened wonderingly; for, insensibly, the old man had thrown off his rugged bearing, as if he had worn it as a mask to cover better breeding and a higher grade of education.

"Good-night, Mr. Hewson," said our hero, as they parted, "I will remember all you have said, and do your errand if I may. As to secrecy, you have my word; and I shall look for your messenger when word comes to march into Boston, which must be soon."

"Good-night, lad," said his strange host, as if relapsing into his old character. "There are strange dreams that one has at times, an' 'tis a question sometimes whether the dream or the awakening is the strangest."

The great hound rose as Stephen passed out, and laid his huge head fawningly against his out-

stretched hand; and as he looked back, he took in with a glance the antique furniture, the ornamented arms, the rover's flag, the heavy coffer, and the figure of his mysterious host, but years passed before he was to meet the privateersman again.

Chapter VII.

The Parting

For within three days, came home from Boston Captain Ruggles, full of news and in great haste to march his men into the town, before further complications should arise to render their brisk enrollment and much care of no avail; for the thousand men already nearly recruited in the Massachusetts were like to go weaponless and ununiformed to the wars, if the truth was known.

"But how happens it that there is any lack of arms and munitions?" asked Stephen in some surprise. "Hitherto, I have always heard that it was harder to find men than either arms or ships."

"'Tis the governor's fault," said Ruggles quietly. "He learned that the king wanted three thousand men from out of the colonies, and Col. Spottswood, of Virginia, was to command the battalion, while Col. Blakeney, with thirty officers, one for each company, comes from England with the King's commission for the first lieutenancy of each of the companies. But our governor must needs call for ten companies here and half as many more in New Hampshire; little Rhode Island recruits five companies, the Connecticut River patent as many more, and New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas are all anxious and ready to do more than their share. 'Tis easy to see that we can't get ten commissions in this colony, and I fear we shall be too late as it is."

"Why, captain, we can march by to-morrow noon, if you will," said Stephen. "Most of our men are here now, and there are but a few away on business, with some that are to join from Plymouth and Scituate on our march northward."

"That is well, and it must be done," said Ruggles. "But you know not how near to completion the Boston companies are already. Captain Goffe has had five tavern keepers in his pay from the first, and even kept an advertisement in the Newsletter, as perhaps you have seen; Captain Phips, of Cambridge, was not far behind him, but changed his mind, and now will keep watch and ward with his men at the castle, instead of risking a stormy passage and the perils of a siege; Dr. Stewart has laid aside lancet and potion, and has a company of stout fellows all ready for the examining officers; and John Prescott, of Concord, and Thomas Phillips and John Furney, of Boston, are about equally ready for their commissions, while all the other officers have, like ourselves, nearly filled their lists. Nevertheless, but four officers of the regulars are here, and four commissions, I am told, are all that have come from Col. Blakeney, who has notified the commissary of but one shipment of muskets and uniforms, and those the Boston companies will get, 'tis certain enough."

"But what will be done in that case?" asked Stephen, biting his lips; for he had set his heart on going in the great expedition against the Spaniards. "What hope have we, after all our pains and trouble?"

"In sooth, I know not," answered Ruggles, "ex-

cept that, should more commissions come, I feel certain of receiving one should our company be on the spot early enough; and I hear it said that the governor hath spoilt much white paper in essaying to draught blank certificates which shall secure arms and clothing for the men, and commissions for the officers, when they reach the fleet. Howbeit, the men lose nothing if they go not, for their bounty and subsistence is to be paid, and the captains who have borne the expense of getting men will be reimbursed therefor; but, should I fail of my commission, I see not how you are to be paid for the good service you have done, in finding so stout a company to serve the Bay Colony and the king."

"It matters not, captain," said Stephen. "You have been fair and honest; if we meet not with the reward we expected, we have at least done our duty, and I have no blame to lay upon any one, since all men meet in this life some sort of loss or disappointment."

"We will send out at once for all on leave, and by the end of the week should be in Boston; and if good shots and stout fellows are wanted, we shall hardly be sent home again."

But Ruggles shook his head ominously, although he sent out horsemen to warn all of his company to meet at S—— by the next day at high noon, from thence to march to Boston, to be enrolled in the service of the king.

And Stephen and Lish busied themselves about their little kits of clothing, newly made by the women of the household, and wetted with many

tears in warp and woof by the sisters, as they spun out the carded rolls of wool, or manipulated the golden flax threads, and by their mother, as she worked at the loom in the hot August afternoons, or sewed by the window as the sun sank in the west, or knitted long, soft stockings in the dim twilight, with loving tears and saddening forebodings.

But now the last preparations were over, and the supper, rich and varied beyond its wont, spoke anew of the tender and loving care to which they were so soon to be strangers, although little was eaten by any one except the hired man, Joel, who made huge inroads on the eatables, after a rough but well-meant attempt at consolation.

The elder Hay and his sons ate sparingly, but conversed as usual on all matters pertaining to the farm, studiously avoiding in the main all that pertained to coming parting or possible disaster; for such is the manner of the men of the Puritans. The women, however, were less self-contained; and the youngest sister, little Tempie, burst into a choking sob, and went out into the orchard, where, half an hour later, Stephen, on his way to bid farewell to Margaret, found her lying on the damp grass, in a passion of childish despair.

He raised her in his arms, and sat down for a moment on the gnarled and twisted trunk of an ancient apple-tree, while the child threw her arms around his neck, buried her hot face in his hair, and kissed his face and neck passionately once or twice.

"I shall die, Stephie dear, if you leave me," said the child, "and you will never see your little Tempie

again. Why can't you stay with mother and me and all of us. We should be happy again, just as we were before this dreadful war."

"Oh, dear little sister, it isn't always right to be happy," said Stephen, kindly. "Do you remember how you kissed me for saving Uncle Zenas from drowning, last spring?"

"Yes, dear, and Margie told me how brave and good you were, and I was so proud of you, and that's one reason why I love you so very much."

"Would you have loved me if I had let him sink in the deep bay, Tempie, and come home safe myself to you and mother?"

"Why no, I—" and the child hesitated as if unable to reconcile herself to the possibility of any such act on the part of her idolized brother.

"Well, dear, that is something like the way that we are going to leave you and all the dear friends here, to face danger for our country and the honor of our king. Some one must fight and bear weariness and pain, and why should your brother stay at home in safety while the brothers of other sisters are fighting for him? Besides, dear," and here the manly voice grew reverent and strangely sweet, "our lives are not in our hands, and God will guard us in all dangers there as he does everywhere that we go. We will trust Him, and do as He would have us, will we not, Tempie?"

The child was wise beyond her years, and her religious teaching had been so interwoven with her every day life, that her convictions of duty were stronger than either hope or fear. Her answer was

strangely composed, and she rose to go as she spoke, "You can go, and I will try to be good and patient, but I shall never be happy any more until you come back to your little Tempie."

But Stephen went on along the shaded path, and as before saw the shimmer of Margaret's snowy dress beside the well-curb, at the turn-stile, and with her went down to the trim little cottage where Uncle Zenas received him with hearty greetings, and entertained him with his best cheer, and many reminiscences of past experiences "among those bloody Spaniards down to the Main."

"Don't trust none on 'em, lad," he said, as he rose to retire in obedience to a hint from his sister. "Don't trust none on 'em, for they'd jest as soon knife a man es eat their dinner, an' seldom show quarter even in fair fight. But I'll see ye to-morrow, lad, never fear; an' here's to Admiral Vernon an' Lord Cathcart, an' confusion to them cut-throat Spaniards."

So saying, Uncle Zenas finished his "night-cap" of Santa Cruz, and Stephen and his affianced were left to themselves and the sorrows of their parting. It was late when they separated at the well, and the pledges of constancy which each uttered were such as neither man nor woman should hold less sacred than the legalized marriage vow, which only death should set aside. There were tender words, and fond embraces, and bitter tears on the part of poor Margaret, whose soul shrank from the terrible possibilities of the near future. Yet Stephen, as he went homeward, felt that in some way his love was not

such a source of deep and confident satisfaction as it should have been.

"She is pretty and loving and good," he soliloquized as he came in sight of the old homestead. "Yet poor Tempie loves me better than she, for Tempie would have me noble and self-sacrificing even while she suffers, but Margaret has never ceased to importune me to give up going and settle down at home, and seems only half reconciled because I may win the king's commission. I would that she had been less petted and more self-sacrificing, but father ever said that Uncle Zenas, though an upright and liberal man, was always too lax in life, and careless in spiritual things, and poor Margaret is not to blame that she thinks differently from me."

He found his father awaiting him, seated Bible in hand by the light-stand before the hearth, on which a few red coals still gave forth a mild warmth not ungrateful, for the night wind was cool and the dew heavy and chill.

"Sit down beside me, Stephen," said his father in a tone which, if not severe, was at least too passionless for affection, and better calculated to awaken veneration and respect than love. Stephen felt, with a curious sense of mingled amusement and vexation, something of that filial fear with which in boyhood he had submitted to parental reproof and correction, but quietly seated himself as directed.

"I have stayed up, Stephen, to speak with you of several matters of importance, which it seems to me you ought to settle before you set out on so

serious a business as that which, in the providence of God, now lies before you. I have no wish to interfere with what does not concern me, for you are of age and have a right to do as you please, but as your father I should wish to see certain matters settled before you go."

"I shall never refuse to listen to your counsel, father," said Stephen, "and shall be glad to hear what things you refer to."

"In the first place," said Deacon Hay, "I have heard that you are betrothed to Margaret Freeman. Is that the case?"

"It is," said Stephen, coloring slightly as he spoke; "we are to be married on my return, should I be spared to do so."

"She is not just such a wife as I should have preferred for you," said the elder Hay, with grave regret, "but I know that in such matters remonstrance would be useless, even were the matter not settled as it is. In such case, however, my first piece of advice is that, if you desire to marry her, you do so before setting out."

"And why?" said Stephen.

"I have no reason to give which would be satisfactory to you, but if your happiness rests on her companionship through life, marry her now," said Hay, sententiously. "Those who are married are firmly bound; those who are only contracted may change their fetters, or throw them off at will."

"I would not leave her a widow," said Stephen, hastily, "and she has no need of the little property I have acquired, which in due course of inheritance will benefit you all in case of my death."

"That is another matter that you should settle," said Hay, quietly. "You ought to leave a will giving to each person nearly related to you something, be it ever so little, and so set forth your desires, as to your estate, that there may be left no room for dispute or contention."

"I should hope," said Stephen, as if somewhat startled, "that there is no fear of contention or ill blood between members of our family. I am sure a wish on your part would reconcile me to any possible division of your property, father."

"Truly, I think it would," said the father in a softened tone, "but you have less of that love of gold, which divides families and sows hate among brothers, than most men; and I may say that I have taken much delight in seeing that it was so, and the child Tempie shows much of the same spirit. Yet I would that you should settle this matter. See, yonder are pens, ink and paper; draw up your will tonight; there is one your great grandfather made ere he sailed the last time for the West Indies, and you can sign and have it witnessed to-morrow." And Deacon Hay arose as if to retire.

"Stay a moment, father," said Stephen, earnestly, "I should like to know something of what disposition you have made of your own property, that I may know who has the most need of mine."

"That is well thought of," said Elisha Hay, as he again seated himself, "and this, in the main, is the purport of my will, drawn but a year ago. The homestead has ever passed to the eldest son, the widow receiving a life interest therein, sufficient to

secure her shelter and sustenance so long as she may remain unmarried. That rule I shall not be the first to break. To you and Elisha I have left the wood sloop of which I am owner, my interest in the salt-works and whale-fishery, and certain lots of woodland and marsh, with various bequests of money, wearing apparel and silver. The girls are to have doweries, charged upon the other devises, sufficient to give them a fair out-fit at marriage, and that is about all that can be said. The Lord has prospered you above your brothers, and it seems to me that with the exception of Joshua all should share in your estate, if so be you should never return to enjoy it, which, Stephen, may God forbid."

Left to himself, Stephen seated himself at the table, perused the ancient will, creased and yellow, faded as to its ink, and blotted and blurred with tears and time, and after much thought, and considerable pains, for his strong, shapely fingers did not readily turn themselves to clerkly exercise, he drew up the desired instrument; a part of which we insert, mainly as a specimen of the temper and tone of the men who dwelt in New England some eight score years ago:

"In the Name of God, Amen! I, Stephen Hay, of S——, in the County of Barnstable, and Colony of Massachusetts Bay, yeoman, being of sound and disposing mind and memory and about to proceed, through God's providence, on the proposed Expedition to the Spanish West Indies against the Enemies of my God and King, do make and declare this to be my last Will and Testament.

"Item. I give my soul to God through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and my body to be decently interred.

"Item. I bequeathe to my dear brother, Elisha, his heirs, administrators and assigns, the whole of my real estate, wheresoever situate, to be held by him in fee simple, subject only to bequests hereinafter written, and the support of our common parents, should the decrees of Providence dispossess them of their present property."

Then followed various bequests to each sister and brother, and even the servants, of money, personal property, mourning rings, etc., etc., and the paper was ready for declaration and signature.

It was after midnight when all was done, and before Stephen retired he stepped into the back room for a draught of water, for he was thirsty and feverish, with conflicting thoughts. In the centre of the floor lay a strange object like a belt, with a handsome dagger sheathed beside it. He took it up and carefully inspected it. It was a belt of a curious leather, banded with black and brown, its surface mottled and rough with tiny depressions, like those left by the removal of the scales of a serpent. The weapon was a long Spanish knife such as the factories of Albacete have turned out for centuries, and the mountings of the hilt and scabbard were of solid silver.

The belt was formed of small pockets, in each of which were found Spanish gold pieces, to the amount of over an hundred pounds sterling. The following note, traced on the torn leaf of a ship's log book,

left no doubt as to the source from whence they came:

"A snake's skin, they say, brings luck and good sight, but I know it to be light, tough and waterproof, and gold and steel will win anywhere, if boldly used.

"Use the gold freely. As to the steel, you may drive it through a silver dollar without harm to point or edge.

"When you bring back news of my brother, leave word at the Swan Tavern in Boston town for John Hewson. So, lad, wishing you good luck and fair booty, I send you with these, farewell."

It was barely dawn when the recruits ate breakfast by candle-light, and, bidding farewell to friend and neighbor, drove under the dewy locusts and along the sandy mail road into the town; and, at noon, with beat of drum and sound of fife, amid crying, cheering, the discharges of an ancient cannon, and adieus and blessings innumerable, the company of nearly one hundred stout fellows, without arms or uniforms and with little regard to military order, took up their line of march for Boston town.

Chapter VIII.

The Muster at Boston

The march of the company, although wearisome enough, and rendered even more so by the haste of Ruggles, anxious to forestall, if possible, some other captain in the distribution of the expected commissions, had little about it of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. The line of march was by the old country roads to Plymouth, where mine host Witherell furnished the men with bread and home-made cheese and the inevitable glass apiece of New England rum, then used almost universally among the colonists. At Kingston, landlord Brewster entertained them; at Hanover Four Corners they gathered around the ancient tavern then kept by one of the Sylvesters, and since replaced by the Howard House, the last dwelling place of the murderer Costelo and his victim. But the landlord here had more than he could attend to at short notice, and the old papers at the State House tell of disbursements to Seth Cushing and Captain Adams, who, like the loyal recruits they busied themselves to entertain, are hardly to be individualized from among the many who lie under the turf of the Hanover cemeteries.

Thence they came to Braintree, and there were fed by one Crosby; and at Milton, took their last refreshment at the hands of Captain Pierce, and weary, dusty and travel-worn marched into Bos-

ton town, and rested at their rude quarters in certain warehouses owned by one Brackett and Simon Dillis.

A day or two passed and a general muster of the nine companies present took place on Boston Common, and Goffe's, Phillips', Prescott's and Stewart's men, in their new scarlet coats and cocked hats, with their bright English muskets and pipeclayed belts, headed the column, and behind them the men of Furney, Richards, Bloggett, Wise and Ruggles marched past the Province House and through Bromfield's lane into Marlboro' street and out upon the Common, where the governor and his aides inspected them, and expressed much gratification at the stalwart regiment so soon recruited for the service of the king in the Bay Colony.

The whole town was ablaze with enthusiasm and crowded by visitors from the surrounding country; the taverns were thronged with thirsty and loyal subjects, who drank to the success of Vernon and Cathcart and to the utter destruction of Spanish domain in the West Indies, while the rabble shouted themselves hoarse and eddied from point to point, as the whim of the moment or some new object of attraction called them.

But already, among the soldiery and in the councils of the colony, were felt the premonitory indications of that insidious yet resistless spirit of jealousy, indecision and discontent which in the end resulted in complete and crushing defeat and disgrace.

The governor, in the midst of his gratification at the prompt concurrence with his wishes on the part

of the legislature and people of the colony, was already at his wits' end as to how he should meet the desires of the captains who had raised their quota of men, but on whom he had no hopes of conferring the promised royal commission.

The officers of the ununiformed companies chafed at what they believed to be unwarranted neglect, and at the drain on their purses, which was onerous indeed, for the allowance of ten shillings weekly per man granted by the colony for subsistence, was altogether inadequate while the companies remained detached and without a regular commissariat department.

Even the men of the four uniformed companies were dissatisfied; for their first lieutenants, young English gentlemen, unaccustomed to meet with men of spirit and native independence in the ranks, made enemies at every step by brutal tyranny or supercilious insolence, and scarcely concealed their contempt for the colonial magnates who had raised and commanded their companies. Then the uniforms sent were but ill-made and ill-fitting, though showy; watch-coats, especially needful in the cold fall nights and on a sea voyage, had been altogether forgotten; and while the leather stock and heavy kit of the regulars galled and chafed necks and shoulders used only to warm and loosely-fitting clothing, allowing free circulation and movement, the men shivered at night in their quarters until the legislature supplied the necessary blankets, overlooked by the British quartermaster-general.

But most of all, these men, drawn from among the

hunters, seamen and scouts of a people habituated to a constant state of warfare, and especially skilled in the use of fire-arms, found their greatest grievance in the new and bright, but heavy, cumbrous and inefficient muskets sent out for their especial use. Scarcely one in ten was there among them but was weak in the lock, over hard on the trigger, straight of stock, and ill-fitted, and in all the workmanship of the poorest and coarsest description. Many of them were sent to the provincial gunsmiths, and good Samuel Miller, locksmith and gunwright, labored long and wearily to put the uncouth weapons into something like effective shape for his discontented countrymen.

"Thar's the piece, lad," he said to one of his customers, as he handed over the regulation musket he had just ceased work upon, "but God forbid thet I should call it a gun. I've fixed the hammer so's to hold a flint, an' tempered the steel, stiffened the mainspring an' eased the trigger, an' if I could cut a bit out'n the stock so ye could look along the bar'l, ye might manage to shoot bird shot purty well. But it's a horse's weight o' iron an' brass, an' to call it a weapon is very near lyin' to my mind."

"Thet's so," said his customer, a stout sun-browned man of from twenty-five to thirty, with something of the seaman in his gait and manner. "I only wish I could carry the gun thet I hed in the Revenge privateer the last two years an' hed to send down home again, because everything's regulation with us now. She was only a French musket taken from one of those red devils on the Penobscot,

but she threw a bullet to a hair's breadth, an' I couldn't miss a Spaniard with her if I tried. 'Tis too bad thet we should have such guns as they've given us. About as much use as so many broomsticks."

Just then two officers, in the rich uniform of the period, entered, the elder of them being evidently a little ill at ease in his regimentals, but of a manly carriage and gravely benevolent face. His companion, a true military dandy, cast a supercilious glance around and received without notice the awkward military salute of the privateersman, and beckoned to his servant, who carried under his arm an elegantly inlaid pistol case.

"Good-day, neighbor Miller," said the elder man cheerily, "how fares the good wife and the little lad I attended last spring; hath he got over the distemper and become strong and hearty again?"

"He hath, I thank God an' you, doctor," said the strong-armed smith, with some feeling. "But, truly, he was nearly taken from us, an' the disease, they say, hath been sorely felt in the western towns, an' even at the college at Cambridge, which was for a time sorely afflicted an' broken up thereby. As to business, what with the birding season close upon us, an' the many muskets your men bring in to have put in something like order, I can scarce keep up with the work on hand."

"Indeed, I am glad to hear it. But here is Lieutenant Woodside, who has just come with Colonel Blakeney from England, and goes out as my first officer. He has a pair of fine pistols, one of which is somewhat injured, and I have prevailed on him to consult your skill."

"Stairs," said the Englishman, curtly, "where's the box?"

"Here, sir," said the valet, obsequiously, stepping forward and opening with a tiny key the case, which he laid on the rough counter, having first spread a snow-white handkerchief to save the varnish from scratch or harm.

"Now, my man," said the officer, briskly, "I'll lay a guinea that you never saw in your life a brace of pops like these, and, damme, I'm half afraid to trust such a pair of beauties to any colonial tradesman; but Capt. Stewart here says that you can do the job; an' faith, they must go with me any way, and the best pistol is of no use without a hammer. Be careful, man," he added, as the smith took up one of the delicate weapons. "You handle them as if they were Doune tacks, and all steel, both butt and barrel."

"They are a little weak here an' there, thet's a fact, sir," said the gunsmith, carelessly, "but I'll buy 'em if they're any the worse for my handlin'. As for repairing on 'em, thet I can do easily, as a broken hammer is soon replaced."

"But can you make a hammer just like the other?" asked the Englishman somewhat incredulously. "I don't want the pair spoiled or botched, and I'll be sworn such work ain't often done this side of the water."

"No, sir," said the gunmaker, composedly, "thet's true; but it can be, ef thar was anybody thet would pay for it. I can make you a hammer just like thet, but the extra work will cost you two guineas."

"Is that all? Why, man, the pair cost fifty; and

Mortimer, of London, would charge me five for what you say you will do for two. But can you really match the other?"

The colonist's cheek flushed a little, as if the evident depreciation of his abilities had begun to rouse a feeling of resentment, and, turning, he took from a chest a long pine case, and laid it on the counter before the officer. Very deliberately he opened it, and took from it a small carbine swathed in waxed cloth, which he slowly unrolled, revealing a piece of exquisite workmanship and ornamentation.

"Thar's a little piece thet I made for my own pleasure. If you know what good work is, tell me what you think of thet."

The officer took the weapon with an exclamation of admiration and surprise, and inspected the carefully-sighted, inlaid barrel, the lock, curiously fashioned and exquisitely carved, and the stock of deep-hued rosewood, inlaid with gold and silver wire, and mounted in engraved steel and silver plate.

"'Tis impossible!" he murmured to himself, and then said aloud, "'tis French workmanship, an' that of the best. No colonial botcher ever turned out work like that."

The Bostonian laid his hands upon the counter, vaulted lightly across it, and the next moment would have had his hands on the Englishman's throat, had not Stewart stepped in between.

"Nay, nay, neighbor Miller! you must not forget yourself and the law of the colony. Lieutenant Woodside, you owe this man an apology. I, myself, have seen him at work on the weapon half a dozen times in the past three years."

"Well, well! if you say so, I can't doubt it; so take the pistols, and finish them as soon as may be—d'ye hear? But what is this that you're doing to the men's guns? Can't your Yankee farmers get along with the arms furnished His Majesty's soldiers?"

"Nor, sir!" thundered the irate smith. "Thar isn't a gun of the four hundred sent here last month thet I'd dare to sell to a drunken Injin; an' as to taking any aim in battle with 'em, I defy the best man in the colony to be sure of his man at fifty yards with any of 'em."

"Take aim? Damme! what are you talking of? Who ever heard of one of the regulars taking aim? Do you want our soldiers to turn murderers, and aim at a man as if he were a brute beast? A soldier draws up his weapon breast-high or thereabouts, and lets drive; and I'll have no man under me taking aim like a Tyrolese jager."

"Wal, cap'n," replied Miller, in utter scorn, "it may be as you say; an' ef thet's the way to sojer, why, all I hev to say is, thet you've got jest the right weepons for it. But it's a sin an' shame to send out the best lads of the frontier an' our smartest privateersmen, as ef they was ign'rant Yorkshire clodhoppers."

"And so I think," said Stewart, pleasantly but firmly, as he turned to go. "So do your best to make the guns serviceable, and if the colony don't pay the bills, I will, myself. Good-day, neighbor." And, taking his fellow-officer's arm, he went out.

"Come, Woodside," he said kindly to his subaltern, as they turned down the street; "you must for-

get some of your regular army ideas in dealing with our colonial tradesmen, aye, and our volunteers, too. They are not such stuff as the cringing shopmen of Cheapside, or the yokels of your provincial counties, and the man who bullies or browbeats them will find himself in sorry case."

His companion turned upon him: "Look ye, Mr. Stewart, you are my senior and commanding officer, and, I doubt not, mean well by your counsel; but damme if I wouldn't rather die than have my friends say that Jem Woodside treated a lot of scurvy colonists better than true British subjects, and so think we all who came to take service in America."

"Well, have your way, man," said Stewart gravely. "I am not given to obtruding advice on any; but, if you will listen, I should like to tell you of a man I did warn once in vain. He was an officer of the Royal Americans stationed up at Lake George, and he treated the private soldier, who saluted you in yonder shop, as he would have done his own stupid levies at home in England.

"At last, the soldier's time was up, for he was a ranger employed only for a few months, and the officer started back for the settlements with the same party that Jack Coggeshall left the fort with. I counseled him to wait, for Jack had told him, when he struck him with his riding whip, 'that the day would come when he would mark him for life.' Nevertheless he would go, and go he did."

"And what did yonder hound do? Shoot him from behind some thicket, or drive a knife into his back at night?" asked Woodside scornfully.

"Neither," said Stewart; "although, as he since told me, it often seemed as if he could no longer keep from slaying a man who had dared to strike him like a dog, and whose insolence daily led him to add to the sense of injury. But one day they fell into an Indian ambush. Two of their party were killed and several wounded, among the latter this officer, who fell with his leg broken, close beside Coggeshall, and two savages sprang out of the cover to take the wounded man's scalp.

"Jack shot down the first, and was about to take to his heels, when the doomed man looked up at him in perfect despair, and hopeless of assistance from the one whose feelings he had so often outraged, bowed down his head as if to await the fatal stroke. Coggeshall called to his companions, and, reversing his gun, rushed up to the second savage, beat down his guard and laid him senseless, and then, with the officer's fusee, shot a third assailant, while his friends rallied, beat off the war party and saved the wounded lieutenant."

"He's a brave fellow, and true man," said Woodside, whose better nature was now thoroughly aroused, "and what did the officer do for him?"

Stewart's face assumed a peculiarly bitter expression as he answered, "He insulted him again; took out his purse and offered him fifty guineas, and promised him a bottle of rum at the halting-place, when he could get to the baggage."

"And Coggeshall?"

"O, Jack flung the purse at his feet, and told him that he had 'had his revenge on a fool who hadn't

sense enough to know a man when he saw one, or was gentleman enough to respect him when he found him out,' and a day or two later the party got into the settlements, and they parted.

"Now, Woodside," he continued, "we've got a good lot of men, many of them as well educated as either of us, and all of them good shots and brave and self-respecting men. They are like horses that will not bear the spur, and a few like Coggeshall are dangerous when angry, and used to peril and bloodshed from their youth. If we treat these like men, they will not only follow wherever we will lead, but many will go where we have neither skill or strength to follow, and we should be but fools to count our judgment in war better than theirs. For my part I shall try to treat them like men."

"And so will I," said Woodside, heartily. "Gadzook's, but a man would be a fool to spur a willing horse, and I'll e'en try to remember that I am not in England, or commanding a scurvy lot of clumsy knaves; but I'm certain that most of our company who came over with me, will hardly learn their lesson as easily as I."

"So much the worse for them, Woodside," said Stewart, sadly, "but I blame them little, for such hath always been the manner of Englishmen who come to do the king service among us, and great have been the perils arising therefrom. I will not deny that I myself find it difficult to bear with the ill-advised carriage of English army and naval officers I have met, and much I fear that in the present expedition, we shall suffer more from neglect and insult, than from disease and battle."

"Why then do you leave wife and child, and friends, and a position of wealth and honor on such an errand?" asked Woodside, as if in amazement.

"Because we of Massachusetts are anxious to show ourselves loyal, brave and adventurous; and also because we all have suffered much from the inhumanity and selfishness of the Spaniards. And the Bay Colony would have raised double the number she has raised to go on such a service had the king been pleased to ask for them."

So ended the conversation, and henceforth a better feeling existed between Captain Stewart's men and the "reg'lar leftenant," who made his peace with the gunsmith, praised his work when finished, paid him liberally as agreed, and while always dignified and exacting, was always carefully considerate of the feelings and comfort of his volunteers.

A day or two later Captain Ruggles handed into the governor a paper, still in existence, entitled "A List of Men under ye Command of Capt. Timo. Ruggles for ye Intended Expedition against ye Spanish West Indies," and then followed a list of about one hundred men, after which the paper concluded in the following characteristic words:

"May it Please Your Excellency:

"Pursuant to your Excellency's order to me Given, for raising a Company of Volunteers for the Intended Expedition against ye Spanish West Indies, I have Done it and beg leave to Lay before your Excellency ye foregoing list; being a List of their names for your Excellency's approbation, and are y'r Excellency's most Obedient humble servant,

TIMO. RUGGLES.

Boston, Aug. 26, 1740.

To his Excellency, Jonathan Belcher, Captain General & Governor in Chief."

But although assurances, public and private, were not wanting, that commissions, arms and clothing for the remaining six companies would soon arrive from New York, each day the hopes of Timothy Ruggles and the other captains grew fainter, and the people began to doubt the wisdom of their governor and the probability of any expedition for that year at least, while day by day the commands of Wise of Ipswich, Furney and Richards of Boston, Bloggett of Woburn, and Ruggles of Sandwich were losing men, who wearied of the uncertainty and delays of the enterprise.

Chapter IX.

Off for Jamaica

A few days later, however, the action of the legislature cut the gordian knot by giving to all the companies not already supplied with arms, and sworn into the service, permission to disband, the men being allowed to retain their bounty and to be paid their dues until the date of disbandment; and in a few hours most of the men had departed for their several homes, leaving the gentlemen who had spent so much time and money in vain, to digest their disappointment as best they might.

The blow was a heavy one to Captains Furney, Richards and Ruggles, who had really desired active service; to the governor, whose efforts when so near complete success had been doomed to so bitter a defeat; and especially so to Stephen and Untequit, who were more strongly interested in the especial work of the expedition than many others. Lish seemed rather glad, upon the whole, that the scheme had miscarried, and the Indians were ready to go or stay, as Untequit might determine.

"I can do nothing more for you, Stephen," said his late captain, mournfully, as the little group stood for the first time in the empty warehouse which had formed their barracks, "except to promise you pay for your lost time as soon as my petition for compensation can be put before the general court. Of course you will go home as soon as maybe, and I

heard that Captain Blackwell's sloop was to sail to-morrow, and can secure a passage home without cost for such of the company as choose to go by water."

"You can set me down for one," said Lish, with more of his old spirit than he had shown for several days. "I've had enough of the regular service and British upstart officers, and though I'm ready to go privateering or out on the frontier, I'm mighty glad to go home."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Stephen quietly, "and shall have nothing to regret if the service proves deadlier than we hope. For my part, however, I have determined to go as a simple volunteer, and so I learn will Captain Furney, whose men have also disbanded."

"And I go with you," said Untequit, whose whole bearing had been gloomy and dejected for some days past, "and all Indian men too, that is if we may."

"Are you really in earnest?" asked Ruggles in some amazement. "Will you, who at the least would have carried our ensign's half-pike, assume the rough uniform and clumsy muskets the king has sent us?"

"I will if I get the chance, captain, assuredly," said Stephen quietly. "I think, as to myself, that Dr. Stewart will readily give me a place in his company, and if I could get another for William here, I should be perfectly satisfied."

Ruggles beckoned him aside and in a low tone said: "A new company is being formed by Captain

Edward Winslow, who is willing to trust to the governor's promise that he shall receive his commission and arms for his men, as soon as they join the brigade headquarters, which will probably be in Jamaica. He would like the dozen of men you can influence, and a sergeant's stripes are better than nothing. Shall I tell him that you will bring him the Mashpee hunters?"

Stephen pondered a moment before he answered, and then said frankly, "When I enlisted these men I trusted in your promise, and had you received your commission, should have been able to care for them and promised Untequit thus to do; but as, through no fault of yours, that may not be, I would not that they should fall into unmanly and ungenerous hands by trusting me. If you can arrange matters so that William and I can have a place under Stewart, I shall be more than satisfied."

"I can promise you so much, at least," said Ruggles, "but I would that wiser men had planned this matter, for the king never had a better chance of raising six thousand stout fellows in the Americas."

Two hours later, Stephen and Untequit had made arrangements to enter themselves in Stewart's company; and the worthy physician had in parting given them friendly and disinterested advice. "Come to me in a day or two; I will keep a place for you, never fear, for Captain Ruggles has long been priding himself on his lieutenant and the Indian marksmen he brought with him. I am only sorry that every commission and warrant are filled, and I can only promise you to be a kind officer and a true comrade to

all who trust me as their captain. Now be off and bid your friends good-bye, and then come back to me."

So Stephen and his servant bade adieu to the men of Sandwich as the little sloop made sail at Scarlett's wharf, and then went to Captain Stewart and took the oath and bounty; which latter, as both had received it before, they handed over to their captain, to be added to the company fund for extra stores to be used during the coming voyage.

Thereafter the enterprise seemed to draw more speedily to its fit conclusion, and from all quarters came news of the embarkation of the quotas of the various colonies. Early in September Lieut. Col. Cope, governor of the English settlements at Placentia, Newfoundland, had arrived at headquarters in New York, and with Colonels Gooch and Blakeney had arranged for the rendezvous at that city of the contingents of the northern colonies. The committee appointed for the purpose had prepared suitable transports, and by the twenty-second day of the month the four companies already raised were embarked on board the large sloops chosen for the service, and dropped down to Nantasket Roads; where, in the last three centuries, so many Massachusetts men have wearily awaited the leisure of bungling and incapable officials, through the intolerable discomfort, noise and ennui of transport life; until after interminable delays the signal for sailing has been given, and the soldiers' last adieus are blent with a sense of relief from utter weariness of inaction and discomfort.

From that anchorage sailed Sir Hovenden Walker, on his disastrous attempt against Quebec in 1711; Sir William Phips's luckless transports awaited his signal for sailing there scarce a generation before; there lay at anchor the fleets destined for Louisburg in 1745 and 1755; and the British fleet after the evacuation of Boston, in 1776, for nearly two months awaited there their consorts and supply ships due from England.

There are still living those who can tell of similar experiences in the war of 1812 and the days of the Mexican invasion; and hundreds can number among their dreariest experiences of the great rebellion, their first contemplation of the narrow quarters assigned at sea to a private soldier, while awaiting "further orders" or fairer weather in Nantasket Roads.

But by the twenty-seventh, Captain Edward Winslow had filled up his company, which with only the watchcoats and blankets procured for them by the colony were sent on board the little fleet, which, with a favorable breeze, started on the voyage to New York, a voyage which then was not without its share of peril from private armed cruisers, an occasional pirate and "the public enemy."

Early in the voyage the guns were "scaled," *i. e.*, discharged, to cleanse them from rust and ensure perfect dryness, for all the vessels carried an armament mostly of small iron cannon of three, four and six pound calibre, with an equal number of one and two pounder swivels, whose pivots fitting into sockets in the rail and on the forecastle were easily

removed to any desired position, and when loaded with musket or pistol balls were calculated to make sad havoc among attacking boats, or a mass of advancing boarders.

As soon as the little fleet was fairly at sea, the men were supplied with cartridges, allotted to their several stations, and a few whose former experience as privateersmen had especially fitted them for the task, were appointed to serve at certain of the guns and swivels aforesaid.

To the officers and the captain and mate of each transport was allotted the great cabin, with its wide berths and yawning fireplace, at which the servants with much petty quarrelling prepared little delicacies, or made tea and heated water for their masters' delectation.

The forecastles were given up to the crews, who failed not to turn an honest penny by parting with their coarse but ample fare of fish, bacon, baked beans, vegetables, apple and mince pies, doughnuts and other Yankee comestibles to the poor recruits for whom hard salt beef, pork, ship's bread and rum were all that the commissariat departments had provided.

For their accommodation the sloops had been ballasted with clean gravel, strongly secured and floored over, and on the deck thus formed rough berths had been constructed, to which rude stairs down the hatchways gave access in fine weather, but in storms or wet days the only means of exit was through the forecastle. Of the size of the vessels one can judge by the fact, that the five Massachusetts com-

panies required six or seven vessels to transport them to New York.

On their arrival they found encamped at the Battery, two Rhode Island, four Connecticut, and five New York companies, which, with the six Massachusetts and New Hampshire companies, made a total of seventeen preparing to sail. Several English men-of-war were in port with orders to convoy the fleet, and it was evident that the stay at New York would be brief indeed.

Seven companies had already sailed from Pennsylvania, and an eighth was soon to follow; Virginia had despatched four companies of her contingent of eight, Maryland had three hundred men ready for sea, and North Carolina had raised four companies for the great expedition. About four thousand men were thus under arms, and yet, as we have seen, it was not the fault of the colonists that the number was not nearly six thousand men.

But the delays of the enterprise were not yet ended, and it was nearly the middle of October before the fleet of transports, some forty in number, sailed out by Sandy Hook with the usual fuss of signal guns and display of colors, with which the cruise of a large convoy always commences. The voyage was tedious, but not disastrous, lasting in all about three weeks, and under date of Dec. 3, 1740, an officer high in command, probably Col. Gooch, wrote from Port Royal, Jamaica, to a friend,—

"I am in a great hurry, having the whole care of 3100 men until the other field officers arrive. Shall then have charge of the 1st Battalion. There are

four companies of Virginia, three of Maryland, and four of North Carolina troops yet to come."

There the troops were kept awaiting the slow coming of the great fleet, which, like all the cumbrous armadas of the past, was delayed by adverse winds, and scattered by storms, and the Massachusetts officers saw with amazement the beauties of that tropical island, and the strange laxity of life among the European residents and their friends of the regular service. Those who were led to join therein sorely lamented their heavy losses at play, and the general utter disregard of money, which, if it made the guest the recipient of unstinted entertainment, bore so heavily on him when he in turn became the host, that even the sudden and frequent loss of their comrades,—which soon, alas, became but too common,—seems to have scarcely awakened such surprise and admiration among the American captains, as the dissipations of the country, and the high cost of living and entertainment.

But Stephen and Untequit saw but little of such folly, for their captain grew grave and watchful, and warned his men against many things which seemed pleasant and inviting, keeping his men quiet at noondays, temperate in the use of fruit and stimulants, well clothed and under cover in the dewy nights, and, above all, so far as he could, sufficiently drilled to secure needed exercise and employment, and to raise their minds and keep their spirits above the especial trials of their situation.

For already the dangerous fluxes of that climate had fastened upon the intemperate and careless.

Yellow Jack had made its appearance on ship and shore, and at almost any hour of the day could be seen the hasty obsequies of soldier and sailor, or the more ceremonious funeral cortege of some officer, whose aspirations had been summarily ended by the diseases peculiar to a tropical climate.

Nevertheless, many of the provincials were delighted with the excesses and epicurean delights of their Jamaican acquaintances, and the compliments paid them on every hand by officers high in rank, who praised their loyalty, wondered at the readiness with which so large and fine a body of men had been raised, and predicted for them a more than ordinary share in the laurels and more substantial rewards of the success sure to attend their enterprise.

The men, however, were less satisfied, complaining bitterly of insults and even blows received at the hands of British officers, many of whom were of the brutal school of such as had served in Germany, whose canes were but too ready to punish the slightest lapse from the iron rules of military etiquette and respect for one's superiors.

And so, although Captain Winslow received his commission, and drew arms and uniforms for his men, and those high in rank were but too anxious to keep every promise made to their colonial allies, it was not without anxiety that the American officers awaited the coming of Lord Vernon and Lord Cathcart, under whose leadership they hoped to end, at once and forever, the long feud between Englishman and Spaniard, so far as the new world was concerned.

But while here, Untequit met with an adventure not uncommon in the West Indies, but one of no very agreeable nature nevertheless; yet one which in the end more firmly cemented the strong attachment already existing between Stephen and himself; for as they were at work one day preparing some firewood for the use of the company cooks, Untequit suddenly uttered a cry of pain, and shook from his wounded hand a centipede which had been hidden in one of the faggots.

"He's pisoned," shouted a volunteer, and crushed the reptile with his heel. After which he started for a doctor, calling out at every rod that "Untequit was pisoned and would die if he didn't git a doctor to once't."

Luckily he soon met Captain Stewart, who at once hastened to the spot, where in the centre of a dozen men he found the patient already in the hands of Stephen, who had caught up a piece of cord, tightly encircled the bitten finger, and was engaged in sucking the poison from the tiny wound, rinsing his mouth from time to time with a little rum offered him by a bystander.

"Well done, Hay," said Stewart, kindly. "That is a pretty sure way to cure a snake bite and it won't hurt now, but a little ammonia will make everything all right in a few hours, and you must look out for such creatures hereafter."

"Aren't they dangerous, then?" asked Stephen, simply.

"Not in the case of temperate and healthy men, although those whose blood is corrupted by drink

and high living, sometimes lose their lives from gangrene, I am told; but Untequit is not of that class. Nevertheless you are none the less to be praised for your unselfish services, and I am sure you will not regret it."

Untequit cast a look of gratitude at his officer, and rising, followed him to obtain the promised remedy.

"I shall never forget it, brother," he whispered as they waited a moment alone together, "but you have done even more than you thought for me, and henceforth I am yours to the death, for you have at last made forever complete the bond of blood."

"So be it," said Stephen, with a smile; "I have often thought that I might have humored you in so small a matter, but now you are content in spite of my refusal. Now that it is so I am no more true comrade than before, for I think you can trust me in whatever a man may expect of his friend, or rely on in his brother in arms."

"Then tonight I will tell you why I desired to trust you, and wherefore I came with you to this accursed place, for I have come too late to save him."

As he spoke a look of anguish overcast his face, but it passed, nor did the stinging alkaline-lotion bring a shadow to the impenetrable features, which greeted the captain when he came back on his errand of healing.

Chapter X.

Canootus

It was nearly noon the next day before the friends received leave until the next morning, a privlege only obtained at the urgent solicitation of Captain Stewart, to whom Stephen had explained that peculiar circumstances had induced his servant to come upon the expedition, which were unknown even to himself.

"It is wholly against rule to grant your request," said his indulgent superior, "and in most cases I should not hesitate to refuse you at once. Have you no idea of the purpose Untequit has in view, in this night journey?"

"None in the least, and I do not know that I can enlighten you on my return. Of this I am certain, however, that I shall return promptly and that Untequit will accompany me also."

"Where is he now?"

"I left him talking with a stranger whom I took to be an Indian at first, but from his dress, I suppose he must be a descendant of one of the native chiefs of this part of the world. But here he comes, and seems anxious to speak with you, captain."

The Indian came forward, and saluted as he halted before the captain, but his face seemed even graver and sadder than ever, and in his dark, deeply sunken eyes there was that eloquent look of supplication, of wistful entreaty, which is seen only in the

animal kingdom, and in human beings whose emotions and passions are still untrammeled by artificial restraints.

"What is it, Untequit?" asked Stewart, gently.

"My brother has asked leave to go yonder to the hills?"

"Yes."

"I have come to ask still more. I would ask you to go with us."

"For what?" asked the surprised captain, while over Stephen's face a shade of doubt, suspicion and alarm showed that even his trust in Untequit wavered.

"There is a sick and, I fear, a dying friend awaiting me in the hills; one whose blood runs in my veins, whose name I bear among my own people. I must save his life if I can. The captain is a great doctor, and can heal him if it is not too late; and if he wants gold, he shall be paid; if he requires service I will follow him to the death."

"How far must we go, Untequit?" asked Stewart, quietly, as, taking out an old medicine case, he examined the tiny phials, and then on a slip of prescription paper wrote a brief note, with which he despatched his orderly to the colonel's quarters.

"Will you go without asking who or what the man may be, and wherefor Untequit is so interested in one who may be a slave, an outlaw, or at best an obscure and poor mountaineer?" asked Stephen, in surprise. "I, indeed, who am bound by many ties to him, am content to risk all things for him; but why you should be ready to do so surprises me, I must confess."

"I do not care who the man is," said Stewart, quietly. "If he is sick, the true physician cares to know nothing more, except how best to restore him to health. For the rest, although I am your captain, we are still comrades, and if I cannot join you in a night march, I am scarcely fit to lead you in the sterner work before us. As to Untequit, he has, I doubt not, good reasons for being silent in the city, and where the walls are but of canvas. He perhaps will tell us more in the greenwood."

The Indian's eyes fell, and for a moment he seemed troubled to give expression to his utterance; but at last he said:

"There is nothing that you shall not know in due season, nor shall you find Untequit ungrateful. But let us take yonder canoe, and cross to the other shore."

"But shall we not take our arms?" asked Stephen. "The mountains are full of outlaws, they say, and even now a reward is offered for the head of Caneotus and his sons."

"You may take your pistols if you will, captain," said Untequit, "and had we good muskets we might bring back a wild hog or some parrots to eat, instead of this half-spoiled beef we are receiving; but where we are going we shall not need arms to protect us—unless, indeed," he added, bitterly, "we fall in with white men in the hills."

Half an hour later, the three, armed and provided with rations for a day's absence, went down to the dockyard, and from a raft of floating mast-logs, embarked in a Jamaican canoe brought there by the

stranger who had been seen conversing with Untequit. The latter took a paddle, and, heading to the north, they crossed to a comparatively unfrequented part of the shore, and, ascending the bank, and following a winding forest path, found themselves on the highroad leading into the centre of the island.

On every hand the vegetation peculiar to the tropics greeted their eyes. The huge cottonwood, the graceful cocoa palm, with its crown of spreading fronds, the kingly mahogany, the crooked fustic, the straight and slender lancewood and dwarfed ebony, with occasional enclosures of bananas, plantains, oranges, pineapples and other fruits, refreshed their eyes, wearied of their camp upon a barren sandspit, and shocked with the constant prospect of scenes of suffering and death.

Suddenly their guide turned into a narrow path, leading up a ravine between two spurs of the lower ranges of the Blue Mountains, and after following the winding trail a mile or more bade his companions refresh themselves and await his coming, striking off on a cross path by which scarcely half an hour later a boy, laden with fruits, came in search of the party, laying at their feet a small bunch of red bananas, another of yellow plantains, several pineapples, sappodillas, custard apples and other fruits.

Of these they ate leisurely, lying on the close greensward of a natural plateau, near the top of a range nearly a thousand feet above the town and harbor, into which last it almost seemed that one might cast a stone, so clear was the air and so rapid the grade of ascent as they went inland.

"I wish our poor fellows might camp here until the fleet comes," said Captain Stewart, sadly. "We are losing men nearly every day, whose lives are thrown away by the stupid officials yonder. No fever is found up here, and yonder you can see where the semaphore stands, not two hundred yards from where the port-admiral lives in perfect safety, while men are dying like rotten sheep in that fleet of transports."

"It is a pity that so many should die within a day's march of safety, for they tell me that fever is unknown up here."

" 'Tis so, doubtless; and what is worse is, that this matter of moving troops disembarking here inland, has again and again been urged upon the government, on every possible ground of argument that could be used. Any one can see, that even those who are not actually down with fever are growing thin, haggard and unfit for duty, and of what avail is it to embark on the most trying service imaginable, skeleton companies of weak and inefficient soldiers?"

"Well," said Stephen, bitterly, "let us pray for the coming of the fleet, and perhaps it may get in before our journey is ended. But truly my heart bleeds to see poor fellows buried out yonder on the palisades to be eaten by the land crabs, who have done our colony good service in the Maine garrisons and against the Spaniards."

As he spoke their guide returned, leading three small, but sleek mules, saddled and bridled, and addressed Untequit in a tongue which, while neither English nor Spanish, seemed not unfamiliar to Ste-

phen, although he could not readily remember where he had heard it before.

"He says that we have yet ten miles to go, and that the way is steep and rocky much of the way, but that these beasts are sure-footed and used to the road. If you are rested, captain, we must hasten on, or we may be too late."

Mounting the animals, the party in single file rode up hill and down dale, winding among rocks and tangled copses, climbing up ledges of disintegrated rock where a single misstep would prove fatal, and descending others where the riders were fain to bend backward until nearly prone along the animal's backbone, to avoid pitching head first over the ears of their sure-footed beasts. The night came on, and their guide, lighting a torch, led the way for a short distance, until a mountain stream, whose fall over a ledge had been audible for some time, seemed close beside them; and as they came out upon the plateau beside it, the guide gave a sharp whistle and the mules came suddenly to a halt.

Before them lay a narrow valley; above them a steep ravine extended up to the higher mountain ridge; through it flowed a brawling stream to plunge a good three score feet into the chasm below, and around them a score of men, half naked and armed to the teeth, stood watching their every movement; while as many women, catching up the brands of their bivouac fires, came to light up a scene which to even Stephen's nerves and Stewart's confidence was sufficiently trying.

It needed no second glance to tell who these

rovers were, for the gay toque or brilliant kerchief turban, their dress of light calico and leggins of hide and slave cloth, their rusty Spanish fowling pieces, blunderbusses and knives, long curved powder horns, and moccasins of untanned hide, proclaimed them at once to be of the untamed blood of the Maroons, even then half at peace with and half-outlawed by the Jamaican government.

They, however, made no hostile movement, but, at a signal from their guide, took charge of the animals, and led the new comers to the side of one of the fires, where bundles of freshly cut aromatic herbs and grasses were spread for their reception, and after some little delay a simple repast of cassava bread, game and fruits, with bowls of milk, and a flask of the fiery spirit of the colony was offered them, to which Captain Stewart and Stephen did full justice; but Untequit, in the midst of the repast, slipped away unseen, accompanied by the guide, who shortly returned, and in fair enough English asked them to accompany him.

"Untequit asks for the captain and his white brother, and the sick man wishes to see his physician."

Taking his pocket-case Stewart arose, and accompanied by Stephen followed their guide to the side of the ravine, and saw that a gigantic wall of rock rose almost perpendicularly above their heads to a height, of which the darkness precluded an estimate, but which was evidently immense. By the light of a brand carried by their leader they ascended a narrow path which wound suddenly around a project-

ing spur, on turning which they found themselves at the entrance of a cave into which they entered. They were left standing in the presence of an aged man, reclining on a kind of dais of skins and rugs, supported on either hand by rude pillows, and attended by women who fanned him assiduously, and seemed expectant of his slightest wish.

But one man, beside their guide and Untequit, occupied this presence chamber, on whose walls were hung more weapons than would have armed the whole number of men already met with. There were muskets, rifles and fowling pieces, of many degrees of excellence and variety of origin, heavy Spanish *machetes,* trenchant cane-knives, stout broad-bladed pikes and boar spears, and even a long ponderous wooden tube, in which Captain Stewart recognized the fatal blow-pipe or *gravatana* of the Indians of Guiana. A long bow, with a quiver of steel-headed arrows, clumsy blunderbusses and heavy pistols were also a part of the ill-assorted display of lethal weapons.

Even the sick man was armed; a keen dagger and a brace of handsome pistols lay within reach of his nerveless hands, a long rifle leaned against the rocky wall close at hand: and as the visitors came forward, the failing eyes seemed to regain something of the fire of former years, and the attenuated form sought to attain and assert the dignity of conceded leadership.

"It is the first time for two-score years," he feebly faltered, "that a white man has heard words of peace from the lips of Caneotus."

"Caneotus," exclaimed both in one breath, "are you Caneotus?"

"Caneotus I was called many, many years since, after one who was a dear friend of Philip of Pokanoket. There are three of the name now, and each has made it a terror to the white destroyers of all whom the Great Spirit has not pleased to make of their race. I had sworn never to spare a white man's life, but my hands are feeble as an infant's, and you are from the land of my youth and the friends of my grandson."

"Your grandson?" said Stephen wonderingly.

"Untequit is the grandchild of Caneotus," said the volunteer proudly, "and if the captain can heal him, the outlaw of the Yallah and the Blue Hills shall return to his kindred, for all are dead who sought to do him harm."

Captain Stewart unfastened his belt, first laying aside his pistols, and stepped to the side of the aged outlaw, for he saw that he was in sore extremity, if not in the very article of death, and as he noted the thin and hollow temples and snow-white hair, the face seamed with scars and corrugated with wrinkles, he shook his head ominously, and pouring out a cordial held it to the lips of Caneotus, who had fallen into a sleep, half doze—half stupor. The stimulant acted promptly, the dim eyes opened and gathered something of the old fire and energy, a slight fever flush glowed on brow and cheek, and the thin voice seemed to gather strength, as the veteran again strove with mortal weakness, to maintain his ancient bearing in the presence of one of a hatred race.

"Why does a white man wait before Caneotus,"

he asked angrily, "take him away and slay; but no, he is a friend, touch him not; he comes to heal, to strengthen the tree rent by the storms of an hundred winters."

"An hundred years old," repeated Stewart inquiringly. "Can it be that your grandsire has outlived a century?"

"I have little doubt that it is so," said Untequit respectfully. "Old Molly Pognet, whom he left a young girl, is nearly an hundred, and he must be some years older."

"And how is it that he is here?" asked the captain in a low tone.

But Caneotus had heard the question, and as he answered it the false strength of passion, and the hatreds of a wronged and blasted life, kept the attenuated frame erect and gave dignity to the wasted face, and strength to his voice until it rang out like a clarion through the rocky cavern, and up the clefts of the sharply defined cliffs forming the crest of the mountain range.

"Why is Caneotus here, far from the forests of Mashpee, and the bright swift tides of Cohasset? Why are the bones of his fathers torn up by the plow-share, and the ashes of the fire of council scattered over the white man's cornfields? Why does the Indian live poor and despised where his fathers roved free and happy; and why is the daughter of a great chief almost a beggar in the land of her fathers? Listen, captain of an hundred, to the words of Caneotus, for he is very old, and hearken to the story of a wrong, done so long ago, that the child

then unborn has been laid in the grave by his children's children.

"Caneotus was once young, and in all the tribe of Iyanough none could equal him in war or hunting; he was the friend and ally of the whites, and more than once he has guided their musketeers through the forests, into the hunting grounds of the Pequots, and the Narraganset lands. But he was the friend of King Philip, and inherited the broad lands by the southern sea, and the white rulers feared the hand that had struck the war-post for them, and their people looked with ravenous eyes upon his hunting grounds and broad meadows; for he would not sell his heritage for fire-water, or the graves of his fathers for a woman's toys.

"So he who had never taken a nail that was not his own was charged with robbery of many goods, and a chief taught to ask admittance to a summer lodge, was brought before the council for breaking into a white man's dwelling. Two more were charged with the crime, and all were condemned, for we had no counsel, and the people laughed at our words when we said that we did not know how the goods came to be hidden near our lodges; for among the whites they believe that the Great Spirit only punishes the liar who calls upon him to bear witness to his words.

"The punishment was death, but they would not have our blood on their hands, and we were sent here, away from home and friends, to be sold as slaves. One died of a broken heart and was thrown to the sharks, the other, sold to a planter, was taken

away by the first fever of the lower lands, but Caneotus was taken to a farm in the hills and set to tending cows and the milking of goats.

"All weapons were kept away from him but a knife; but he who has a knife has all, and Caneotus bore patiently with his captivity, until he had all that a warrior of the Massachusetts could need for war or hunting. A bow and quiver of arrows headed with sharks' teeth and spines of the stingray, a lance headed with a rusted file, and a knife ground down by days of labor to edge and point hung in a cleft of the rocks ready for the day of freedom; and the Maroons, hunting through the forests, came to me and told me of their freedom, and promised that I should lead their band, if I would leave my white master.

"But he was old and poor and feeble, nor did he strike or threaten, but was ever kind and gentle, and he died in my arms, thanking me for good service and faithful nursing in his need. But the heir, who had left him to die alone, came for his heritage armed with pistol and cutlass, and with cowhide in hand ordered me to gather in the cattle and be ready to go with him to the fever swamp below; and when I spoke of my master's promise that I should go back to the Massachusetts a free man, he laughed scornfully and, with a blow across the face, sent me to my work.

"I felled him to the earth and fled to the forest, but he rose and followed after, and as I reached my weapons was close upon me. He fired, and missed me, but I sent an arrow to his heart and since that day have been an outlaw. I have never known

want or fear; I have had children born to me, who bear my name and will lead my people when I am gone, and I have spoiled the oppressor and plundered and slain the dealers in human flesh.

"But I would go back to my own land, and die amid the scenes of my childhood and lie amid the graves of the chiefs of my father's house, although there, only poverty and degradation are the lot of the sons of Iyanough."

"Then drink of this draught, and sleep until morning," said Stewart in mild, calm tones, "and we will see what can be done to restore you to your home." The potion was taken without hesitation, and almost as he sank upon his pillow, the dreaded outlaw of the Blue Range was buried in a profound sleep.

As they went out into the night and descended the winding path to the ravine below, Stewart halted and motioned to his companion to survey the scene before him, for the whole ravine was now ablaze with the fires of the Maroons, fifty at least of whom stood, torch in hand, at the foot of the cliff.

Their gay turbans and barbaric ornaments, the bright steel of their machetes and cane knives, their fierce and swarthy faces, and bright hued cotton dress, and the utter silence and statuesque pose of the members of the band, formed of themselves a scene not easily to be forgotten. But in the background beyond their bivouac fires, where the women went backwards and forwards with fruit and curious vessels of honey, milk and water, or sheaves of coarse grass and aromatic herbs for the couches of their guests, the ravine rapidly narrowed, and the brawl-

ing stream, almost lost in the shadows of broad-leaved water plants and lofty tropical trees, here and there flashed down a score of feet in a shimmering cascade, or flowed down and through a dense curtain of mountain moss and tangled lianas. Above them all the midnight sky, clear and cloudless, displayed that glory of the host of heaven which, in all tropical climes, has so enchained the fancy and the longings of the hearts of men, that they have often forgotten the Creator in their worship of his marvellous universe.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed the physician, in that low yet intense tone which is most indicative of deep feeling or appreciation. " 'Tis wonderful, how little we of the icy north and the thronged cities know of this beautiful world He has made, or the wonders of His greater kingdom."

" 'Tis so indeed, sir," answered Stephen; "and yet, I often think that, perhaps, we who are rovers by sea or land think more upon these things, than you who know more of books and try to study more deeply into the causes of all that is strange or wonderful. There's a German doctor down yonder, who sails in Lord Vernon's fleet. He knows every bird and plant and insect which the men bring him, but he cares nothing for their beauty; and, would you believe it," and here the volunteer's voice sank to an almost inaudible whisper, "he says there is no God."

"Indeed!" said Stewart. "There are many like him among his people; but such belief seems almost impossible in one who stands in the presence of a scene like this. Do you know, it almost seems to

me that David must have stood near some midnight bivouac amid the mountains, when he looked upon the stars and poured forth that famous apostrophe to the heavens: 'When I behold the works of Thy hands, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained: what is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?' "

As he recited the inspired words of the warrior-poet of Israel, the enthusiast poured forth the words with such fervor and richness of intonation, that his voice filled the whole ravine as he stood in sight of the waiting Maroons drawn up to do him honor; and as if by magic the whole band fell upon their knees and bowed their faces to the earth, nor did they again raise them until the whites, accompanied by Untequit and his newly found relatives, had reached the foot of the cliff and stood beside them. Then they arose, and at a signal from one of their leaders, passed out of the ravine and disappeared from view with the exception of a kind of reserve, or picket guard, who posted themselves at the entrance of the ravine, on a small platform of rocky and open ground.

No question was asked until a second repast, more varied than the first, was set before them, and bundles of country-made cigars, and long-stemmed earthen pipes were offered for their gratification; but at last the elder son of the sick man removed the long cane pipe-stem from his lips, and spoke the thought that had for some moments troubled him.

"What has the god of the white magician said of the life of Caneotus?"

There was an uncertain ring in the outlaw's tones, as if he was in doubt as to the meaning of the captain's unwonted fit of enthusiasm, but Stewart was as shrewd at need, as he was brave and fearless, and had heard something of the savage and superstitious nature of the lawless men in whose power he had placed himself; while Untequit, no less watchful, made an almost imperceptible movement, which had been agreed upon as a signal of caution in case of danger or treachery.

Stewart drew from his breast a pocket Bible and held it up to the fire. "Does my brother know what book this is?" he asked quietly.

"It is the fetish of the white priests of the city below us," said the chief, gravely. "What has that to say of Caneotus?"

"For every man this book has a message," said Stewart, solemnly, "sent by the maker of all men to his children alike, whether they be crowded in the city, or rove freely and without care in the wilderness. In it is a message for the chief, your father."

"I will hear it, for he sleeps, but he shall know it when he awakens. If it please him you shall have gold and pearls; if it be ill, Caneotus has many followers, and knows how to punish."

"The message is not mine," said Stewart, without a trace of trepidation in voice or manner, "but gold cannot purchase the good will of my God or change His decrees. Listen and you shall hear what he says to Caneotus," and in the almost fearful silence he read as follows:

"The days of a man are threescore years and ten,

and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow."

The savage turned to Untequit, and as they conversed the latter grew more and more earnest, pointing by turns to his comrades, the cavern and a huge cottonwood which stood in the light of the fire. The Maroon's face at first was fierce and malign in its expression, the Indian's sorrowful in the extreme, but both at last became calmer; the son of the outlaw at last arose, and extended his hand to the physician.

"It is well. You have spoken truly. Untequit will hear your words, and bear them to our father in the morning," and so speaking the friends saw him shoulder his gun and stride away into the darkness, as if he wished, like some dying animal, to be alone in his agony.

"What did your uncle say, Untequit?" asked Stephen of his servant as soon as they were again alone.

"He called the captain a treacherous sorcerer, and said we should all die if Caneotus was not restored to health," said the Indian quietly.

"How did you appease him?"

"I said to him 'See yonder great tree. Is it old, very old?' and he said, 'It was old and decaying when I was a boy.'

"I said, 'Is it firmly rooted and solid at heart?' and he said that its roots were strong, but that he could sleep inside its trunk when the rain was pouring; and I asked if anyone could make it young and strong again, and he answered, 'No one.'

"Then I said, 'Caneotus is an old tree, deep-

rooted here, but weak and infirm; for many years have whitened his hair and decayed the strength of his youth. It would kill him to go back to the cold northern land, and he may not be cured of the weakness of many years and much sorrow, but he may yet be many months among his children in the shelter of the mountains.' "

"You have said well, Untequit," said Stewart, admiringly, "for my skill cannot heal the decay of years or stop the ravages of time. Your grandsire would die if you tried to remove him thence; he may yet live some months and perhaps years among his kindred."

In the morning they paid a last visit to the exile, who awoke apparently refreshed by needed repose, and calmer than the evening before. He had first sent for Untequit, and when Stephen and his companion again entered the cavern, the old chief had again assumed his weapons and apparel of state, and with a calm and even pleasant voice bade them welcome.

"Untequit has told me what the skill of the white physician has determined, and repeated the message of the great book given by his God. Caneotus has often heard it read in his younger days, for there came among his people just men who loved the Indians, and read it to them in their own tongue, and, had the whites kept its sayings, many would not have died who have fallen in battle and perished in great torments.

"But Caneotus knows that he is old and weak, and he could no longer bear a long journey or the

tossing of the great sea, and only in the land of spirits beyond the setting sun can he hope to see the bride of his youth, now old and weak like himself. So when you may no longer tarry with us, take the thanks and gifts of Caneotus and his message of farewell to the remnant of his people."

Stewart took from his case a small flask, and affixed to it three strands of a tough creeper and a tiny measure made from the shell of a gourd. "The pure air, clear water and delicate food of your hills are better than any medicines of mine, Caneotus; and with rest and a quiet mind, your life will last longer than in anger, revenge and vain regrets. God, who knows neither white, nor red, nor black, but only just or unjust men, will avenge all wrongs in His own good time and comfort all who carry their sorrows to Him. But should sudden faintness come upon you, let him you trust most give you as many measures of this cordial as there are strands around the neck of the flask; not all at once, but the second only when the first fails to bring you clear sight and perfect speech, and the third only when the second is no longer sufficient. In no case let them dare to give you more, for then no power on earth can save you from certain death."

"It is well," said the exile. "Untequit, come and hear the words of the last chief of Manomet," and as he spoke the soldier knelt at his feet and laid thereon a small belt of ill-shapen beads, rudely made of the shells of the quahaug, and curiously strung, apparently without pattern or design.

"You have borne the wampum and proved your-

self of my blood, and you have given to Caneotus messages from those he has never hoped to hear from again, since the days when a lie sent him across the sea, to a strange island and a slave's doom. Now you shall be my son's son, and lead with him when his father is old like myself and I am no longer with the living."

Untequit took the belt again and reversed it in his hands. "The wampum asks for an answer, O my father, and an old woman will weep for the boy she nourished, and the messenger she waits for in vain. Besides, a brave on the warpath must not lie, and we must be in the camp by the sea before the setting sun."

"It is well, Untequit," said the exile, calmly. "Bear back the wampum, and tell the wife of my youth that, if the Master of Life wills it, I will wait for her at the first night encampment on the crowded pathway of souls. Tell her that I have never forgotten our betrothal by the grave in the forest, and let her not want while the gold I give you can buy her food or shelter."

"White men," he continued, "do not fear to receive from my people the gifts of Caneotus, for we have little need of gold, and you are the first who have met us in peace for many years. We shall never meet again under the sun; perhaps in the land of the hereafter we shall look again upon each other, and see that we are indeed the sons of one father."

They left the cavern, leaving Untequit at his grandsire's feet, and how they parted none else ever knew, but at the foot of the cliff their animals stood

saddled, and all the band crowded around them to shake hands and bid them "good bye." To each saddle was slung a small basket, tightly covered, and at Untequit's hung a finely ornamented Spanish musket and a curious hunting knife, such as the Albacete manufactories of Spain have for generations sent out to her colonies in the new world.

The descent was easy and rapid compared with the ascent, and by mid-day they had crossed the Yallah, and reached the foot hills, and the skirts of the lowland along the coast. Suddenly the mules stopped at a signal from their driver, and from the thickets on either side rose the son and grandson of Caneotus and the outlying members of his band.

The elder man greeted them warmly, while their guide of the day before opened the baskets beside them, and took from each a small square package of rawhide, wrapped in a curious scarf of woven fibre as red as blood.

"For this," said the elder, "the whites will risk all dangers and commit all crimes, and in the years to come, the men of the red blood and the black will become so many, that they will be crowded into the sea and so perish forever. But, if in that day you or yours shall be here, let them send me this toque, or wear it, and I will burn alive with fire whoever shall touch a hair of your head."

As he spoke he delivered to each a package and the accompanying token, and an instant later was lost in the thick, tropical forest, while the friends following the path soon struck the post-road, and saw below them the white walls of Port Royal and the fleet

of Lord Vernon, which, with transport and storeship, still awaited the coming of Sir Chaloner Ogle and the great Armada.

"We need not speak further of these adventures," said Captain Stewart, "than to say that we have camped a night in the mountains, and had our fill of fruit and clear spring water. We have been good comrades to each other, but henceforth, as your captain, I must show you no more favor than is due to good conduct and brave men. Perhaps, should God spare us to return to the Massachusetts, we may meet as friends and talk over our strange adventure in the recesses of the Blue Mountains."

They entered the encampment as the sun was setting, and Stewart, at the request of the others, took the musket given to Untequit, and the packages of native gold (for such they indeed were) with the intention of sending them home by a Captain Barker, master of the transport Two Brothers, soon to sail for Boston. He met his mate at the landing the next morning and hailed him cheerily.

"Good morning, Mr. Atkins. Where's Barker? I've a little business for him to attend to, and some letters to send by you."

"He'll carry no more letters for any one, poor fellow," said the mate wearily, "and although I'm willing enough, it seems as if I couldn't bear to try to do aught. We were eight in all when we cast anchor in this accursed harbor, and now but three of us, and what niggers I can pick up, must take the old hooker back to the owners and poor Barker's widow."

"It is indeed a deadly port. Would to God that

the fleet would come, for the troops are sickening fast, and I have had to turn surgeon myself to help our wearied doctors."

"Yes, 'tis a bad port, but I never saw the fever so bad before in a dozen voyages, and what is worse our colony boys are so despised and insulted by the regular officers, that they've lost heart, I think, and the fever takes such hold that they can't shake it off. Poor Barker was struck by a drunken major, and would have thrown him into the street, but he had him taken by a file of men and ironed, and let him go at the pier, after cursing him to his heart's content, and the captain never got over it. All the time he was sick he was moanin' over the disgrace, and I hear that our poor boys in the regiment fare even worse."

"Well, well, Atkins, it's bad enough, but it can't be helped. You'll take the package and the letters, won't you, for I don't like to trust them to the packet-masters."

"Ay, ay, sir, I'll do my best, though between fever, an' Spanish privateers an' the perils o' the seas, 'tis a question if either I or the sloop ever reach home agin."

The mate's apprehensions were but too well founded, and although a crew was procured and he sailed in a small convoy for New York, the little fleet was scattered by a storm off Hatteras; and neither the household at Ploughed Neck nor the family of Captain Stewart ever received the letters or the gifts of the exiled chief of Manomet, the outlaw of the Jamaican mountain ridges, Caneotus.

Chapter XI.

The Arrival of the Armada

Day by day the men sickened and died in their encampments; the crews of the transports wasted away more than decimated by the fatal fever, until over forty mates and captains had perished and Phillips's company alone had lost more than one-fourth of its whole muster roll, including Ensign Christopher Goffe and Lieutenant Vryling.

For some reason, however, the other companies suffered less in proportion, and good Captain Stewart won the praise and love of all the battalion by his skillful treatment and generous care of the sick, from whom he utterly refused to receive pay of any kind, merely saying, "We are comrades, sir, and you can best pay me by helping some one else in your turn, should God put it in your way to do so."

But worse than the fatal malaria which claimed its victims every hour, and threatened every day to become irrepressible in its ravages, was the attitude of insult and contempt already taken by the officers of Lord Vernon's fleet towards the hapless colonists, whose patriotism had urged them into the false and trying position of a private soldier.

For to the Englishman of to-day, a resident of a British colony is never a British citizen in the sense which pertains to the humblest native of English soil, and it is simply wonderful that an empire whose originally contracted limits cover so many narrow

and bitter sectional antipathies, should ever have become dominant over so vast a territory, and so many peoples; who in their turn are alike scorned by their English protectors, and ever made to feel that bitter sense of insolent contempt, which your true Saxon never refrains from openly showing to a supposed inferior.

For the Englishman scorns above all the Irishman, next the Welshman, and to a less extent the Scotchman, who in their turn distrust each other more or less, but the Englishman most of all; but each and every native of the British Isles looks upon a colonist as a dependent and unhappy being, hopelessly deprived of the higher privileges of the British citizen, a source of heavy outlay to the British Empire, and of questionable benefit to that "tight little island," to whose greed and glory so many vast empires are tributary.

It followed, as a matter of course, that in an age so brutal, coarse and even cruel as that in which the events we chronicle took place, the free and tameless hunters, sailors and yeomen, who, for the most part, had filled up the quotas of the American colonies, found themselves from the first in a position contrary to all the experiences of their former life. Their own discipline, though strict in essentials, was loose in detail, and better calculated to develop marksmanship and individual prowess than concerted movement in the open field; and the amphibious character of their pursuits added to the difficulty of restricting their activity to the stiff, artificial and mechanical movements, characteristic of the disci-

plined marines and grenadiers with whom they were to be associated.

Nevertheless brigadier Blakeney, and his corps of lieutenants, strove at every turn to reduce their somewhat erratic recruits to the mechanical movements and utter subjection of the soldier of the regulation standard, and could not sufficiently express their contempt of soldiers, who shot better than they could wheel; who objected to polishing the barrels of their muskets "because it spoilt their aim," and were as much at home in a boat with sail, oar, line, net, harpoon or cutlass as they were in camp or on parade.

Many utterly refused to clean the officers' boots and perform similar menial offices, and the guard-houses were often crowded with men up for punishment for breaches of martial law, until at last some severe examples were made, and the authority of the officers shown to be absolute. But the effect on the men, whose natural training had utterly unfitted them for such service, was depressing in the extreme, and many who had been beaten with canes by their officers, or flogged publicly, unable to endure their deep sense of undeserved disgrace, fell sick and died, or were devoured by sharks, or drowned in trying to desert by swimming on board vessels bound homeward. Others of sterner mould bided their time of vengeance, and Col. Gooch, early during his stay at Jamaica, became utterly disgusted with the dissensions arising between his English officers and the Colonial gentlemen, who better knew the temper of their men, and resented with more or less spirit the abuses which they were powerless to prevent.

But when the Jamaican government marched in under armed guards, and a corps of slave-drivers, the most mutinous, useless and refractory slaves of the whole island to the number of some two thousand, and parties of the Americans began to be detailed to cut pickets and fascine material in the woods, in company with this refuse of the slave-pen and canefield, even the English officers murmured at the terrible degradation, only to be imagined by those who have themselves lived where men are held in bondage. But there was no help for it; the admiral laughed at complaint, and became angry at petition, while the few soldiers in garrison at Port Royal added by their taunts to the spirit of humiliation and disaffection already but too rife.

It was therefore with a general sense of relief that the Americans learned from the semaphores, used to telegraph the approach of vessels, that a large fleet was off the coast and was supposed to be the long expected expedition.

On the morning of the 9th of January the whole population of Spanishtown and Port Royal, and the soldiers and sailors already at the harbor of rendezvous, gathered on the shores of the bay to watch the imposing spectacle of the entering fleet.

As far as the eye could reach the ocean was covered with sails, and the larger ships of the fleet, in three divisions, came on before the sea breeze, their huge hulls surmounted by lofty pyramids of canvas, and the emerald seas foaming under each massive cutwater, while from their open ports long tiers of black cannon told of the care with which the Eng-

lish ministry had chosen the flower of her famous navy for this last supreme effort against the Spaniard.

Behind them, flanked by frigates, bomb ketches, sloops and fire ships, came nearly eighty transports and hospital ships, and from every friendly island, passed in their tedious voyage, had gathered such English merchantmen as by good fortune were favored with the sure protection of the great expedition.

And now, after nearly eleven weeks of unwontedly tempestuous weather, in which the fleet was for several days utterly dispersed, the great armada had gradually reassembled, and, with the exception of a small squadron sent two days before to observe a French fleet of equal force, all the war ships and most of the transports safely entered the chief port of Jamaica.

"They're no fools at shortenin' sail," said a veteran privateersman at Stephen's elbow, as he stood upon the seawall of snow-white limestone. "Jest see them take in their kites," and as he spoke, the leading division let go their lighter sails by the run, and the heavy yards were alive with topmen, who secured the canvas as if by magic, and with equal celerity lay down to await the next order of the admiral.

"'Tis a splendid sight," said Stephen enthusiastically; "and they come in good time. God grant we have no more delays, for we have left enough of the poor fellows yonder to the landcrabs of the palisades, who had far better been killed under the walls of Cartagena."

"Thet's so, mate," said the stranger gravely; "but ther won't be no gret of a hurry to get to sea again, when once the anchor is down. Thet fleet hes hed its share of bad weather, an' yonder's a seventy thet's got a jury mainmast, an' thar's plenty of light spars missin' among the transports too."

"We ought to get to sea again in three days at the least," said Stephen, "and it seems to me that a week would be a fatal delay, if the men on board suffer as we have done."

"Thar'll be plenty of food for the landcrabs yonder," replied his companion coolly, "an' ef we sail in less than two weeks, I'll lose all my share of the gold of Cartagena. But there's the flagship leading in, and they're takin' in sail now in earnest."

The huge Russell, carrying the blue pennant of Sir Chaloner Ogle, was now fairly within the entrance, and under her heavy foresail alone, swept slowly but majestically up the bay to her anchorage beyond the fleet of Lord Vernon, saluting as she passed. The great flagship in answer opened fire, which was taken up in turn by the other vessels of both squadrons and the forts of the harbor, while the light guns of the transports, privateers, slavers and even more questionable small craft congregated in the port, added their sharper reports to the heavy thunder of the great ordnance of the fleet.

All day long the excitement continued, and when the careful tactics of the heavier ships was succeeded by the loose seamanship of the transports, there were many staved bulwarks and broken spars to employ the carpenters and sparmakers of the port, and to add to the general causes of delay.

But as the Torbay forged in beside her sister ships at the anchorage, the seaman pointed to her ensign floating at half-mast and said, "'Tis for no common man thet thet flag hangs thar', an' as fer me I'm positive thet we shall hev' bad news by the first boat thet reaches the shore."

"Don't talk so, man," said Stephen, impatiently, "'Tis only a colonel of marines or perhaps an officer of the ship. Hear the men cheer as they man the yards. Why should we borrow any more cause of trouble than we have already?"

But boats were already manned and waiting at the gangways, and the admiral's barge was soon seen to push from the side of the Russell and seek the flagship of Lord Vernon. There was the usual ceremonial of reception, the regulation salute, the sound of martial music and the guard of honor, but when all was over the news spread like wild fire, that the great general who was to command the land forces of the expedition, Lord George Cathcart, the veteran of more than one successful campaign under and against the great leaders of continental wars, was dead and buried in the ballast of the Torbay. Owing to his death the command would devolve on Brigadier General Wentworth, of whom little was known and less expected, if one might judge by the comments made by military and naval critics, even amid the unexampled rejoicings which filled the towns of Kingston and Port Royal on the night of the safe arrival of the fleet.

For when the sun went down bonfires glared on every eminence; every window was ablaze with

candles; the ports of the warships were revealed by tiers of battle lanterns, and from every yard and truck blue lights and portfires lit up the glassy sea and the deep shadows of the wood-fringed haven. Every mansion was open to the officers of the army and navy; the ordinaries were full to overflowing, and in the streets, as the night wore away, the whole people, white and black, rich and poor, male and female, naval and military, seemed to have given themselves up to unbridled license and shameless debauchery.

It was nearly midnight, when Stephen, who had been sent to care for a comrade just committed to the hospital, set out on his return to camp; and as he emerged from the guarded gateway and found himself in the street, he saw on every hand that reckless pursuit of unlicensed pleasure, which, strangely enough, is most noticeable where death comes most suddenly and unexpectedly.

Through the open windows of the finest residences he saw on either hand the tables burdened with choice viands and varied vintages, and around them the best blood of England, in the gorgeous costumes of that age of personal display, engaged in the aimless and unceasing round of "healths and bumpers," which left few in possession of their senses at the close of the orgies. From others came the sound of sweet music and the rhythm of dancing feet, where the pale, dark-eyed beauties of the tropics joined in the dreamy waltz, with partners rejoicing in their temporary escape from narrow quarters and the unstable footing of the sea; while in the illuminated

gardens and under the shadow of tropical trees, glided in couples those who chose the subtle charm of sweet converse and fair companionship, in the stillness of night, under the strange spell of the voiceless stars.

But around him the streets were thronged with revellers, the soldiers from the camps, seamen of many nationalities, the burly captains of colonial transports and English merchantmen, the free negroes of the town and their companions still doomed to bondage; and Stephen caught a glimpse of one or two, who from their dress, springy tread and wild bearing, he knew must be of the blood of the Maroons, and he thought of the band of Caneotus himself.

At every turn, met as she sought or issued from the taverns and low resorts, whence issued ruder music and more boisterous merriment, or beckoning from street and window, woman, degraded, fallen, but enthralling still, brought to the aid of brutal Bacchus and degraded Terpsichore her wondrous charms of beauty, spirit and fascination, which even coarseness, vice and dissipation fail to wholly alienate from the daughters of Eve.

Suddenly there issued from a tavern near by, an officer of the American contingent; a young Virginian of herculean mould and graceful proportions, notorious throughout the battalion for his wealth and even more so for the boldness with which, even in that day of gaming and its kindred vices, he vied with wealthier if less powerful revellers.

He was evidently in complete and extreme accord

with the general spirit of rejoicing, and held high in air a slender crystal goblet full to the brim, while on his arm hung one who, even in that cesspool of tropical passion, was alike notorious for her beauty and for her crimes. His uniform, velvet waistcoat and cocked hat blazed with the richest lace; at his side a rapier, with velvet scabbard and gilded hilt, hung in a belt of Cordovan leather, and the buckles on his shoes and the rings upon his large, shapely hands were set with diamonds of the purest water.

"Here's to all loyal hearts and gallant men," he shouted wildly. "Here's to Lord Vernon and his brave tars, and Wentworth and his grenadiers. Fill your glasses, comrades," he continued, as several officers came near, and, at the word, his valet stepped forward with a tray, from which he took another beaker, while the servant courteously offered to serve the new comers.

"Long live war and love," he cried in ecstacy. "Drink, Cerise, to the toast, the only labor worthy of a gentleman, the only pleasure which even the gods cannot despise. Come, comrades, fill your glasses again. Here's to the loyal Americans. May they be first in the field, as they have been first at the rendezvous."

One or two drank to the toast, but a third handed the cup back untasted. In an instant the American flung off the arm of the flower-crowned Creole, and confronted the stranger who had refused his pledge.

"Why do you refuse my toast, sir?" he cried, angrily. "How dare you offer such an insult, and to me?"

The answer came back in those cold, calm tones, icily sardonic and pitilessly menacing, which at once indicate the blasé man of the world, who, from being preyed upon, has learned how to devour, and has devoted every resource of mind and body to his own advancement, success and pleasure; who can creep like the serpent and strike as fatally, and at need can put on the tiger and crush out opposition without pity or remorse.

"I dare," he said quietly. "I would as soon drink with the overseer of the colony negroes, as with one of the officers of your contingent. You are to perform the same duties, I hear."

The blood receded for a moment from the American's face, and then surged into his temples until his face was crimson with pent-up passion. "Give me a glass, Forbes," he muttered, and the next moment the contents were dashed into the Englishman's face.

There was neither anger nor annoyance visible in the air of the latter, as he wiped off the wine with a laced kerchief, and turned for a moment to one of his companions, but a slight compression of his lip and the relentless gleam of his steel-blue eyes told that he intended to exact complete vengeance for the insult.

"At once, if you please," said he, pointing to the outskirts of the city. "There is plenty of space on the sands, and we shall have light enough before yonder bonfires burn out, if we hasten."

"As you please, sir. Forbes, follow me. I have no second, and must request one of your companions to perform that office," and with a word and a smile

he bade adieu to his companion, and walked arm-in-arm with one of the strangers down to the sandy peninsula, on which a tar-barrel or two still gave ample light for the tragedy about to be enacted.

Without a word, each threw off his coat, waistcoat and belt, and the seconds, having measured the rapiers, returned them to their owners, and, placing the duellists on guard, drew their swords and stood ready to strike in at the first wound given or received.

They had not long to wait. The American, though powerful and no mean master of his weapon, was no match for the Englishman, who met his fierce attack with almost imperceptible guards, given by a wrist like iron and muscles like steel; and it was soon apparent to Stephen that he was only biding his time to make a thrust, which should end both the contest and the life of his antagonist. Slowly, but surely, he drew him on inch by inch, until at last his foe was within his reach, and a lightning-like thrust transfixed the American from breast to back; but despite a wound almost instantaneously mortal, the Virginian, shortening his sword, drove it through the lung of his triumphant antagonist.

The seconds rushed in, but before they could reach them the Virginian, throwing up his arms, uttered a stifled sob and fell back into the arms of Stephen and the officer, who laid him gently down upon the sand, but, at the first glance at the handsome young face, saw that he was dead.

As they looked up, a low exclamation of horror came instinctively to their lips, as they saw the victor

still erect, but transfixed from breast to back by the slender rapier of his antagonist; his face fast losing its expression of confident and deadly purpose as the reality of his terrible condition, and the horrible cost at which he had gained his hollow triumph dawned upon him.

"Killed by a boy at last," he muttered, as his friends ran to his support. "Spitted by a green volunteer as a hawk is trussed by a heron. Vane, you are a doctor. Can I—is there any chance—I can't speak. Tell me, for God's sake."

The surgeon cast a single glance at the protruding point of the weapon, and turned to his friend. "The lung is transfixed and I fear that nothing can be done. If we can get you to the city, there might perhaps be a chance."

"I can't bear this pain," moaned the wounded man. "Take out this cursed blade, for I suffer infernal torments. Will no one rid me of that fellow's rapier?"

The surgeon's answer was quick and startling. "If it is withdrawn here you die. If you have anything to say or write, do it before the blade is withdrawn."

A cold sweat stood on the brow of the duellist, but in that supreme moment, the conventional spirit of his race and kind failed him not. "I understand you, Vane. You will see—to my effects here. Send me home to England. One of the Fortescues—can surely lie—among his kindred. You will see, doctor—that my commands—"

"We understand you, Fortescue," said Doctor Vane, kindly. "But have you no wish for a lawyer, or a —"

"Or a priest? No, no, I die as I have lived. The estate is entailed—and I cannot even support—those whom I have ruined. It grows dark—I am dying, Vane—" The finely chiselled face grew strangely drawn and set; the dark eyes, no longer full of conscious power and pride, were fixed and glassy. A mortal shiver shook the symmetrical limbs, and with a single convulsive heave of the broad chest, the spirit of Captain Fortescue parted from all in which it had delighted in this mortal life.

"He is gone," said Stephen, in a low tone; "and now what is to be done with the bodies of these unfortunate men?"

"What business is that of yours, sirrah?" was the rather brusque answer of the third stranger; while Vane, who had carefully withdrawn the rapier from the wound, turned to survey the bold infantry soldier, who had dared, unasked, even at such a moment, to question an English officer.

"I am a volunteer of the American battalion," answered Stephen, sternly, "and was therefore comrade to the man who lies yonder, slain, as I hold, by one whose provocation was ruffianly, and whose intention in this affray was murderous. He has only met with his deserts; but each should have reverent care, and I am here to see that my countryman's body is not plundered or slighted, until word is sent to our camp and his body is taken in charge."

"'Sdeath, fellow!" said Fortescue's second, raising his cane and advancing angrily toward the provincial. "How dare you presume to speak thus to an officer in His Majesty grenadiers?" And, with a

torrent of strange oaths, he announced his intention of at once inflicting a severe chastisement upon our hero.

Stephen caught up the Englishman's weapon and calmly awaited the bully's approach; but at the significant action he stopped short, and changed the method though not his air of menace.

"Ha, mutiny? Damme, my fine fellow, but I'll have you shot or hanged for this. I'll not dirty my hands with your blood, but send you under guard to the provost marshal."

"Peace!" said a deep, stern voice; and at the word, the officers, turning, saw Gooch, the lieutenant-colonel of the Americans, and a near friend of the hapless Virginian. Behind him stood the valet of the slain officer, and several files of men with stretchers were in attendance.

"Gentlemen," said he, sternly, "you are under arrest. Take their swords, Johnson, but show them every attention at our quarters, and bear the dead into camp, reporting to Captain Hopkins, who is officer of the day. He will see that the bodies are suitably cared for."

"Sirrah! why are you here, and with your rapier drawn on an officer?" he continued, turning to Stephen, as the soldiers, gently raising their burdens, set out on their return to camp.

"I was out on leave, with an errand to the hospital. I saw the beginning of the quarrel between Lieut. Lee and Capt. Fortescue. The lieutenant had no second except one of Fortescue's companions; and as it lay in my way, I stayed to see fair play and aid

any who might be hurt. I wished to know what was best to be done when both lay dead at our feet, and yonder bully cursed me for my insolence, and threatened me with his cane. I said nothing, but picked up Fortescue's sword; and—"

"There, sir, that will do; I must hear no threats; and you may deem yourself lucky that the thing has gone no farther. Return to your quarters. Stay! give me you name and company; and hand your weapon to my aid."

Stephen did so, and saw the little procession move down the low peninsula in the fitful light, with a heavy heart; for the dead American, although personally unknown to him, had by his splendid physique, dashing manner, and untiring good nature and gay spirits become one of the most popular officers in the battalion. He walked slowly along by the strand, reviewing the events of the night, and saw in imagination the dead man again in the bloom of perfect physical health, surrounded by gaiety and pleasure, flushed with the hope of fame, the fire of loyalty and the consciousness of strength and courage; and now a few scornful words had turned mirth to hate, the soft spell of love to the concentrated fury of mortal conflict, and the splendid frame and fair face were now no more than so much carrion, which ere another sun should set, must be hidden from the shocked senses of even those who had loved the strong spirit which it had enshrined in life.

"So runs the saying," he said, musingly, as he walked along the midnight beach and heard the sigh of the breaking ripples on the outer coast. "He had

wealth, family, strength, beauty, love, knowledge and a kindly heart, but an hour has swept them away, and the pride of birth and rank of his slayer has but hurried him also to the inevitable destiny of us all. Truly, our time is a very shadow that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed so that there is no returning."

And as he entered the camp the blaze of the battle lanterns was suddenly extinguished; in the distant towns the lighted windows grew dim and died out like setting stars; the bonfires were smouldering along the strand, and of the brilliant displays on shore only an occasional rocket fitfully lit up the midnight sky, or fell hissing into the waters of the harbor, now dimly seen through the deadly mists of the tropics; but afar off to the south and west, a single balefire, red and lurid, blazed upon the crest of the mountains.

As he reached his own quarters, a few of his comrades stood in front of the tent watching the strange light.

"'Tis some loyal planter just at home after the day's carousal," said one.

"No! The news of the coming of the fleet has just reached some farmer who never gets so far from home as Spanishtown," quoth a second.

"It is more likely to be a cottage or a coffee barn burnt by the thieving Maroons," observed a third, who had visited the place in previous voyages. "No one can keep slaves or carry on a plantation so far inland as that, although every now and then some one tries it and gets murdered for his pains."

Untequit alone was silent, and greeting his friend, led him away from the rest to the harbor side of the encampment, and, as they again turned toward the mountains, a second bonfire blazed in the southwest, apparently a mile or more from the first. Stephen uttered an exclamation of surprise, but Untequit laid his finger on his lips, and intently watched the beacons, as they paled and grew bright by turns against the dark mountain ranges.

Suddenly, between the two, a bright spark appeared, and grew each second in size and brilliancy, until a column of flame sixty feet in height towered between the two former, and even at that distance the limbs and trunk of a huge tree seemed to writhe and blacken in the fervid and glowing conflagration.

"It is the signal!" said Untequit sadly, "Caneotus is dead, and I have only his last words to carry back to Monamet."

"How know you this?" asked Stephen, in some surprise. "Perhaps yonder fires are the blaze of a planter's building, as yonder sailor hinted."

"No! no!" said Untequit. "Before we parted, his son, my uncle of the half-blood said, 'Yonder ceiba-tree, like the old chief, is dying of age! it shall not survive him. When you see a blaze in the mountains, look for another a mile to the west and then you will see the ceiba-tree a mass of fire, for I will fill it with reeds and cover it with pitch from the ground to its highest branches. Then you will know that Caneotus is dead, and that I have borne him to his tomb in the heart of the mountains, where no white man comes, and no hand shall ever disturb his last resting place.' "

"I am sorry, Untequit, if this be so," said Stephen, gently, "but as they say in our own country, 'the young may die but the old must.' It is almost a miracle that he lived to become free, and attained so many years beyond the ordinary life of man, and it is strangest of all that your people should know of his existence, hope for his return, and send you on so strange an errand, in the hope of bringing him back to his own land again."

Untequit raised his face, which he had buried in his hands, and answered, "You whites know us but poorly, or you would have learned that we, who have no books and but little knowledge of the world, remember all we see and hear, and treasure up in our hearts the traditions of the old men handed down from generation to generation. Many a man among you knows not how it is that he is avoided by the Indians, so that even the poorest will not let their children live under his roof. But it is because the lands he holds were wrongly taken from our people, perhaps by ancestors of whom he knows scarcely the name; and, had we the power, many wrongs done long, long ago, would be avenged upon the living. The Indian's heart is a deep well into which one cannot look farther than the surface, but in it are gathered many and deep waters."

"And have mine ever done you or yours wrong, Untequit?" asked Stephen gravely.

"Of your people have I never heard aught but good," answered the Indian, "but he of whom your grandsire bought his land was of the blood of one, who, though not a warrior, was wily as a fox and merci-

less in the pursuit of gain. You have found arrow-heads of stone, and the scattered ashes of our camp-fires in the east pasture; by the sweet springsand in the shelter of the great swamp. Think you that the Indians willingly left their ancient encampment, beside the great marsh, and the creek full of all kinds of fish?"

"I know not, Untequit, but sure I am that our title is good, and was honestly paid for in bright guineas and sterling silver."

"No one can question it now, comrade," said the Indian, sadly, "nor would it bring back the game and fish, nor the shade of the forest trees, even if the land were restored to the children of those who once dwelt there. The Great Spirit knows best, and it is his will, that his red children should no longer stand before him in the land of their forefathers."

"Hist, Untequit, a boat is near us. Who can it be, that comes into our lines at this time of the night?"

"Friends!" said his companion, quietly, and the next moment his low whistle was answered from the mists. A light canoe was run in upon the beach, and the son of the dead outlaw stepped lightly ashore and stood beside them.

"I have come to look once more upon your face," he said in the Indian tongue, "and to ask why Untequit, who is the son of chiefs, and may have warriors to lead and broad lands to hold by rifle and steel, is willing to stay among the hated whites, and ready to shed his blood for those who have neither love nor pity for those who are not of their color."

"Speak English, Caneotus," said Untequit, calmly, "Stephen is my friend and brother and just although a paleface."

"Canoetus is dead," said the outlaw, bitterly, "and we dare stay no longer so near the dwellings of our foes. Already our tribe is many leagues away among the hills. But I knew that Untequit was left a common soldier among those who despise his race, and who every day degrade their own warriors with cruel scourgings and strange tortures, and so I come to offer him one-half of his grandsire's riches and an equal command over all my band."

"It is impossible, fellow," said Stephen, angrily. "You are among our sentinels, and risk your own life and liberty every moment of your stay. How dare you then come on such an errand among the loyal Americans?"

The outlaw laughed sardonically. "The nearest sentinel is at yonder point, but he has smoked the leaves of the *wanga* with his tobacco, and though he walks his beat he is in a dream from which he will not awaken for a good half hour. You are unarmed, and I could pistol you and escape, long before the alarm could be spread far enough to cut me off," and he significantly took a pistol from his belt as he spoke.

"Put up your weapon," said Untequit calmly. "He will not injure you or be unjust to his friend. Stephen!" he continued, turning to the colonist, "Why should I not go to those who love me and become again a chief and a leader of men. Are we not dying every day of disease, fed with repulsive

food which even the officers' dogs despise, and are not those over us growing more cruel and insolent every day. Has the king kept his promises to us as we have to him?"

"No, Untequit, no! Yet our oath is sacred, and as for me I should be disgraced among my people were I to break it. Yet for you there need be no such feeling, for when you return you come back to those who have little of that honor, which among us is held dearer than life itself."

"You are unjust, Stephen," said Untequit sadly. "We hold ourselves justified in breaking promises made from a sense of weakness and the contempt in which our race is held, but there are bonds that we never break and promises that we never forget. But you see, I may be free, rich and powerful; an outlaw, but still a chief; a dweller in the wilderness, but above want, and secure in the strength of the hills; and if I stay, I must endure our common miseries and coming perils, and go back to beggary, or at least to gain a pitiful living among a people who scorn the race they have wronged. What say you, comrade, shall I go or stay?"

"I will not choose," said Hay, much affected, "for on the decision too much depends, and on you, at least, the claims of the English crown and people are weak indeed. But do not desert to-night, for I must know nothing of it, if indeed you will leave me and go to your new life in this strange land."

"Your words are wise," said the outlaw, surprised at the turn matters had taken, "and need not fear for yourself. It will be many days ere you leave

this place, and Untequit shall come to his people, and the whites never know how he went from among them."

"It cannot be," said the Indian resolutely. "Bid me farewell and return to your people. She who sent me will look for my coming, and longs for the answer of Caneotus, and my people yonder are poor and oppressed, and I must help them if I can. Here, too, is my comrade, and the good doctor. I have promised them to be true and to stand by them in war and sickness, and I can never be false to my word."

"Then farewell, grandson of Caneotus. Go on from miseries, of which you have had but little, to the woes you must endure. Stay under the insolent officers who whip better men than themselves; starve, while they throw away dainties which might save the lives of their soldiers; and thirst, while they know nothing of fever or pain. But if in the future you flee to our mountains, come freely; for though you scorn our offers, we can trust your word in life or death.

"Here is my last gift, Untequit," he continued hurriedly, for afar off they heard the challenge of the sentinels as the guard was relieved, and he took from his breast a small packet of leaves curiously swathed in stout creepers. "We fear not the fever which destroys your people, but, although you have escaped thus far, you can hardly hope if you stay long in this spot. This is a poison, deadly and almost without remedy to the well; but when the fever settles upon you and the brain begins to reel, then take so much

as you can lay in powder upon a crown piece and boil it until the water is red as blood. Then strain and drink it, and cover yourself with blankets, for when the sweat runs in streams from your limbs the fever will be over.

"But farewell, white man; farewell, Untequit, for the guard draws near and we must be gone."

He stepped noiselessly into the light boat, pushed silently out into the mists, and in a moment was lost from view; while Stephen and his friend, crossing the fog-veiled parade ground, easily escaped observation and sought in their tents needed repose, after the day of excitement and adventure which had resulted from the arrival of the fleet.

Chapter XII.

The Sailing of the Fleet

Two days later the vessels sent out by Sir Chaloner Ogle, to observe a strange squadron on his way through the Archipelago, also came into port, having had a sharp sea fight in the night off Cape Tiburon with a portion of the French fleet in those seas, in which, after much damage to rigging, spars and bulwarks, and the loss of over one hundred men on each side, both parties suddenly discovered that they were the representatives of nations at peace with each other, and, after many very pretty apologies and complimentary regrets, parted to pursue their several courses.

On the 10th of January Lord Vernon, Sir Chaloner Ogle, General Wentworth, General Guise and Governor Trelawney held a council of war at the Government House in Spanishtown, and there decided that, in view of the hostile meeting briefly chronicled above, it would not be wise to attempt anything against Cartagena before ascertaining whether the French admiral, D'Antin, had any intention of joining his forces to those of the king of Spain, a thing far from unlikely in the unsettled state of feeling between France and England. Accordingly, the Wolf sloop, Captain Dandridge, was despatched to windward to reconnoitre, and orders were given to the fleet to hasten forward their preparations for a new cruise. But the delays were many and una-

voidable, and sickness had so ravaged the crews of many of the men-of-war, that some of them counted the disabled by hundreds. Four of the great warships had lower masts so damaged as to be unserviceable, three by M. Rochefeuille's shot and one shattered by lightning in a storm, while all of Vernon's own vessels had long needed new rigging and stores, which arrived in the transports convoyed by Sir Chaloner Ogle.

Besides this, the vessels were nearly all short of water; and although Vernon had made the best possible provision for speedily supplying that necessary element, it was not until the 22d that Sir Chaloner Ogle, with his division, sailed out of Port Royal harbor, followed by Lestock on the 24th, and the admiral himself on the 26th, accompanied by the transports, guarded by the Falmouth and Litchfield men-of-war.

On the 31st the whole fleet had beat up to Port Morant, and, seven days later, lay off Cape Tiburon, the western point of Hispaniola, where the next day the Wolf joined them, with news that the Marquis D'Antin with nineteen ships lay at anchor in Port Louis; and Lord Vernon at once beat up to the Isle de Vache, about six miles to the west of Port Louis, where a French officer going on board the Weymouth informed Captain Knowles that D'Antin had sailed for Europe.

Knowles at once communicated with the admiral, who despatched him in the Spence sloop to reconnoitre, and, having satisfied himself that but one vessel-of-war lay in the suspected port, he returned; but the next day, with Captain Boscawen and General

Wentworth, landed at Port Louis, where they were politely entertained, returning with the information that the admiral, with twelve of his nineteen ships, had sailed for Europe nearly a fortnight before.

In consequence of this, the fleet put into Tiberon, Donna Maria and Irish Bays, where all the empty water casks were filled, and the Americans were again exposed to the indignity of being brigaded with the Jamaican negroes, and detailed to cut fascine and gabion materials; but the health of the men was much improved, and on the 25th the signal was given, and one hundred and twenty-four sail drew out from the wooded bays of western Hispaniola, and glided before the trade winds southward without storm or accident, until, on the evening of Wednesday, the 4th of March, the leading ships signalled that strange sails were in sight; and Knowles, in the Weymouth, with his attendant sloops, Experiment and Spence, led the way in shore under the Isle of Arenas, and into the anchorage of Punta de la Canoa, Playa Grande.

It was nearly daylight, however, before the transport in which Stephen's company had been bestowed came down under foresail and jib, and ran in between two of the triple row of warships which strained heavily at their ground tackle, in from fifteen to twenty fathoms, with the trade winds still blowing a light breeze, and the land currents setting strongly westward toward the goal of their hopes, the city of Cartagena.

With the daylight all were on deck, except the sick and dying, of whom there was no lack, for every

hour in the day some poor fellow, scantily coffined in his hammock, but too often not even provided with sufficient ballast to carry the wasted body to the bottom of the sea, splashed overboard from the transports and men-of-war, to float on the swift tides until the sharks fought over their terrible banquet, not infrequently in the sight of the very comrades and shipmates of the dead.

But misery had become too universal to excite remark, and even on board of the cleanly Salem transport, in which Captain Stewart's good fortune had still ordained that he should remain, there had been sad changes. The honest, hard-featured Yankee skipper had long since succumbed to the fatal fever, and his son, still emaciated by the same disease, had almost lost heart, and ever brooded over his father's death, the long detention of the transports, and his fears of meeting his bereaved mother and the owners of the Two Friends.

Nevertheless he kept the cook—a freed Guinea negro, black as the ace of spades and as cheery and large-hearted as black—well supplied with all that the resources of his sea-going experience had been able to secure, and daily the men had enjoyed fresh fish, porpoise liver and plenty of sweet water, with lime juice, sugar and thick, black molasses; while the unhappy men on board the English ships fed on spoilt beef and putrid pork, washed down with grog, unsweetened, and without lime juice or even vitriol to correct its fiery nauseousness.

And now as they pitched heavily in the long groundswell which swept the almost open roadstead

of Punta del Canoa, the boy-skipper sat soberly on the top of the low cabin, and beside him Captain Stewart and Stephen, now Sergeant Hay, were talking over the situation and their hopes, while Woodside, the English first lieutenant, seated on the quarter, stood angling for groupers and joining from time to time in the conversation.

"I did not know, Hay, that you had ever visited these coasts before; I suppose, then, that the dim lights we saw last night to the south-west were the beacons of Cartagena," said Captain Stewart.

"I reckon not," said Skipper Clarke, "for the epitome says thet the entrance is near thirteen miles to the west'ard of the city."

"That is so," said Stephen, pleasantly. "There's no man in the fleet that studies chart and book closer than our skipper. I was in here once, driven upon the coast by a gale, in the Revenge, letter-of-marque, and had to run into this very anchorage. No Spanish vessel could put to sea in such a gale, but we were only six miles or so from the city; and they sent out a battery of light guns and drove us to sea, before we half liked the look of the sea and sky, I promise you."

"Know you aught of the land hereabouts, sergeant?" asked Stewart.

"No, sir! The only thing I know is that I landed in a whaleboat just inside that ledge, and filled a couple of casks with fair water, while two of my men gathered half a bushel or so of guavas and custard apples."

"There's a new book in my kit, Stairs," said

Woodside wearily, for the stout, ruddy Englishman had failed sadly during his short stay in the tropics. "'Tis said to be a translation from the work of a Spanish pilot, and ought to be correct."

Stairs, who had lost much of his trim appearance and stiff pomposity, soon returned with the little book, one of the numerous *brochures* brought out by the absorbing interest of that year pregnant with coming war, 1740, and by his master's direction handed it to Captain Stewart, who spread out the map which prefaced the letter press, on the top of the companion way.

"We are lying here, I suppose," said he, after a moment's thought, "and, if the map is correct, opposite a neck of land which, once occupied, would shut out Cartagena from all succor or hope of reinforcement from the interior. I suppose we shall soon be sent ashore, although I must say that the prospect of landing through yonder surf is not inviting."

"Had we such boats as that," said Stephen, pointing toward a long American whaleboat which was lashed amidships, "we could easily do so, but such heavy, clumsy, low-lying craft as the boats of the squadron are totally unfit for such work. If, however, there's any scouting to be done, I could easily find a crew on board here."

Stewart started to his feet. "Do you hear him, Woodside? What say you, shall we have the honor of the first landing?"

Woodside threw his tackle down upon the deck. "With all my heart, Stewart, but first we must get leave of the Admiral, or at least of the captain of the

Weymouth yonder. I knew him slightly in London, and if he is in a good humor, I can, I think, get permission."

"Well, sergeant, choose your crew. Captain, I suppose you'll let us have the boat?" he continued, turning to Clarke, who, however, showed little apparent pleasure at the proposed adventure.

"I don' know," he said, thoughfully. "Thar's more than an even chance o' losin' the boat, an' she cost forty dollars in good silver, an' besides the ol' man sot a heap by her, an ' I wouldn't sell her fer more'n she's wo'th."

"I'll pay for her, sirrah," said the lieutenant, wrathfully. "I'll leave ten guineas in your hands before she leaves the side; if we come back you shall keep two, and if not, the whole are yours."

"I didn't say ye couldn't hev the boat," said Clarke, quietly. "An' yer money ye may keep ef she comes back all right, an' welcome. But I've a mother, an' three sisters thet hes no father now, an' I somehow doubt ef they'll ever see me agin, an ef so thar'll be a hard show fer 'em in this world, I tell ye."

"Forgive me, captain," said Woodside, touched by his evident depression of spirits, "you are right to look out for your poor mother and your sisters; let us have the boat, and you shall have the guineas and my thanks too."

"Wal," said the young man, "thar's one more condition, an' thet is thet you'll take me with you. I'm at home in thet old craft, an' I'd like one more look at the kentry before I leave it; I've a rifle in my berth yonder thet I reckon might be of a leetle use if, as is

more then likely, thar's Spaniards watchin' us from the woods ashore."

Woodside was almost speechless at this new development of character in a man whom he had once deemed sordid and grasping and, at the best, spiritless and unmanly, if not actually cowardly.

"What say you, Captain Stewart?" said he at last, "it is for you to make up the party of course."

"I think as to the men we had better leave it to Sergeant Hay, but the skipper of course has a right to go or not, as he chooses, and for my part I am glad he is going with us. How many will she carry, sergeant?"

"We ought not to take more than the regular crew, cap'n," said Stephen hesitatingly, "for the surf is heavy, and we don't go to fight, but to scout and learn what is to be seen under yonder palms and ceibas. Six men are her crew, and we can take eight, but more would be in the way, and all must know how to swim."

"That last will shut me out of your list," said Stewart, regretfully. "I shan't submit to it in my case, I assure you."

"Now, what's the use, cap'n?" said Clarke, quickly. "I tell ye, we've got an ugly job to land yonder, even with good men; an' one man thet can't swim is sure to drown himself, an' perhaps three or four others."

"There's another thing, captain," said Stephen, gravely. "When we land, unless we can find a lee, we shall have to run her up the beach on a roller, and be ready to jump out and catch her before the undertow sucks her back under the next breaker;

and if we're pursued, we've got to launch her into the surf and jump aboard with no time to spare, and you're not used to that kind of work."

"He's right," said Woodside, "and you'll have to stay, captain, I think. An officer must go, or I'd stay myself and trust to the sergeant. However, I can swim like a fish, and know something of boating in the surf, for I spent two summers among the Orkneys, and they know what a heavy sea is there."

"Well, I suppose I must yield to younger men," said the doctor, slowly. "Detail your men, sergeant, and get everything ready at once."

"Will you take an oar, skipper, or go bowsman?" asked Hay of Clarke, who had just come upon deck with a long, heavy rifle in his hand, which he proceeded to divest of a close swathing of woolen rags, completely saturated with porpoise oil.

"I kin do both, I reckon," he said quietly as he slowly rubbed the brass-mounted stock and massive barrel with a dry cloth, and poured in a loose charge of fine powder, preparatory to testing her condition for service. "Best to take no more then one extra man, I guess," and "squibbing off" his piece, he tested the barrel by blowing out the smoke through the pan, and taking a small charger of alligator tooth, measured out with the utmost nicety a charge of powder, which he slowly poured into the narrow bore of his piece. From a small pouch attached to a shoulder-strap, he took a tin box of greased buckskin patches, one of which he laid upon the muzzle, and selecting a bullet with great care from a handful taken from

the same pouch, he placed it in the centre of the leather, and with his loading rod drove the tightly fitting missile down upon the powder. After loading he primed the piece, and slightly waxing the edges of the pan, shut down the cover firmly and tied it with a piece of whipcord.

"I'll lay a guinea thet thar's a piece will answer all demands at sight, es Squire Tompkins used to say, an' ef so be the pan dont' get a knock, she'll dew it jest the same ef the boat rolls over an' over a dozen times in goin' ashore. Mr. Sampson, git out the boat."

The mate, a huge Cape-Codder, called to his aid a dozen by-standers, who in less time than it takes to tell it, had the lashings off, the boat raised from her supports, turned right side up on deck, and her oars, mast, and other fittings cut loose from their fastenings. Her tholepins were carefully fitted, the oars laid in place, her mast taken out and stowed away, and her lockers cleaned of whale tub, line, boat hatchet and other whaling gear. "There's an old lance slung in its hooks too," said the mate, "take it out, Jones, and clear away all this craft."

"Leave the whale line in, Jones," said Stephen. "As for the lance it may serve to fend off with among the rocks." The soldier deftly put in order the somewhat tangled fakes of the whale line, and Stephen saw at once by his wistful expression, that the fellow was longing to go on the proposed excursion.

"Jones, Coggeshall, Gibbs, take your muskets and bayonets, but leave your accoutrements on board. Untequit, you will go too, and as we have no cart-

ridges, get out your powderhorns and bullet-bags in that wooden box in my berth."

Jones, a Cape Ann shore fisher, was off like a flash. Coggeshall, a Marbleheader, and the privateersman whom we saw in good Samuel Miller's gun shop, had already brought his musket on deck and was loading it from some private source of supply, displaying as he did so a handful of musket-balls carefully sewed up in soft leather; and Gibbs, of Falmouth, deliberately finishing his pipe, went below to prepare himself for the trip.

Woodside had already received his sword and pistols, and stood awaiting the launch of the boat, which was soon alongside and rising and falling with the rough sea. Untequit leaped in and took the after oar, and Jones and Coggeshall, the privateersman, the two next forward, and Clarke the bow, after having first carefully secured his weapon to the thwart with a piece of marline.

"Come, Gibbs, bear a hand," cried Stephen, as he took the long steering oar, and motioned Woodside to rather contracted quarters in the stern sheets.

"Aye! aye, sir!" answered the volunteer, but a roar of laughter greeted his appearance, for he had laid aside his cocked hat and wig, and a stout oilskin fisherman's "sou'wester" was tied tightly over his ears, above the gay coat and stiff stock of his regimentals.

"Here, sirrah!" said Woodside sternly, "go below and put on your hat and wig at once; it won't do, you know, to go in such trim aboard the Weymouth. We should have all hands laughing at us, from the first luff down to the powder boys."

Gibbs returned, with his despised head-gear, and soon the light boat was lying under the lee of the Weymouth, and Woodside, having sent his card on board, was invited into Captain Knowles' cabin.

"I am glad to see you, sir," said he, after the first greeting; "but Vernon has been pleased to keep me very busy, and I cannot spare you much of my time at present. Still, I am really glad to see you, and if there is any favor that I can do you, command me."

Woodside bowed his acknowledgments. "I thank you, sir, but I come to ask your permission to reconnoitre yonder shore with some of my Americans. I have alongside one of their whale-boats, and a crew accustomed to heavy seas and landing through the surf, and skilled in Indian fighting and privateering service; and if there is a landing, we will find it."

"Dear me! dear me!" said the captain, who was fast verging on fifty. "I don't know what to say. I have no specific orders, and yet it might be of great use. Still, I shouldn't dare to risk boats or any of His Majesty's stores on such service."

"I risk the boat, and as to the men, all are of my company, except two belonging to the transport. We will be prudent, and will search the shore thoroughly."

"Well! well! if you will go, I won't hinder you, and the Spence sloop shall be ordered to cover you with her guns if you are attacked. Be prudent though, for I know your father well, and would not have him blame me if aught befalls you. James, pass Lieutenant Woodside the decanter. Sir, I drink to your good fortune and speedy promotion; but be careful! be careful!"

Woodside thanked him heartily, drained his glass and ran on deck. Half the crew were at the side gazing curiously at the long, sharp craft as she rode like a duck at the end of a line from the boom. At a motion of his hand, they veered in, he descended the side and stepped aboard, and, five minutes later, they were to leeward of all the fleet, except the sloop, which was already answering the signals from the Weymouth.

As they swept by her, an officer on her quarter waved his hand to them, and already she lay with a spring upon her cable, ready to lay her broadside to the shore, although, thus far, no sign of human life was to be seen on the beach or in the dense forest beyond.

Chapter XIII.

Punta Del Canoa

Two hundred yards from the beach they lay upon their oars, while Woodside with his glass swept every yard of the alternate patches of glistening rock and yellow sea sand, on which the heavy rollers dashed into foam with a roar which made it difficult to hear what was said close to the ear, unless uttered at the top of the voice; while even the staunchest surfmen shook their heads as they noticed the weight of the huge green rollers and saw the refluent foam sucked back by the strong undertow.

"I'm afraid we must give it up to-day," shouted Woodside; "we can't face such a sea as that," and, as he spoke, he pointed to a rocky islet rising some feet above the surrounding waves, which, struck by a sea heavier than its companions, disappeared for a moment beneath a whirl of foam and the cloud of spray that dashed across the highest peaks.

But the next moment, Clarke had seized and was about to level his rifle at an object whose presence no one had heretofore suspected.

Leaping up from behind the highest fragments of the submerged island, a naked Indian sprang into the sea, and was borne like a withered leaf along on the crest of a roller until lost from view behind some projecting point of rock; and the skipper, putting his weapon down, pointed to the islet and took up his oar as if ready to pull the head of the boat round

toward the hidden cove, which he felt must lie inside the ledge.

Stephen smiled, but held up his hand and shook his head, motioning to Woodside to turn his glass toward the point at which the spy, for such all felt that he must be, would have to land. The landing was rocky, but the cliffs were flat and open on top, with neither brush nor grass to cover an enemy, although a single stunted cedar stood near the further edge of the little promontory, behind which seemed to crouch a naked human figure. Handing his subordinate the glass, Woodside pointed to the native, for such he seemed to be, and shouted in a lull of the surf beat, "Let us try it."

Hay raised the glass and saw a dusky-hued arm raised in air, and a gleam of steel; and dropping the perspective caught up his musket, took a quick aim and fired. The distance was extreme, a good two hundred yards, and the motion of the boat precluded certain aim, but a dry twig flew into splinters above the Indian's head, and the next moment his lithe form was gliding at full speed toward the forest, which lay perhaps a quarter of a mile inland, although many clumps of bayonet-grass, low thorny chapparal, and beds of cactus lay scattered over the more sterile belt of open ground.

Stephen lowered his piece, steadied it between his knees and loaded it with that grave and steady deliberation, which to the novice is provocative of much irritation, but is really the result of experience founded on numerous mischances arising from undue haste and careless preparation. Having ex-

amined his flint and lock, and finally primed the piece with equal care, he laid her down beside him, while his men took the same opportunity, by turns, of assuring themselves of the state of the priming of their own weapons.

Then nodding his head as a signal to give way, Stephen headed the boat toward the narrow opening between the islet and the shore, and taking advantage of a lull in the heavy swell, ran in under its lee, and laying the boat's head off shore hastily glanced round at the cliffs. The prospect was not reassuring, for the walls of the chasm, although low, were steep and smooth, and the seas, although much broken on the outer ledges, were nevertheless too heavy to risk laying a boat alongside the rocks, which would soon have splintered the light whaler into kindling wood.

Suddenly Clarke stood up in his place and pointed to the tree, from which a rude kind of ladder of roots and creepers hung dangling over a projecting shelf of the rock.

Hay saw at once his opportunity, and giving the steering oar to Woodside, stepped lightly forward, and taking the whale line made a running bowline, which he committed to Clarke with directions how to use it. Then, seeing that the tub was old and shaky, he dashed in the bottom, and taking the lower end of the coil carried it aft, and assisted by Untequit coiled some twenty fathoms there ready for use.

Clarke, in the meantime, laid aside his oar and took his place in the bow, while Hay, watching his opportunity, ran the boat close up to the high-

est point of the little islet, and the skipper leaping ashore threw the bowline over a projecting ledge, tightened the noose and leaped aboard just in time to escape a heavy sea, which swept them half way to the cliffs before he could check the boat's headway by a turn of the warp around the loggerhead.

Stephen waited for one or two seas to test the safety of his new mooring; but, finding that the boat rode easily amid the broken rollers, he signed to Clarke to ease away on the whale line, and to the men to back up to the cliff, until the stern of the boat rose and fell close to the ladder, and not a dozen feet from the volcanic rock of the surf-beaten ledges.

He seized the rude ladder, fearing to have it come down by the run, for he knew that the spy had sought its destruction; but a sudden fall of the boat, which left him hanging by it above the water, somewhat assured him of its safety, and, clambering up its rude projections, he found himself on the summit; the next moment, the warp flung by Untequit fell across his outstretched hands, and, passing it around the dead cedar, he returned the end into the boat, and in five minutes more the little party, with their weapons, were safely landed on the shore of Punta Del Canoa.

Woodside's first care was to survey the surrounding country with his glass; but he was soon assured that no immediate danger was to be feared, for the point was narrow and several hundred yards in length, with nothing upon it which could conceal a foe, while the woods were even farther away than he had at first supposed.

He accordingly led the way inland a little out of the din of the surf, and the party, throwing themselves down on the short, dry herbage, proceeded to stretch their limbs, cramped by their long boat service, and to take breath after the hard rowing necessary to counteract the swift sweep of the seas.

"We must not be taken, at all events," said Woodside, "for we now know that a landing is possible even in such a sea as this; and that is a point of the utmost importance, for even the clumsy boats of the men-of-war can be moored where our boat is lying."

"Thet's true," said Clarke, "but I reckon that few on 'em would ever git thar onless the steerin' was better than I've seen so far, any way. But a leetle less sea would make it safe enough."

"We must leave one man here to keep guard over the boat," continued Woodside; "and as he must be keen-sighted, vigilant and of good judgment, I must leave it to you, sergeant, to choose the man; for on the boat-keeper may depend the liberty, if not the lives, of all."

"Then, if it is left to me, I should ask the skipper to take that duty; and if I might presume, lieutenant, I would ask that you lead us at once inland to reconnoitre the woods; for if there are no troops there now, we can look around all that we wish to, and there certainly will be some here in a few hours at most."

"Let me go, Master Stephen," said Untequit, quietly. "If anything should occur, the whole of us could hardly get aboard and pull off before cavalry

would be down upon us. I can outrun a horse for a half-mile, and, if you will let me, will crawl up yonder dry water-course that flanks the wood to the left; then, if all is clear, I will signal you to come up and join me."

"I don't think we could do better," said Woodside, musingly. "Untequit, you can go, but hasten as much as you can with safety."

The Indian asked permission to throw aside his uniform coat, hat, wig and belts, and tying a dingy kerchief around his head, drew off his heavy gaiters and spatterdashes, and with only a long knife and pistol in his girdle went back to the cliff, and laid his musket and clothes beside the tree where Clarke also took his post as boat-keeper.

Untequit, keeping to the west, followed the edge of the promontory for a moment or two and was then lost to view, having found a succession of rough shelves, under cover of which he skirted the shore, entering the mouth of the dry gully without the knowledge of even his own party, by whom he passed while they were busily engaged in looking around them.

Suddenly Lieutenant Woodside, who was using his glass, lowered the instrument, stared open-eyed at a clump of bushes near the edge of the gully some two hundred yards away, took another look through the instrument, and finally turned to Stephen muttering, "We must get out of this! There's an Indian yonder in that gully that our man was to take. By the way, where is he? He went down to the boat to leave his clothing."

Stephen caught up the glass, but instantly lowered it and broke into a low laugh. "Well, he's got by us easily enough, and I guess no one yonder, if there are Spaniards up there, will see what we haven't been able to."

"Well done!" said Woodside, heartily. "Do you know though that, when I came out here, I had nothing but contempt for colonial soldiers," he added in a low tone. "But now I am certain that almost any one here, is better fitted to manage a matter like this than I am myself."

"I don't think that, sir," said Stephen, gravely. "Nevertheless I am glad to see that you appreciate those things to which our men have been trained, and in which, for my part, I hold them more skilful than any other people in the world, and that is the use of boats, general skill in marksmanship and individual fighting."

"I don't believe there are any troops yonder," said Woodside, thoughtfully, "for our man entered the wood some moments ago, and I have seen him several times since then gliding from tree to tree around its border, and penetrating deeper into the forest."

"There he is!" cried Coggeshall, rising to his feet. "We may go forward now, an' get some fruit, mayhap, before we hev' to go off on board again."

Just then Untequit was seen waving his kerchief, and the whole party, rising, took their muskets and moved rapidly across the open, leaving only Clarke at his post by the dead cedar. Fifteen minutes later they reached the wood, and, passing through—for

it was a mere belt,—found themselves in a country road, whose broad ruts showed that the *rotas*, or wooden-wheeled ox-carts of the country people, were about the only vehicles that ever passed that way.

"There's a small hill yonder that commands a view of the forts and the city," said Untequit; and, ascending the eminence, which, indeed, gave the anchorage its name from its shape, which somewhat resembled in outline an overturned canoe,—they crawled cautiously up until they could overlook the summit, and saw, some six miles away, the spires of Cartagena, the fortress of San Lazaro, and the convent-citadel of Nuestra Señora de la Popa.

"We hed better get off at once," said Coggeshall, pointing to a turn in the road some two miles away, where it wound around a sandy hill slightly wooded with huge cotton-trees. "Those lancers will soon be here, at the rate of speed they're makin', an' we can't gain anythin' by stayin'."

"I move we have some of the fruit from yonder enclosure," said Stephen, pointing to the foot of the hill, a little to their right. "The boys on board would like some plantains, I guess, and we can each take a bunch as well as not."

"So be it; but no time is to be lost, for in fifteen minutes they'll be here," said Woodside; and plunging down the side of the declivity, they found themselves beside the deserted cottage of a fisherman, whose nets, paddles and rude household equipage showed signs of recent occupancy. In the little garden around it were a score or more of plantains, bananas, guavas, orange and other fruit trees, nearly

all of which were in bearing; but as the former were most plentiful, each man cut a bunch of yellow plantains or red Baracoa bananas, and, crossing the road, plunged into the forest, emerging at the beginning of the gully by which their scout had come in reconnoitring the place.

Down this they raced in single file, until reaching the cliff they emerged on the shelf of rock from which they could see the islet, which was now much larger in extent, the tide having sensibly fallen since their landing, and at the same moment they heard apparently from just beyond the hill, the clear notes of a well blown bugle and the "*Andela! Anda!*" of the captain of lancers as he urged on his men.

No time was to be lost, and Woodside hurried his men to the platform where Clarke still sat, keeping well out of sight behind its trunk, and evidently anxious about something or other.

"I'm glad you're come," said he, "for I consait ther's somethin' ahind yonder side of the cove thet isn't thar for any good. Pursued did ye say? Tumble right in thar," he said, catching up his rifle. "Fust the fruit, then the men an' then myself."

"Well said," laughed Woodside, "but I come last, skipper. In with you, Jones, Gibbs and Coggeshall. Carefully, now. Here are the muskets. In with you, Untequit. Go down, skipper, for yonder are the lancers at last, just beyond the gully, and by heaven! by the side of the captain rides that naked Indian that tried to cut the rope. In with you, Hay."

"By the Eternal!"

It was Clarke who spoke, and as he caught the

officer's wrist to call his attention to seaward, his lips were drawn firmly over his teeth and his glance was painfully fixed and keen as he pointed out an unexpected danger.

From beyond the suspected point shot out into the heaviest of the surf, a rude *balsa,* or raft of logs of the light cotton-wood, joined three abreast, with the central one turned up into the shape of a prow, and, kneeling upon it, a single Indian, with a broad paddle, drove it with surprising swiftness toward the islet. Arms, save a knife in his belt, at first sight he seemed not to possess, but Stephen pointed to a tiny quiver on his shoulders and a long, slender reed which lay between his naked knees, and even Woodside grew white as Hay said impressively: "He has a *gravatana* there; the arrows he carries yonder are fatal. If he reaches the islet we are lost."

As he spoke, he poised his musket and fired, but the ball caught on the rising crest of an intervening wave, and ricochetted over the head of the occupant of the *balsa;* and from behind them, those on the top of the cliff heard the nearing hoof-beats of the cavalry.

"Git daown intew the boat, leftenant, an' yew, tew, Hay, an' tell your men I'll tend to yonder varmint, an' they may save their fire to cover me. I'll git him when he lands; ef I don't, may I never hear Salem church bells ag'in."

Woodside lowered himself into the boat. Stephen unrove the bight of the whale line, threw it into the stern, dropped down the native ladder, and reloading his piece, looked from the figure above him to

the Indian balsa and its occupant, who had just drawn in under the lee of the ledge, and, catching up his weapon and drawing his knife, leaped from his rude craft to the summit of an isolated rock a couple of yards from the main islet. With a cry of triumph, he drew himself together for the final leap; but the tall, gaunt rifleman overhead raised his heavy weapon, and a sharp, whip-like crack, scarce heard above the surf, told that the death shot had parted. The war cry died away on the dusky lips, the deadly tube fell from the outstretched hand, and the Guayqueria, faithful to the death to the Spaniard, fell dead in the midst of the surf.

"Hello! below thar'! look out for her, sergeant," and Stephen caught in his hands the trusty weapon, as its owner dropped lightly into the stern, and sprang over the thwarts to the bow, where, seizing the line, he joined with the others to warp the boat out of musket shot of the shore.

"We needn't mind their muskets much," said Coggeshall, "but them Spanish 'scopetas are the devil to carry. Ah! here they come, boys!" and as he spoke, the lancers drew up on the edge of the cliff and opened fire. As Coggeshall had intimated, their arms and ammunition were poor, and the one or two balls which struck the boat rebounded or fell harmlessly into the sea; but one of the troop, reserving his fire, drew up a short, clumsy bell-mouthed weapon, and, taking deliberate aim, fired just as Clarke bent over to cut the line short off at the chocks—for that was no time to count a few feet of rope against men's lives.

The splinters were seen to fly in the bow of the boat, a terrible burst of profanity followed, and all thought that their skipper had been severely if not mortally wounded; but when he rose, he held in his hands the stock and barrel of his long-tried piece, cut short off at the small of the stock by the huge bullet of the trabuco.

As the boat shot out into the open sea, the men caught up their muskets and returned the fire by way of bravado; but only one bullet took effect, killing the horse of the commander of the pursuing force.

By this time the heaviest guns of the Spence sloop opened upon the lancers, who disappeared promptly from a field where so unequal a game offered itself; and as the boat passed her, a hearty cheer burst from the lips of the tars, in honor of the success of the adventurers.

Going on board of the Weymouth, Lieut. Woodside reported the events of the day, and urged on Capt. Knowles the acceptance of one of the bunches of fruit; and having received orders to hold himself and men in readiness for farther service, the men returned to receive the thanks and applause of their captain and comrades on board the Two Friends.

Chapter XIV.

Preparing for Battle

The next day at dawn, a boat came alongside the Two Friends, and Lientenant Woodside received an order requiring him to report with his whaleboat and crew to Captain Cotteril of the Lion, a large 60-gun ship; and with the same crew as the day before (with the exception of Skipper Clarke, who remained on board to repair his broken rifle), he hastened alongside the Lion, and found her men at quarters. A few moments later, General Wentworth came on board, and, albeit the sea was rougher than that of the day before, the ship got under way and stood down the coast, carefully conned by her Spanish pilots and keeping the lead going continuously, as the course lay nearer the dangerous shallows on which the heavy rollers broke into masses of white foam.

As they drew out from the shelter of the islets, the sea grew still more terrible, and the oldest seamen shook their heads as the ship staggered along under short sail, unable to open her ports on the lower decks, and so tossed and buffeted by the long, heavy rollers that the sailing master and his assistants looked anxiously to the condition of spars and stays, and rove and applied preventer gear wherever additional strength could be secured; for the Lion had been long on service, and much of her rigging needed replacing, for which neither time nor material had been afforded.

But, although the day was clear and cloudless, and the wind gradually lulled as the sun rose higher over head, the danger only became more pressing, for the shoreward current set them nearer the breakers, and the heavy yards and booms swung and slatted as the ship was heaved and listed to larboard and starboard by the mountainous rollers.

"We shall lose our boat, lieutenant," said Stephen anxiously, "and much I fear that harm will come to Gibbs yonder, for they say among the men that the masts are shaky and the shrouds old and rotten, and should it go it will crush both the whaler and the other boat at the boom."

Woodside spoke to the officer of the deck and, ten minutes later, in obedience to orders, Gibbs made fast one end of the whale line to the painter and, bringing the other in on the boom, let the boat run astern, where, at the end of thirty fathoms of warp, she danced like an eggshell over the heavy sea, and awakened no little admiration of her graceful make and lively qualities among the English officers, and the crews of the clumsy yawls and heavy cutters of the ship.

They had scarcely, however, ceased canvassing the peculiarities of American boat building than the watch was called to take in the maintopsail, for the wind was now almost insufficient for steerage way, and the slatting of the yards promised at every roll to carry away the topmast, which sprung like a piece of steel.

"We had better return, your excellency," said Cotteril to the commander of the land forces, who stood

with him near the break of the quarter-deck. "We are losing the wind in here under the land, and our only hope of safety lies in standing off shore into yonder streak of blue water."

"We can't have much reason to fear," replied Wentworth, rather contemptuously. "There is no wind, as you say, and Lord Vernon says you have one of the staunchest ships of his squadron. What danger can there be?"

More he would have said; but at that moment the slender pole of the main-top-gallant-mast snapped its stay, and the broken rope in its fall struck a top-man, who, with a bruised and bloody face, still managed to cling to his hold on the top-sail yard; but a larger sea than before was seen coming a half-mile to seaward, and Cotteril roared, in a voice of thunder:

"Lay down there in the main-top! Lay down from aloft, all! Lively, men!—lively!"

The order came not a moment too soon, and, fortunately for the lives of the men, was obeyed as promptly as it was given. Some slid down by the stays, others swarmed down the shrouds, while a few of the older and less active men had hardly quitted the ratlines when the wave, racing down upon them, filled the deck half full of water, and sent the faithless main-mast with all its gear over the side, bringing down in its fall the lighter spars of the fore and mizzen masts.

Wentworth stared aghast at the terrible scene of confusion which followed and the view presented alongside, where a huge mass of wooden spars,

heavy rigging and wide-spread canvas lay under the lee, forming a dangerous raft, against whose projections each roller dashed the ship with a force which momentarily threatened to be fatal.

"Let us take to the boats," said the general, hastily, but Cotteril, with somewhat of disdain in his tone, made answer:

"It would cost me my commission to give up one of His Majesty's ships while a chance of saving her remained, and I do not despair of carrying her back to Plaza Grande, although the case is serious. Your own boat or that of the Americans is at your service if you desire to return to the fleet, but my duty lies here."

"Pardon me, captain," said Wentworth heartily, "you know we of the army are poor sailors, and ignorance they say is the parent of fear. I will remain and share your fortunes; perhaps you can make use of the Americans you spoke of. Captain Knowles recommended them to me very highly, as better than ordinary for dangerous service."

Cotteril nodded pleasantly, but turned to give orders through his trumpet to extricate his vessel from her dangerous predicament, and the splashing of the anchors and rattling of the chains through the hawse-pipes soon followed, and after some moments of suspense, the ship begun to swing head to the wind and pitch into the tremendous rollers with a force which, but for the sandy nature of the ground, which allowed the anchors to drag, would have torn away the windlass or snapped the chains like pipe-stems.

Meanwhile, the men with axes and knives cut and slashed at the rigging in order to get clear of the wreck which still lay alongside, giving a heavy list to the ship and adding to the strain upon her cable. Gibbs, Jones and Coggeshall joined in the work, cutting quickly, but so as to save the largest possible amount of material. Stephen, with his Spanish knife, did almost the work of two men, and Untequit, the most agile of the crew, saved much of the gear belonging to the canvas of the foremast and foretop, in which service he caught an approving glance from the captain himself.

"I'd like to save the wreck from yonder Spanish hounds," said Cotteril to his companion, "but the anchors won't stand the strain, and it must go to leeward, I fear." But Stephen, who was just descending the mizzen rigging, forgetful of etiquette and rank, spoke as he would have spoken on the deck of the Two Friends.

"Why not bend on a large kedge, and let them drift into shallow water? There they'll be out of reach of the Spaniards, and we can get them when the sea goes down."

"Well said, my man. How they ever got you into a red coat, I don't see. Pass the word forward, Mr. Alston, and let them make fast a strong warp to the wreckage and bend on one of our heaviest kedges."

" 'Tis easier said than done, sir," said the first luff rather contemptuously, "for the drift must be dead aft, and our drift is now so fast that we should be right amid it again in a few moments. If we

could carry the kedge to the westward an hundred fathoms, it might help us."

"Say the word, sir, and we'll do it with our whale-boat," said Woodside eagerly; "and as to the warp, our whale line, they say, will stand more than ordinary cordage of nearly three times the circumference. Only I'd recommend you to trust details to Sergeant Hay here, who knows most about it."

"Very well! very well! How much of the whale line have you sir?" asked the lieutenant.

"About one hundred and eighty fathoms, I think, sir," said Stephen. "I'd like to have you sling the kedge by a piece of spar, so that we can get its weight more amidships," he continued.

"All right, sir! Get your boat under the lee and your gear shall be ready," and two minutes later the boat was lying under the quarter, and one end of her line lashed to one of the shrouds remaining uncut, while the rest lay coiled in the stern of the whaler. The kedge, brought aft by a dozen men, was slung by two ropes to a long stretcher, and the other end of the warp having first been bent to the kedge, the boat was run under the spar, and being carefully eased away the kedge hung beneath the keel of the whaler just under the amidships thwart. The men bent to their oars and rowed out under the lee of the vessel, while Stephen paid out the line, for the men kept the proper course, keeping the sharp stern to the crests of the huge ocean rollers, and then cautiously edging away to the westward until only a few coils were left in the boat.

"Stand ready to cut the line in the centre of the

spar, Gibbs," cried Stephen, as he caught the few remaining fakes in his hands and threw them clear of the gunwale, just as they had safely escaped the crest of a huge green roller and looked across the green abyss to another equally huge.

"Aye, aye, sir," said Gibbs, laying his keen knife on the rope, which secured only by slight lashings, lay stretched along the spars.

"Cut then, and stand clear," cried Stephen. The knife fell, the rope parted, one moiety slipping through the lashings and the other carrying the spar end over end into the sea, and the light craft lay clear of danger, ready to return to the Lion, which still dragged under the added strain of the wreck.

Stephen waved his cap; the axes of the tars fell on the few shrouds which still held; and as the American, with his long steering oar, made for the lee of the vessel, he saw the submerged tops gradually draw apart, and the dismasted man-of-war righting and riding more easily at her dangerous moorings.

Later the next day, the wind breezed up sufficiently to allow the Lion to get under way and return to the squadron, and the New Englanders were sent to their vessel, with orders to join a small squadron detached for special duty on the morrow; and, indeed, it seemed likely that, for a time, at least, Capt. Stewart would have little assistance from the presence of his tall sergeant and the crew of "the Yankee whaleboat."

On the 9th of March the sea was still heavy, and the huge rollers, as they broke upon the shallows

to the westward, forbade any decided general movement; but the smaller frigates about noon got under way, and, manning their deck batteries, stood down the coast, running close in shore, as if about to cannonade the city, while the Dunkirk, Capt. Cooper, with the two sloops so often mentioned, kept on down the coast of Tierra Bomba, an island which, separated by a shallow strait from the city, stretches westward for several leagues to the passage of Boca Chica, or the "Little Mouth," the only navigable entrance to the great lagoon of Cartagena.

Nothing, however, came of these movements; for, although Don Sebastian de Eslava, the military governor, sent his men to the outer walls, he well knew that neither his own brass pieces nor the iron guns and short carronades of the frigates could work harm across the broad expanse of sandy shallows and dangerous surf which defended his stronghold on the seaward side; and threatened its future existence with the same fate which had befallen what was formerly a broad and level, although sandy plain, but was now a shoal unsafe for the lightest canoe, except in perfectly calm weather.

But that night as they returned, wet, weary and hungry, they noted an unusual stir in the fleet, which seemed to intimate that on the morrow the long delay would be ended, and the great struggle between the Briton and Spaniard would be brought to an issue.

Clarke met them at the rail. "I've sold the boat an' I reckon I sold her well, tew; an' arter this I s'pect you'll hev to live aboard the Weymouth,

fer Captain Knowles I hear has begged ye fer special service. Hows'ever, I'll be sorry to hev ye leave, an' to-night the cook hes somethin' hot an' hearty fer ye in the caboose. We've hed good luck fishing to-day, an' you'll be the better for some fried *pompano*, I reckin."

Capt. Stewart confirmed the news, and handed Lieut. Woodside his orders to report to Capt. Knowles the next morning. His men were to take their kits, and be quartered on board until further orders.

"You'll hev a chance to see how you like the food an' lodgin' thar," said Clarke, meaningly; "but I reckin if they'll on'y let ye off by yourselves once a day, you can find somethin' decent to eat."

"We can't always expect to live as well on board ship as we have with you, skipper," said Stephen, heartily, "and I, for one, shall never forget your kindness; but we will carry some bird-shot and fishing tackle with us, and it will go hard but we manage to pick up fish and meat enough for ourselves, while we are detached."

"They say that we are to go on board Commodore Lestock's vessels," said Capt. Stewart, a little wearily. "I hope not, for I was on board a vessel of the fleet yesterday, and the men are crowded together so that there is little chance for the sick, and great danger to those not yet attacked by the fever. It's a pity, that the council of war has decided not to attack on this side of the town; and as we have to enter the harbor over thirty miles from here, they will have every opportunity to send out

their treasure and ineffective population, and bring in supplies and reinforcements. We have come, I hear, to a fair basis for the division of plunder, but I'm afraid we are selling the lion's skin on the back of the beast."

"The captain is not himself," said Woodside, as they sat on deck enjoying their food, so thoughtfully prepared for them by the young skipper; "and he has enough on his hands as an officer, without trying to be surgeon to his own command and honoring every call that is made on his kind heart; although God knows it would be well were all in authority here as humane as he."

As he spoke the captain came up from below, and stepping to the rail looked across the intervening waters toward the shore, where here and there the gleam of the bivouac fires, or the glimmer of a lantern, told that Don Sebastian de Eslava was not yet minded to withdraw the corps of observation, which for the last three days had been entrenching themselves, and awaiting any attempt to disembark.

The sea was going down fast, and the rollers, though large, seldom broke into foam, but swept lazily along with an occasional gleam of phosphorescent fire wherever the oily surface was broken by prow or cable, or the occasional passage of a boat from one vessel to another. Above the sky was clear, and in the deep blue the tropical constellations shone with a wondrous beauty, and as Stewart raised his eyes to gaze upon them, his regular and noble features seemed almost like the

profile of a marble statue, so pale and thin had he become with over anxiety and unremitting labor for others.

"'Tis a question," said Woodside gravely, "if we keep our captain long, and though once I'd have deemed it a bit of luck to get the grade, damme if I shouldn't be sorry to step into his shoes, for a kinder man I never saw."

"That is true, sir, and as brave as he is kind, I'm sure," said Stephen. "But you must talk to him, lieutenant, for he has a noble wife and loving daughter at home there in Boston, and I doubt if he will leave them over well provided for should aught befall him."

"Come, Woodside, this won't do," said Stewart, approaching them, "the night air is not the best thing in the world for you who have been hungry and weary all day. 'Tis a beautiful evening though, and even the great war ships seem less grim and cruel. The sky, too, is so clear and the stars so brilliant, that all things seem full of peace, and rest and beauty. Why, the very waves that have swept against us so heavily for the past week seem going to sleep, and one would think that neither human suffering nor the destructive passions of man could exist in such a scene. I assure you, gentlemen, that the contemplation of so much peaceful beauty is a great relief to me, for I weary of the human suffering and death that so far has surrounded us."

Suddenly a terrific scream, or rather series of cries, came up the hatchway of the schooner; a half

clad figure emerged, and, eluding the sentinel, crossed the gangway at a bound, leaped upon the rail, and ere Stephen could prevent it, sprang into the sea. Hay was about to follow, but Untequit, who had followed the delirious man from below, laid his hand upon his shoulder and ejaculated, "Look!"

On the inner crest of the roller which had just passed beneath them, a sharp object, cutting the water with great velocity, appeared above the water, and the next instant a huge shark was seen enveloped in a phosphorescent glow, which rendered the squaliform monster almost supernaturally terrible and repulsive; and as the spectators stood almost petrified with horror, the man-eater glided down into the depths where the doomed man had disappeared.

Stephen broke from his trance and seized the sentinel's musket, Woodside felt mechanically for the heavy pistols he had laid aside, and Untequit looked in vain for a weapon; but the terrible episode was soon over. For an instant the head and outstretched arms of the doomed man were seen above the surface, and then there was a shriek of mortal agony, a gleam of crimson in a circle of phosphorescent water, and all was over.

"Poor Jarvis!" exclaimed the captain. "He was a stout shipwright at Medford Bridge last summer, and left a good home and prospect of a fair heritage to die thus terribly. Well; well! I must to bed, but I fear me I shall not rest much after such a sight."

"'Tis the lot of man, captain," said Stephen quietly, "and what matters it how we go out of life,

so that our work is well done. I've seen many die of the black vomit, and to my mind the shark's jaws were a better choice. You must harden yourself to such sights, for we go where worse awaits at the best, and perhaps more than even the strongest and cheeriest can endure."

"True, sergeant; and in Him there is strength to endure all things as good soldiers. Good night and needed rest." And soon only the sentinel and the drowsy sailor who kept the anchor watch were left upon the deck of the little transport.

Chapter XV.

The Landing

The 9th day of March, at dawn, Lieutenant Woodside with his crew rowed away to their new quarters on board the Weymouth, which the day before, with the huge Dunkirk and her satellites, the sloops, had carefully reconnoitred the coast of Cartagena, and sounded with all their boats disposed *en echelon* at a cable's length apart the whole shore line of the isle of Terra Bomba, which extends north and west from the old entrance of the port called El Boca Grande to El Boca Chica, "the little mouth," now the only feasible entrance to the grand lagune, which all ships must enter at a good ten leagues from the walls of the city.

The Lieutenant was treated as a guest rather than as on duty, but the men viewed with ill-concealed disgust the crowded quarters assigned them, where in reach of their own hammocks hung many sick men, who were allowed to remain there, because the sick bay was already too full of victims to that scourge of the tropics, "Yellow Jack." Luckily for them they soon received orders to transfer themselves, with all they might deem needful for night service, to their boat, and stowing their hammocks in the nettings they seated themselves in their trim craft, and soon saw the ships appointed for the day's service get under way and stand up the coast, in which direction the greater moiety of the squadron,

with the exception of the transports, soon followed.

On the shore, they could discern the cavalry and light infantry of the Spaniards passing along the roads to join in resisting any attempt to land near the city, which, strangely undefended on the seaward side, trusted only to the shoal quicksands and unceasing surf which broke for a mile or more across the Playa Grande, which ten years before had been a level and sandy plain, as its name implies.

Here Don Sebastian de Eslava had anchored two of his largest men-of-war just inside the shallow boat entrance of El Boca Grande; but it was not a part of the play to send crowded boats and men with cutlass and pistol to certain destruction: so, leaving several vessels to blockade the inlet, the armada ran down the sinuous coast of the Isle of Tierra Bomba, which, at times a mere neck of sandy eminences, some three or four miles from the city, expanded into a large island cut up by ponds and swamps, and heavily wooded with the peculiar vegetation of the tropics.

Suddenly the three leading ships, the Norfolk, Russell and Shrewsbury, were seen to shorten sail and crawl in toward the land, at a point less than a league from the fortifications at the main entrance, and from the wooded shores of Salmedina bay darted out several puffs of white smoke, and the distant thunder of several eighteen-pounders told that the real work of the expedition had begun.

"There's two batteries there just built by the viceroy," said Stephen, who had heard from Woodside some details of the probable plan of attack.

"Just beyond there, around the point, the ships would lie open to the fire of four or five other forts, but, unless they drift past it, will have only a fascine battery and the guns of the Chamba fort—not over thirty eighteen-pounders in all—to silence."

"They strip es prettily as boxers goin' into the ring," said Coggeshall, his heavy face lighting up with the fire of battle. "There go all the sails down to the courses; an' see how the big Shrewsbury runs close in an' comes into the wind to anchor. Close quarters an' plenty of grape is the word now, I'll warrant."

As he spoke, Townsend in the Shrewsbury, Graves in the Norfolk, and Norris in the Russell, all of them eighty-gun ships of the line, in the order named; running boldly in shore, close under the fire of the partially masked batteries; came to anchor, and having first corrected by means of springs upon their cables, the tendency to swing in shore, were the next instant lost from view in the smoke of their own tremendous broadsides, which made the huge hulks quiver, roll and tremble, until the spars above the hidden spar-deck swayed to and fro in the ascending volumes of sulphurous vapor.

The iron storm vomited from six score iron throats, was seen to throw up huge clouds of sand, dashing into the air fragments of rock and the shattered tops and limbs of trees, but the shore and ships were soon so lost to view that only a few high spars and lofty branches, swaying in the storm of war, could be distinguished; for it was high noon,

and the fresh sea breeze with which the fleet had come gaily down the coast, "killed by the cannonade," had died away, and most of the fleet were drifting along with the westward current, until the signal to anchor was given and obeyed.

But soon the fire of the Spaniards seemed to slacken, for the tongues of red flame from the shrouded shore grew strangely infrequent, while the fire of the English ships, and the hoarse, mad cheers of her gunners came more distinct and triumphantly across the water, and Stephen, who had been summoned on deck by Woodside, heard Captain Knowles say to his first officer, "The first move is ours, and with small loss I'll wager a score of sovereigns, for the dons are no lovers of so close a game."

"I won't bet, thank ye," said Ashton, dryly. "But what the mischief is the matter with Townsend in the Shrewsbury yonder? By heaven, they've cut his cables, and he'll be under their whole fire in less than twenty minutes."

"If he does we can't help him much except with heavy loss, for there's no breeze, and we can only drift in under fire," said Knowles, anxiously, "and, with our part of the squadron crowded with troops, it would be murder to go into action under such circumstances."

"Well, it's Lestock's business to get him out of the hobble, but God help his crew," said Ashton, bitterly. "Look at her now; there she goes yawing and swinging clear of the smoke, and with no more steerage-way than a coal barge with a crew of drunken colliers."

Every glass in the fleet, and almost every eye, it might be said, was upon the apparently doomed ship, as she drifted close to the outer ledges of the promontory which alone intervened between her and the entrance, along whose shore, bending to the south and west, lay first the outer castle of St. Jago, then the sister fort of St. Phillip, and half a cannon shot farther away the great ramparts of Boca Chica and Fort St. Joseph, guarding the floating boom, which shut with huge logs and gigantic chains, the narrow entrance. Beyond it the Spanish Admiral Don Blas, in his great warship, the Gallicia, with the Africa, San Carlos and St. Phillip, lay ranged along the boom, with their broadsides sweeping the narrow channel, while on the opposite shores of the Island of Varu, several lesser batteries awaited the first appearance of the Shrewsbury's hull from behind the protecting cape.

"She's past the ledges now," gasped Knowles, his face perfectly white. "There go the first guns from the Barradera batteries, but he needn't mind them if he could only anchor in time. There, he catches the harbor current! See how fast he's sweeping up under the guns. No, there she stops; he's got another anchor down, but he's too far out and under fire from all their guns. There! there they rake him. Good God! what a place for a single ship."

"Townsend is good for it," said Ashton, with compressed lips. "That was a raking discharge, but he'll soon get his guns to bear unless they've killed his sailing master at the first fire. See! his maintopmast go into splinters. Why doesn't Lestock signal?"

As this conversation proceeded, the Shrewsbury, with her moorings cut by a cannon ball, had, as we have seen, drifted by the protecting cape, opened the harbor, and, before another anchor could be bent and let go, lay within close range of the two outer forts, and not beyond the reach of the heavier guns of the main defences of the pass, and the Spanish fleet. A tremendous cannonade was opened upon her, and as she swung stern-to, the raking fire severely damaged her rigging and upper works, killing and wounding over a score of her crew. But, as Ashton had said, the Shrewsbury's sailing-master was a veteran and tried mariner; and when once moored, the great ship was soon lying across the current, with her guns bearing upon the hostile batteries, and quickly the smoke of her own fire told friends as well as foes, that the flags she ran up at every mast-head might be shot down, but would never be lowered while men enough were left to fight the heavy batteries below them. Her fire opened with a crash, as her men ran madly to their quarters from being shot down like sheep at their labor with capstan and windlass; but the discharges speedily became more regular, as section after section fired in regular rotation, showing that Townsend was getting his men well in hand, and making his officers sight each gun, so as to make every shot tell; and later the signals shown to the admiral told that, although suffering heavily, she could hold her own without risking any of the other ships of the squadron, although several vessels got out their boats and kedges, and essayed to work to

a position from which, if the worst came to the worst, they might drift in and take part in the unequal contest.

"He'll do," said Knowles, shutting his glass, "and now, lieutenant, your work is to come. Norris and Graves have silenced yonder batteries. Can you reconnoitre them, and see if the Spaniards have really abandoned them?"

"Certainly, sir; shall we go at once?"

"Yes, sir; I will send a boat to the men-of-war, who will cease firing as you near the shore, which you will do well to the eastward of the Chamba fort, which lies well out on this side of the Salmedina. Let only one man land, and don't be ashamed to run rather than fight, for the troops won't be ready to land this two hours yet. But send your best man; and, by the way, who is he?"

"Well, sir, that's hard to say. Sergeant Hay here is good enough for any service, and his judgment I can trust implicitly; but his servant, yonder Indian in the boat, is as lithe as an eel, as noiseless as a serpent, and, as his Puritan friends would say, 'would deceive the very elect;' being in all things of that kind a scout equal to the best of his people."

"Very well! Let the Indian lead by wading, and reconnoitre a little; then, if he reports all safe, let your sergeant join him and, if feasible, enter the works. If they are deserted let both report at once, and you will signal me by means of a weft which the signal officer will give you."

A few more directions as to the kind of signals to be given followed, a cutter was manned, and the

two boats darted off toward the two eighties, which still kept up a desultory fire upon the silent batteries.

"Cease rowing," said Woodside, as they drew near the Russel, and, as the Americans rested on their oars, the officer in charge of the cutter, with a wave of his hand, kept on his course and boarded the man-of-war, which soon after ceased firing, and a few seconds later the Norfolk did the same, while a boat passed and repassed between them, after which the cutter came back to the whaler, now almost alongside.

"The ships will re-open their fire in a moment," the officer said breathlessly, "for they say a few men are still to be seen in the Chamba battery; but they will use grape and round shot, and under the smoke you can land unseen. Make haste, for the land breeze will soon set in, and then the smoke will blow away almost as fast as it is made."

"Give way, men," said Woodside quietly, as he set the direction by a pocket compass laid upon his knee. "There's the first gun; we shall soon have smoke enough," and five minutes later they swept under the stifling vapors, through which only the sough of the seas breaking upon the beach could be heard, in the intervals between the roar of the deliberate and measured but heavy fire of the ships.

Suddenly Untequit raised one hand and gave a light knock on the gunwale of the boat; Woodside as suddenly motioned to ease rowing, and bent forward as if inquiring the Indian's purpose.

" 'Tis only that we are a little out of our course,"

said Stephen, pointing eastward. "The current is strong and we are inside the point. If we keep her up a couple of points, we can land when we hear the sea on the ledges."

"Do so," said Woodside quietly; and in a short time he saw the outlines of the shore and found himself a boat's length from a sheltered nook, where no great danger of ambuscade or accident from the seas seemed possible. Stephen laid the boat's head to the waves, and Jones, who took the bow oar, threw over the grapnel and paid out the line until the stern lay scarce three yards from an isolated boulder, the first of a line of several extending into the sea and occasionally submerged by a wave larger than usual.

Untequit had already laid aside his heavy gaiters, and catching up his piece, brought her to the trail, and awaiting a lull in the seas, motioned to Hay to swing the boat near the rocks; then stepping upon the covered stern leaped from his precarious footing to the slippery ledge, and thence from rock to rock until he stood safely upon the strand. Then stealthily following the base of the cliff, he ascended by a series of crumbling ledges and disappeared from view.

Fifteen or twenty minutes later the firing had ceased, and soon after Untequit came back breathless with the information that the fascine battery was empty, and that in Chamba there were only some wounded men and one or two friends who had refused to desert them; and that although he had followed the trail of the fugitives to the edge of the

woods he had seen no one else; and as the smoke still hung heavily and the signals could not be seen, Untequit came on board, and the party returned on board the Weymouth.

Captain Knowles was much pleased with the report, and complimented Woodside and his crew highly, giving each man a Spanish dollar, and what, perhaps, they valued even more, an order on the purser for an extra ration of rum, after which they were given their dinner, consisting of the regular navy rations of hard ship's bread, beef, and pork; which, owing to the inefficiency of the commissariat department, were the worst of their kind, the bread being alive with worms and maggots, and the meat tainted and salt as brine.

"'Tis a pity we couldn't have foraged a little," said Jones, dolefully. "I'm thinking we shall miss the old schooner an' her cook, boys, arter this."

"Don't grumble, Jones," said Hay, sharply. "This ship is as well found as any, and the Shrewsbury's crew would like time and leisure to eat even this, if they were out of their death trap, I reckon."

"Well said, mate," said a burly topman who sat near them, with his clasp-knife, kid and tin can, eating heartily. "Th'o I must say 'tis no wonder that yon Yankee grumbles, for rations so bad I never zee, an' t' drink be as bad as the 'atin'. Try un, man."

Stephen placed his lips to the can, but barely managed to swallow a few drops of the fiery spirit, which, half diluted with water, and neither sweetened nor mixed with lime juice, formed a draught nauseous enough to disgust the most confirmed lover of spirits.

"What is it, shipmate?" asked Stephen, curiously.

The fellow roared heartily. "'Needcessity' they do call it, zur," he chuckled, "an' sure enough, 'tis ayther this or nothin', for about three half pints o' water is all they gives us beside the grog, although we filled ivry cask an' bar'l at Jamaiky."

"Well! well! let's go on deck," was all that Stephen could say, and the party hastened to leave the greater part of their viands behind them, and went up to see what else should come of the day's adventures.

To the northward the fight was over, for the land breeze had sprung up, and the Shrewsbury, slipping her cables, was standing out to sea from the terribly exposed condition, in which for nearly three hours she had been fought with consummate skill and bravery. Over a score of brave fellows lay dead along her larboard gangway, and forty others had been wounded. Her lower masts were pitted with shot, and her rigging and canvas hung in ribbons; but she had several times almost silenced the fire of St. Jago and St. Phillip, and their gunners were scarcely sorry to see so stubborn an antagonist draw out of range.

On the Russell and Norfolk the loss was much smaller, numbering only some half dozen slain outright and fifteen or sixteen wounded on both ships, for their fire was so heavy, and delivered at such close quarters, that most of the guns were deserted by the Spaniards after one or two discharges. And now the crews lay at quarters, resting after their herculean labors, their canvas kilts, bare arms,

breasts and faces black with powder, and flecked with tar and blood, and nearly all in that deep, almost death-like sleep, which follows excessive excitement and exhausting labors.

"'Tis time that the troops were ready for landing," said Knowles, impatiently. "Unless we soon make a move the Spaniards will take heart, reoccupy Chamba, and send Norris and Graves to their guns again."

"Lestock is slow at any time," said Ashton, "but the wind is baffling, and the Stromboli ketch is six or eight miles to leeward, and Wynyard, with a part of his grenadiers, went on board her this morning, as I saw myself. But there's the signal to land the troops; luckily for us we haven't any of the clumsy cattle on board."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Woodside," he added quickly, as he noted the quick flush that mounted to the temples of the other. "I don't mean your colonists, who are as amphibious as seals. But those redcoats are all under foot in a seaway, and in a boat—" and he ended with an expression of utter disgust which need not here be written.

"No offense, Mr. Ashton," said Woodside with a smile. "I hope, Captain Knowles, that we may join the landing party. We can move more quickly than the regulars, and will come off in the morning if you wish it."

Knowles hesitated a moment. "You can go," he said at length, "but I can't spare you later than at noon to-morrow, for I've no doubt it will take us until then to land the troops in this division. Mr.

Ashton, see that the watch take in a little more on that spring, our battery may be wanted. Be prudent, Woodside, for I have need of you."

Taking their arms, blankets and a supply of food and ammunition, the Americans started in their light craft with the heavier flotilla of ships' boats which, laden to the gunwale with their own crews and the starched and stiff but athletic men of the British infantry, moved slowly and heavily through the water, in spite of the regular, powerful strokes of the men-of-war's men.

From the officer in charge of the landing, who occupied a position on the flank of the flotilla, Woodside got permission to precede the boats and test the practicability of landing in safety and without opposition.

It was now between five and six o'clock, and the land breeze had toned down the sea until, almost unruffled, it lapped gently on the sandy beach of the nearly semi-circular Bay of Salmedina; and indeed it appeared that the heavy surf which protected the Cartagena shore, was seldom found to prevail farther to the north and west.

Without waiting for farther orders, and merely steering a little to the eastward of the batteries, Woodside laid the boat on a sandy beach, and Stephen and Untequit jumping overboard, ran quickly up the beach until they gained the cover of the woods, through which they scouted carefully but quickly until assured that only the dead and wounded were left to dispute the possession of the batteries with the English soldiery. Returning they

beckoned to their companions, who lay on their oars just outside the line of breaking sea, and running in they beached their boat, leaping into the water and running her up just clear of danger from the sea.

The main flotilla was now close at hand, and several of the boats seeing that no harm had come to the whaler's crew, followed their example, the sailors bending sharply to their oars, and the men cheering lustily, and in as many moments no less than half a dozen boats had landed their quota of grenadiers, who promptly fell in, opened their pouches and were lighting their matches and slinging their muskets, when the officer in charge appeared and angrily ordered them to re-embark at once in spite of all expostulation.

"Col. Wynyard is not here, and we have not over four hundred men to hold the batteries in case of an attack. I won't take the responsibility, sir. I tell you I won't take it. Re-embark your men at once, and keep outside the surf until the rest of the battalion comes to join us," and despite the evident disgust of the naval officers, and the remonstrances of his own comrades, the fussy little major had his own way in the matter; and after much lifting, tugging, profanity and wetting of clothing and arms, the stranded boats rejoined the rest, and the flotilla lay on their oars in a close body within easy reach of the guns of the deserted battery.

Woodside turned to his crew. "Well, boys, we at least are not under his orders, and it seems to me that we can do no better than to watch that no force takes advantage of this blunder, to give yonder poor

fellows a volley of grape or musketry from the battery or these thickets of underbrush. Can we keep guard, Hay, with our boat's crew over the approaches?"

Untequit raised his head as if to answer, and Stephen checking himself made an almost imperceptible motion of acquiescence. "Why not, sir? The woods are thick and plenty of thorns. There are only two roads and a path. Three men are enough; the rest can stay in the boat."

"Let us two and Coggeshall go," said Stephen. "We will help you launch the boat, and you can fish, for there are lines in the lockers and a rind of pork will do for bait until you get a grouper or parrot-fish. In a couple of hours the troops will be ready, and we can come down and join you."

"Well said!" cried the lieutenant. "Come, boys, off with the boat. Of course you will not fire except in the last resort, for an alarm might spoil all if it was causeless."

While they were speaking the boat had been righted, and the united crews easily ran her down the sloping beach after a retreating wave. Woodside and his three men pushed off, and twenty minutes later rode easily at anchor outside the line of breakers, fishing with a success which promised them a toothsome repast, when the slow-moving disembarking force should take possession.

Meanwhile, the three scouts entered the woods and, having looked carefully to their weapons, traversed the inner boundaries of the cleared space in which the works stood, and found, as the Indian had

said, that there were but three approaches through the almost impenetrable forest, and also that the Spaniards had left in great haste; for several of their dead and wounded lay near the inner battery, and one young fellow lay groaning in the very entrance of the covered way to Boca Chica.

Stephen stopped and bent over him. A grape shot had shattered his elbow, he was evidently delirious, and an occasional moan of *agua! agua!* told of the thirst which consumed him.

Silently they raised him and drew him to the edge of the clearing, where no harm could come to him in case of a night attack, and Stephen held to his lips his own canteen, motioning to Coggeshall to pour a little from his into a jetty oxhorn, mounted with silver, that hung by the creole's side. The sheath at his side was empty, but the pistols at his belt were loaded, and, taking them, Hay gave one to the ex-privateer, retaining the other for himself.

"Untequit, you will take the woodpath leading inland, follow it a short distance, and if you come to an opening take your stand there. Coggeshall, you will go toward the city an hundred yards or more until you can find clear space, and I will follow down this road toward the castles. Keep quiet, and don't fire, except in the last extremity. Stay, give me a strip of this poor fellow's kerchief, or he will bleed to death."

Quickly he extemporized a rude tourniquet, which he applied and secured with a short stick, and then turning to his companions, motioned to them to be gone. The Indian glided into the shadow of the

dusky thickets like a spectre, and the privateersman followed as quickly, if less silently than his companion; and as they were lost to view, Hay caught up his musket, loosened his Spanish knife in its sheath, and, despite his weight and stature, moved noiselessly down the darkening wood-path, over which, scarce three hours before, the retreating enemy had hurried.

Pausing at every turn and angle, scanning closely every jagged stump and ragged boulder, distorted by the twilight, he, nevertheless, soon saw before him an opening, through which he could catch a glimpse of evening sky, still faintly tinted with the last rays of the sunset.

Before him lay a broad lagoon, and between him and its waters were the castles of Tierra Bomba, which guarded the nearer bank of the narrow and tortuous channel of Boca Chica. But nearer still, in truth scarce half a musket shot away, he caught the gleam of a bayonet above the scattered bushes beyond the edge of the forest, and saw that he was close to the advanced pickets of the enemy.

Still, he desired to see more, and, passing through a side path, he stole along on his hands and knees, and, peering through the bushes, saw that a second sentinel stood between him and the castle—or, rather, battery—of St. Jago, which lay nearly half a mile away, and, between it and the pickets, at their bivouac fire, the reserve guard of some fifty men were grouped; but he saw nowhere any signs of any intention to reoccupy the southern batteries or contest a landing.

As noiselessly as he had come, he returned, leaving the sentinels, who laughed, chatted and cursed alternately, as they met at the end of their beats, totally unconscious of the fact that within pistol-shot of their posts had lurked the first of the invaders, who had that day won the first move in the great game of war, and were even now taking possession of the captured forts of Salmedina.

For, as he hastened back over the winding, covered way, he heard the cheers of the troops as they entered the batteries, and met at the entrance of the road a guard on the way to picket the approaches, accompanied by Untequit, who had been called back from a fruitless watch by the noise of the disembarkation.

By midnight the grenadiers were all landed, and to the number of about eight hundred were bivouacked in the clearing, rejoicing in their success and the pleasure of once more standing on *terra firma;* and their fires lit up the dark woods and the dusky outlines of the forts, where the engineers labored until late into the night in pointing a part of the guns to sweep the land approaches with grape and bags of musket balls, and setting palisades to strengthen the feeble defences in rear of the works.

Hastening down to the shore, they found their whaleboat carefully drawn up to the edge of the woods, and under a ledge their friends were grouped around a fire, intently engaged in discussing a supper of fish, cooked after a way learned by Jones during a short sojourn amid the fishermen of the lower Potomac.

Against the rocks, and suspended to them by pins of wood set into the crevices, the fish, nicely split and washed, were suspended, and exposed to the heat of a bed of coals; and from time to time, with a sharp stick, the presiding genius of the feast reversed the position of the fish until equally cooked. They were then taken down and laid on some broad leaves gathered near by.

"You are just in time," said Woodside, heartily, "and no doubt you are hungry enough by this time. But, fall to, for those fish are tempting enough for an epicure."

"They ain't jest what they might be," said Jones, hesitatingly, "fer we used to hev' oak planks about two inches through, an' we could turn 'em better an' oftener. But anythin' is better then such stuff as we hev' to eat yender."

The fish were indeed delicious, and for some moments little was said, until a bright flash and heavy roar to seaward brought the whole party to their feet, but they reseated themselves as they saw that several small vessels were closing in under the cape, by which the Shrewsbury had drifted under the fire of the castles.

"'Tis the bomb ketches getting to work on the batteries," said Woodside. "The Stromboli anchored there before landing the grenadiers, and she'll give the Spaniards in Boca Chica little chance of sleeping on guard after this, for the thirteen-inch shells from her mortars are terrible things when they drop in the right place."

Another burst of vivid flame lit up for a moment

the distant cliffs. Another thunderous report rolled across sea and forest and jarred the very earth, and a hissing, coruscating point of light ascended high in the heavens, rushed down in a swift parabolic curve, and ended in midair with a crashing explosion which sent the ponderous missile to earth in a cloud of jagged fragments.

" 'Twill go hard with the dons if they don't keep under cover," said Stephen, as two more heavy explosions burst out almost simultaneously. "The Etna and Basilisk are at it, and they say that Captain Knowles calculated the ranges and charges himself."

"There's an answer from the Spaniards at last," cried Jones, as a large shell suddenly exploded near one of the frigates outside the line of bomb ketches. "I reckon we shall git it ourselves afore mornin', fer they know the distance to an inch."

Even as he spoke, a swiftly moving speck shot up into the heavens above the forest, rushed down toward the batteries and exploded, as Stephen judged, near the boundaries of the cleared space.

There was a terrified rush among some of the troops who were moving idly about, but when another came even closer, the order to "fall in" was sounded, and the men moved into a position aside from the line of fire.

"The bear is hunting the hunter," laughed Woodside coolly, "and after this we shall have sterner work than before; but we shall have good cover here, and we had best haul our boat under yonder cliff and sleep beside her. Look well to your arms

and make a better fire, for the night fogs and mosquitoes will trouble us the less if we keep up a little blaze until morning."

Stephen started to his feet. "We've forgotten the wounded Spaniard," he said, and catching up a brand he hurried up the bank and across the clearing toward the entrance of the covered way, and Untequit and Coggeshall following more slowly, came up just in time to find their comrade arrested in his errand by the guard, posted to keep men from that part of the clearing invaded by the enemy's shells.

"It won't do, sirrah," cried the officer in charge, who happened to be on his rounds, and came up promptly to see who was parleying with his sentinels. "Damme me if you Americans have any more idea of discipline than so many sheep. Go back at once to your command, if you have one, or if not, let me find you at the fascine battery to-morrow morning."

Stephen waited quietly and then said, "I was wrong, sir, I see, not to wait for orders, but we are a part of the crew of the whaleboat, and when we scouted through here, we found a wounded officer out yonder and forgot him, until the shells began to come this way, and we thought—"

"Bless my soul! yes, sir; of course, sir! and very creditable to you, sir. Go out at once, and bring him into the Chamba battery. Here, John," he added, turning to his orderly, "take your lantern and go with them, but keep a good look-out for the shells."

The sentry shouldered his musket and recommenced his regular and measured walk, while the four hastened toward the gloomy wall of black, where the tropical forest was at times disclosed by the sudden meteor flashes of the bombs, which, while evidently true to a well-calculated range, were fortunately propelled by too little powder to invade the quarters of the men in and around the fort.

But every step the party took drew them closer to the forest, on whose verge the crashing of tree-tops and the downward rush of huge palm-leaves, cut off by the breaking missiles, told that their errand of mercy might well cost some of them limb or life.

"We must get to him," said Stephen, firmly. "Give me the lantern, and I will go in alone. I can make shift to bring him out, I think, for he was a mere boy, and of slight build at that."

"Heavens!" ejaculated Coggeshall, as a huge shell burst just over the top of a tall tree, which for an instant seemed to be the centre of a flash of lightning. "We rested his head ag'in the root o' that very tree; an' I'd bet anything thet their mortars are laid by it, fer its top is nearly es high ag'in es the trees around it."

"Keep to the left, and under cover of the trees," said Stephen; and at full speed they rushed in under the shelter of the thick coppice, and at last stood, tired and panting, by the side of the Spaniard, who lay with his face to the earth a little way from the oak.

"He has fainted," said Hay; "get him behind the

tree before another shell comes." And, raising him, they drew him behind the spreading bole, while the Englishman held up his lantern until its rays fell upon the motionless face.

"He's dead," said Coggeshall, as he pointed to the half-closed eyes and fallen jaw. "We've come too late to save him."

Stephen hastily opened the breast of the gay velvet doublet, and placed his hand over the region of the heart. "It can't be," he said, "for the bandages have not loosened, and the loss of an arm is a common chance of war." Suddenly, however, he withdrew his hand and shook it as if in disgust and horror; then threw open the stiffened garment and held the lantern close to the body. A deep, contused wound, which might be the work of either bullet or poinard, had pierced to the very heart.

"The man hes been murdered," said Coggeshall in a strident whisper, "an' by no British hand, I'll be bound. There's be'n devilish work done here sence we stood here over him, an' not fer gold either I consait, fer that ring is on his han's, an' yonder chain round his neck is wo'th mor'n one doubloon, I reckon. Good God! thet was close."

Over their heads a tremendous explosion deafening, blinding, suffocating, filled the air with fragments of iron and masses of shattered wood, and all four lay for a moment half-stunned beside the dead.

One by one, however, they all rose to their feet except Untequit, who seemed insensible, and as the lantern was still fortunately alight, Stephen seized

it and bent in much anxiety over his faithful comrade. But he quickly revived, and after one or two futile efforts sat up and looked in a dazed way around him. "It's all right," he said; "a branch struck me and I feel a little sore and out of breath, but I shall be better soon. Here's a knife, though," he continued, "I found it in getting up."

As he spoke, he gave into the sergeant's hands a short but polished poniard with a nearly round but slightly fluted blade, still stained with a drop or two or red blood, which encrimsoned a hilt of rare workmanship, such as Italian artists alone have been wont to expend on weapons of this nature. The gripe and guard were of silver in the form of a Medusa, whose feet were encircled by the coils of a huge serpent, and while small rubies formed the eyes of the boa, the cold glitter of a brace of emeralds set with consummate art gave to the tiny statue a weird and strangely malign effect.

"'Tis the very weapon," said Coggeshall, as he pointed out on the edges of the wound the peculiar creases of the fluted blade. "But this is no place for us. Let us take him to the camp an' give him burial. Mayhap we may learn his name an' help to avenge him."

An hour later, after removing from the body such articles as were of value or might help in identifying the dead, the young Spaniard was buried in the ditch of the fascine battery, under the orders of the old major, to whose servant was given the purse of the deceased. Lieut. Woodside received the chain, rings and other valuables, with orders to

hold them, until such time as the chances of the siege, should give him the opportunity of ascertaining the name and rank of the dead and communicating with his friends. In default of this, they were to be sold, and their value divided among the crew of the whaleboat, according to the customs of that period.

Hay and Coggeshall retained the pistols they had taken, but they bore only the unmeaning but costly and elegant inlaid work of that period, except that under the trigger-guard of each, a close inspection revealed a rude "H" burned into the rosewood of the stock.

"The face was not altogether Spanish," said honest Jack Coggeshall; and Stephen felt a thrill of strangely blended wonder and fear, as he drew from his pouch the gift of the old buccaneer, and compared the workmanship of the serpent ring with the scaly coils that supported the emerald-eyed Medusa.

Chapter XVI.

Blazing a Path

Before daylight, Woodside awoke his men, and announced to them the landing of nearly all the regulars, and the occupation without farther bloodshed of the two small forts of St. Jago and St. Phillip. "We must be on board the Weymouth by to-day at noon," he said; "but the engineers are talking of cutting a way across the island to the lagoon, and have asked me to get you, who are used to forestry, to explore the line to be followed."

"There is your man," said Stephen, pointing to Jones, who was busily engaged in devouring some remnants of last night's supper. "He has stepped out more patents than any man in the brigade, and just give him a pocket compass and the course, and a surveyor with all his instruments won't be able to do a great deal in the way of straightening his blaze."

"Well, you shall do as you please about volunteering for this job," said the officer kindly. "We have done what was asked of us in reconnoitring the forts, and you may rest here until it is time to go on board, or take up this new duty; but I confess I should like to see more of the land hereabouts, and, if possible, something of the lagoon yonder."

"Besides, there might be a chance to get some information or capture a picket of the enemy," said Stephen eagerly.

"I'll venture to say thet we'll git some fruit, an' perhaps some game," suggested Jones, who despaired of another mess of fish.

"I'm agreed," said Coggeshall thoughtfully; "ef 'tain't too far, we may hev' to drag our boats acrost, an' come in back of them batteries."

"What do you say, Gibbs?" asked Coggeshall of the Falmouth whaler, who sat smoking deliberately by the side of the boat.

"Why, I ain't particular, sir, whether I go or stay. Somebody ought to stay with the boat, an' I jest as lieves stay as not. Ef you want me to go, I'm here, an' ready to chop brush, forage for bananas, or fight Spaniards, jest as it happens."

Woodside laughed heartily: "You ought to be a regular, Gibbs, you're so ready to obey orders. However, you're right, and, if you will, shall be appointed guard over our boat and stuff. Hay, take a man and go to the new battery for some axes; you will find a lot among the intrenching tools. Four will do, for I'm not used to wood-chopping, and my sword is a true Ferrara, and will cut underbrush with any *machête* that a Spaniard ever wore on thigh."

Half an hour later, just as the first rosy gleam tinged the eastern sea, Hay and Jones returned with two axes, a hatchet, and a pair of heavy, horn-hafted *machêtes*, which, as our readers may not know, we will describe as short, very broad-bladed cutlasses without hilts, much used in the Spanish and Mexican territories, and generally worn in a leathern sheath at the side.

Coggeshall had already chosen the heaviest *machête*. Stephen and Untequit took with ill-concealed contempt the broad-bladed, clumsy, straight-handled Spanish axes. Jones poised the short-handled hatchet, and, after a minute inspection of its edge, stuck it in his belt; and, leaving the remaining cutlass to Gibbs for cutting firewood, the party, after looking well to their priming and flints, moved through the busy encampment to the edge of the wood, where several officers of the engineer corps were already marshalling a lazy rabble of Jamaican negroes.

"Give us your course, gentlemen," said Woodside, saluting them, "and we will try and lead the way for your axemen; we will only blaze a path, and you can correct its defects at your leisure."

"You are welcome to try," said the elder of the engineers, "though 'tis against rule to trust to anything but theodolite and compass. You had better look well to your steps though, for snakes seem but too plentiful, and we've killed a rattlesnake already."

Jones slung his musket, took his hatchet from his belt, took a long sight over the theodolite and marched into the thick coppice, cutting and slashing at the thorny twigs and passing them behind to be carried off by the others, until a passage just wide enough for men in single file had penetrated the narrow belt of close underbrush and let them into a more open growth of ceibas, myrabolans, cocoa palms, plantains and mameis; some of which the men quickly attacked with their axes, and though the season was late, secured enough fruit

to give each sufficient to fill their almost empty haversacks.

In such a growth, with the exception of lianas, there was little to obstruct Jones, who carelessly lopping off the cable-like vines, and occasionally cutting a huge blaze on the side of any tree abutting on his line of march, kept straight forward until over two miles had been traversed and the guns of Boca Chica seemed so near that one of the engineer officers, who had followed them with a compass, became alarmed and counselled a return.

"I don't know after all that it will be best to make this covered way, for the Boca Grande is watched by our ships by day and night and no force can cross from the city without their movements being telegraphed to us before they have gone a single league; and it will be easier for them to send reinforcements by the lagoon, until we are masters of Boca Chica."

"Still," said another, "we shall be better able to survey their movements, and perhaps to take advantage of their knowledge to strike when they least expect it. Let us go on and see what is being done in the lagoon."

"Agreed," said the other, "but we must go quietly and use the cutlass only to force a way through; for an axe-stroke rings through these woods like a musket shot, and I'm jealous we shall have a brush with the dons before we get back."

Stephen spoke in a low tone to Untequit, who stepped lightly forward, passing Jones, who at a whisper at once stuck his axe in his belt and took his musket in hand. The Indian led the way hence-

forward, simply by the direction of the sun's rays, until about a mile further on they saw an open path which they crossed at right angles. The path was a mere cattle road, but the stumps of several large mahogany trees showed recent marks of the axe, and Coggeshall, as he stole across it, picked up the coarse brown paper of an empty cartridge casing.

Thenceforth they spoke only in whispers, and moved forward quickly but watchfully, unmindful of the golden bunches of plantains, grateful custard apples and other tropical fruits, and not daring to fire, although great flocks of gaudy parrots, huge iguanas, and occasional coveys of the white-meated *guan*, crossed their path from time to time. The way grew boggy and wet, the hiss of large serpents was heard from clumps of tall grass and thick-set reeds, and occasional detours were necessary to pass by pond holes and quaking morasses.

"We must be nearly across," said the engineer in a husky voice, for the heat was now almost overpowering. "See, yonder there seems to be a gleam of blue water, and I hope we may be able to see without being seen, and rest an half hour before we set out to return."

"That we can do," replied Woodside cheerily. " 'Tis only six o'clock and twenty minutes, and we have a good five hours to cover as many miles. Hay, see why it is, that Jones and the Indian are stopping yonder."

As he spoke, Untequit beckoned and stepped boldly into a glade which opened on a little bay of the lagoon, which the party as they emerged,

beheld spread out before them, a shallow inland sea bordered with wooded islets, between which they could see twenty miles away the farther shore and the deep ship channel, now beaten into short chop seas by the fresh ocean breeze. The shore where they stood was sandy, but on the south, a long, muddy point ending in a tangled grove of mangroves forbade farther exploration in that direction. Moving carefully northwest, they approached the ridges of a woody promontory, and found that between them and Boca Chica a second mangrove marsh intervened.

The grass gave no intimation of human habitation or the presence of a foe, and several species of water fowl, wading and swimming near the mouth of the bayou, gave proof that no boat was near them, unless most cunningly concealed, which was not likely.

"I will go yonder," said Untequit, pointing to a huge ceiba near the end of the promontory, "and keep watch in that tree. I will answer for any party from that direction, but you must see that no sly canoe or scouting party surprises you in the open."

So saying, the Indian took from his haversack a juicy custard apple, and eating as he went, sauntered off through the woods toward the great cottonwood, in whose foliage he was soon lost to view.

The rest of the party were soon reclining on the smooth sward on the border of the little cove, and near a spring of cool, sweet water, with which they bathed their heated faces and filled their canteens, before sitting down to breakfast, or rather lunch,

for all were hungry, and the fruit they had gathered had suffered somewhat in forcing a way through the woods. Nevertheless they enjoyed the luscious plantains and pulpy mameis, which they ate with their coarse shipbread, and scooped out the cold, creamy pulp of the cocoa nuts with their knives, not without some little apprehension of sudden surprise, for they were at least a league and a half from any support in case of attack.

"Juba, go and fill my canteen yonder," said the officer of engineers to the Jamaica negro who had accompanied him. The negro rose slowly, and grumbling at being disturbed, shambled off to the brook, and was about to fill the receptacle when, with a kind of howl of terror, he sprang backward and ran at full speed toward the party, followed rapidly by a huge, yellowish snake. The boa, on seeing the others, suddenly threw itself into a coil, and, as if fearing to advance, yet unwilling to retreat, reared its shining crest above the convoluted folds, and with glittering eyes, erected fangs and forked tongue vibrating like a lambent flame, filled the air with loud hisses, which seemed to be echoed and re-echoed from the woods.

Coggeshall started, then threw up his musket, and called to the negro who stood between him and the monster, "Stand clear, thar, blackey, an' I'll soon stop his devilish noise. What in time ails ye; what are ye lookin' at now?"

Following the upturned glance of the negro's eyes the party glanced into the tree above them, and with singular unanimity sprang from the ground

and rushed down to the shore, for in the branches above a second serpent, even larger than the first, hung, slowly swinging back and forth, with four or five feet of his burnished neck and glittering, undulating body pendant from the branch around which he had been coiled.

Jones struck his musket strongly on the lock to settle his priming, and spoke sharply and firmly to his comrade, "I take this, you t'other. Ready?"

"Aye, aye, mate," responded the privateersman, as his heavy musket settled down to perfect and deadly aim.

"Then fire," exclaimed Jones, and so promptly was the order obeyed that it seemed as if but one report echoed through the glade.

The wading herons, with startled cries, leaped awkwardly into the air to seek the distant tree tops; the wild duck sprang into flight with a rush of wings and confused calls until the air was full of circling birds; flocks of screaming parrots swept away into the deeper woods and, as the smoke cleared away, Coggeshall saw that his bullet had sped truly to its mark, and the serpent, with shattered head, was writhing in the death agony.

Scarcely less fatal was his comrade's aim, but he had loaded with buckshot instead of ball, and the agonies of the wounded monster were something terrible to witness. The tree-top was shaken as with a tempest by the muscular contractions and rapid movements of the serpent, and leaves, twigs and drops of blood, which almost seemed to burn the flesh, flew all around and over the party.

Suddenly the reptile relaxed its hold, and half glided, half fell to the ground, and, either blinded by its wounds or enraged to the point of desperation, wriggled out to attack the party; but a blow from Hay's *machête* ended the episode and its life together.

"There! they're dead! But we must be off," cried Stephen, as he wiped the crimsoned blade on a handful of grass. "If the Spaniards are not all shut up in Boca Chica, we shall have plenty of company on our march back. By heaven! there are oars coming around the point yonder. Let us be off."

"You are right. Off with you, boys!" said Woodside. But just as the men had slung their haversacks, and were about to send word to Untequit, who, despite the noise of the guns, had not made his appearance, a tongue of flame flashed from the mangroves a hundred yards away, and the negro fell dead, riddled with bullets.

The next instant the bow of a large periauga, full of men, and carrying one or two swivels,—evidently one of the guardboats of the harbor,—darted out of the thick cover, and came on, her crew pouring in an ill-aimed volley, which for the most part flew high above the heads of the little party.

"We must leave the Indian to his fate," said Woodside, sadly; and the Americans in single file entered the cover, Coggeshall, who brought up the rear, loading as he ran.

For three hundred yards or more they saw nothing of their pursuers, although an occasional missile, aimed at random, passed now and then too close to be pleasant; and, although the Americans grumbled

at his orders, Woodside utterly refused to let them fire in return.

"The lieutenant is right, men," said Hay, at last. "There's that path a good mile ahead to cross before we are even passably sure of not being cut off, and if we want to get back with whole skins, we had better not lose time in potting one or two out of a dozen Spaniards."

Nothing could be said against this, for twenty minutes later, as they burst into the narrow wood-path, the whistling bullets of half a dozen muskets, fired by the advance of a small party from the forts, told them they had stirred up a veritable hornet's nest from which there was scant hope of escaping.

A mile farther on the engineer cried out that he could stand the pace no longer. Woodside's face was flushed, and his breath came thick and panting, and even Hay looked distressed and weary.

"Let us turn and fight," said Woodside, as the rustling woods told of the hot pursuit. "'Tis better to die fighting than to have our throats cut, like deer run down by the pack."

"There's an opening a little further on," said Stephen, breathing hard as he ran. "If we get across it they must charge us, up to the muzzles of our muskets."

"'Tis between two swamps, I consait," said Jones, hopefully. "I remember we passed yonder old greenheart, for I minded the dead top with the yellow flowered vines."

"Let us hurry across it, in God's name," said Woodside, "and woe be to them if they try to charge in the teeth of our fire."

A hoarse shout, or rather half savage yell of assent burst from the lips of all, and even the exhausted officer of engineers grasped his fusil more eagerly, and broke into increased speed as he issued into the opening, which might measure from three to five hundred feet across, and perhaps half as many more in width from one deep pond-hole to another. On the farther side a rocky cliff projected from a small eminence, and offered a little vantage ground of defence to the pursued, who, on reaching it, fell flat behind loose boulders and one or two large trees which stood near the top of the acclivity. They had scarcely looked to priming and flint, before the first of their foes made their appearance in the glade.

Some half a dozen, mostly Spanish sailors, wiry, bronzed and bearded, bare-headed and bare-footed, with long knives and boarding pistols in their sashes, and their naked cutlasses in their hands, sprang into the glade, followed by an infantry soldier or two with heavy muskets and cumbrous trappings.

A single shot rang out from a clump of yucca which covered a fragment of granite, the leading sailor sprang an ell into the air and fell; dead long before his riven breast touched the parched herbage.

Coggeshall turned upon his back, and merely biting his cartridge poured in the powder, and throwing away the bullet rammed down a neatly made cartridge of buckshot. "Fire away, boys," he cried, as he struck the stock of his musket sharply against the rock; "I'm ready for 'em again." The engineer fired, and the leading sailor, a slight, gaily dressed

officer, dropped his rapier with a volley of Spanish oaths, but caught it up with his left hand, and led on his men to the attack.

Jones fired, and a man beside him fell dead. Hay's musket sorely wounded a third, but the survivors, eight or ten in number, still pressed on to avenge their comrades, and Coggeshall alone had his weapon charged.

"Give 'em your pistols, leftenant," he whispered coolly. "Fire es ef ye were practisin' at a mark hangin' from the foreyard."

Woodside levelled and fired his pistol, setting the hair-trigger and aiming at the centre of the group. A marine dropped his long musket from his crushed right hand, then turned and fled, and Coggeshall uttered a yell of triumph, which sounded strangely like a Tarratine war-whoop, as indeed it was.

"Good again, Cap," he cried. "Give 'em 'tother one. I'm jest awaitin' 'till they pass yonder bush, an' then ef they keep together es they hev' I'll drop more'n one, or my name's not Jack Coggeshall."

The second pistol rang out from the cover, but no effect was visible, and the young officer, scarce forty yards away, bounded on in advance of his men, swinging his bright blade and crying his war-cry of "God and Spain!" The hindmost pursuers began to make their appearance at the edges of the wood, and already two or three soldiers, with their cumbrous muskets, had met and passed their wounded comrade as he ran for shelter to the rear.

"*Andela! Anda! Dios y Espana!*" The clear, young voice rang like a bugle through the glade, which lay

strangely still as the last faint wreath of smoke rose slowly up from the ambushed hill. The men who followed him had reached the bush; the privateer's musket was raised to its level and slowly swung as the rushing footmen changed places, swinging in and out of line. Suddenly three swart faces came for an instant into range; the trigger was pressed, the shower of *mitraille* hurtled through the yucca leaves, and the boy officer saw the deadly gap open between him and his surviving sailors, part of whom turned as if to flee, while the rest stood irresolute; but the Spaniard, with his sword-blade, threatened instant death to all cowards, and promised honor and gold to those who should follow and sweep the "*hereticos*" from the face of the earth.

"'Tis a pity; but 'tis his life or ourn," Jones muttered regretfully to Stephen, as he raised his piece. The death shot parted, the brave mariner cried his war-cry once more as he clapped his hand to his left breast, and, as he sank to earth insensible, his companions took to flight, nor halted until they were safely ensconsed on the borders of the opposite wood.

"We've beaten 'em off," said Coggeshall with a grim laugh; "but they're comin' in fast thar', an' there's twenty at least in the cover by this time. Ef ye've got your wind, we'd better start fer camp afore we're cut off in the rear."

"It won't do to start just yet," said Stephen, "for they're gathering for another charge. If we hold our fire and use buck and ball cartridge, we can drive them back, I think; and then, we'll let the officers go first, while one or two of us bring up the rear."

Woodside reddened. "Damme, sergeant, if I can stand this. I'm willing to let you do your bush fighting in your own way, and I'm free to say that you do know better how to do it than I can tell you; but I'm no baby, sirrah, to run first out of danger and leave my men to throw their lives away behind me."

Hay saluted respectfully: "I meant no disrespect, sir. You have no piece, and you are not used, as both Jones and Coggeshall have been, to running at speed through woods. We shall have our fill of fighting in ten minutes from now, for I see the bayonets of the men gathering among the thickets. If we drive them back, we shall be able to give you a quarter of a mile the start; and a few shots from here will make them think that we are disposed to stay and fight it out, and we can steal off, one by one."

"You're right, as usual," said Woodside, heartily. "But what a pity we haven't the skipper's rifle, to pitch a bullet or two across the open, into that squad of men."

"Thar'll be two less to fight before they git twenty paces clear of cover," said Coggeshall, coolly, "for Jones and I have loaded with ball, an' ought not to miss at forty rod at sech a mark as thet. We'll be reloaded before they reach us, an' ready fer a volley."

"I'll fire too," said the officer of engineers, as he handled his light, long-barrelled Spanish piece. "I've killed a seal at full the distance, ere now, with this little piece."

"She's a good one," replied Hay, "but you'll have to load quicker than you're used to, I reckon; so hand her to me when you've fired, and I'll have a load of buckshot ready for her."

"They're comin' ag'in," muttered Jones, as the bushes slowly parted, and a score or more of men, mostly soldiers, with bayonets fixed and muskets at the charge, marched four deep out of the forest, and advanced deliberately into the glade.

Jones fired first, and a marine fell out of the first rank with a broken leg, but the second rank man stepped into his place just in time to break the fall of his left-hand man, who received the ball from the engineer's fusil in the breast, while a third man in the second rank fell stunned by Coggeshall's bullet, which ploughed an ugly scalp wound along the whole top of the skull.

Hay hurriedly reloaded the officer's piece, but the Spaniards were quickening their pace, and their bravery, discipline and numbers threatened a disastrous defeat to the little handful of colonists; when a puff of smoke burst from the thicket behind them, and the officer in charge of the scouts fell dead in his tracks. A second musket rang out, and another file closer, a sergeant, lay mortally wounded, while the detachment halted just as a third musket carried death into their ranks.

"Who can it be?" said Woodside, who with a pistol in each hand and his sword beside him, had anxiously awaited the proper moment to give the command for their final volley. "Who can we have out scouting this way who would open fire so slowly?

It can't be the grenadiers or the marines that landed with us."

Hay's face gleamed with a strange joy as he answered, "'Tis no regular that fired those shots, for the best marksman of old Barnstable County is behind yonder cover. 'Twas a bold thing to do, but he knew their strength, and I'll risk that he gets clear. See, they are sending back half a dozen men. Now for our own part of this last struggle."

The remaining officers, a corporal and ensign, had for a moment hesitated as to the course to be pursued. But a dozen at least were left for the subaltern to lead against the scouts, who now with a stronger confidence awaited the attack of the lessened number, which again advanced at the run to carry the little hill.

Hay with some anxiety watched the movements of the others as they dashed toward the wood whence the hidden marksman had fired; for his keen eye caught a glimpse of a cocked hat peering above the shelter of a large stump, and at the same moment the Spaniards opened fire on the object.

On the instant, from another point of the glade a long gunshot to the westward another shot was heard, another victim fell, and at the same moment a cry which none who had ever heard it could mistake; full of the lust of battle and savage triumph; pealed through the forest, echoing and re-echoing until it seemed as if a dozen throats must have joined in the savage war-cry.

"*Eu het tee kee! Eu het tee teah!*" The strangely-modulated cry pealed forth again, but this time on

the flank of the regulars, whose thinned ranks counted one the less as another musket-shot rang out almost even with their advancing lines.

Hay laughed silently as he drew himself up for the final volley: "'Tis the Indian war-cry, though few white men have heard it, for none of the tribes that once used it wear war-paint, or fight except in the ranks of the Massachusetts militia. But give the word, lieutenant, as soon as you please, for they are getting near enough now."

"Are you ready?" cried Woodside.

A murmur of assent came from the cover.

"Then make ready!—fire!" The volley which swept from the coppice left but half of the charging force alive, and they, without leaders or courage for further endeavor, took to their heels and fled for shelter to the distant forest; while, from the bushes which skirted the nearer swamp, Untequit, without hat or wig, and minus all his trappings except waist-belt knife and bayonet, sprang like a deer, and, running across the open space, rejoined his friends.

His story was soon told. Suddenly alarmed by the reports of the muskets discharged at the boas, he was about to leap down and run to the aid of his companions, when he saw a small body of soldiers cross the ridge from the forest, and hasten in the direction of his comrades. Then came the crashing discharge of the boat-gun and the noise of pursuit, and he rightly judged that a guardboat had suddenly come upon the party.

Cautiously descending, he laid aside his heavy cartridge box, canteen, haversack, and leather stock,

and determined to essay his own deliverance and the succor of his friends, if skill and courage could effect it.

"I found the negro dead," he said briefly. "All the Spaniards followed; I followed, too. I heard firing. The sailors came back, and three left their muskets yonder. They went by me, wounded and bleeding, through the woods, toward the boat.

"I waited until the soldiers marched out of the woods. Then I crept up to the muskets; two were loaded. I shot three times, and each time I drew blood; and then reloaded, and left my hat and wig on a ramrod behind a tree. When they fired, I was a gunshot nearer you; and, if they had followed—"

"What would you have done?" asked the officer of engineers eagerly.

"He would not have left one of them Spanish soldiers alive, sir," said Coggeshall eagerly.

Untequit nodded gratefully to his comrade, and the next moment rose and darted out into the plain, where lay the wounded and dead of the enemy. Several of them gave utterance to cries of pain and terror, evidently fearing that no quarter was to be given, and Woodside turned anxiously to Stephen:

"Surely he won't scalp or harm a wounded man. If he does, I won't answer for his life at the hands of the provost marshal."

"Have no fear, sir," replied Hay gravely. "We are none of us cruel; and Untequit, although an Indian and descended from great warriors, is an honest man and a Christian. See! he is stripping the cartouch box, belts and stock from that dead

marine, and, I dare say, will go back yonder to get his hat and wig again, for, I'll venture the dons have had enough of it."

On his return from this errand, Untequit found that his friends had assisted the wounded into the shade of the forest, bound up their injuries and given them water to quench their thirst, filling their oxhorn canteens from the nearest pool. The dead officer was left as he had fallen, for none cared to unclasp the slender fingers, which even in death gripped the silver-hilted rapier with a clasp which only brutal force could have unloosened.

A little later they issued from the woods and found the pickets alarmed, and the working force strongly reinforced; while Capt. Knowles, whose ship they were to have rejoined at noon, stood talking with the engineers, who had made but little headway on the proposed path through the woods across the island of Tierra Bomba.

"I excuse you, sir!" he said to Woodside, after hearing his story, "and will see that the admiral hears of the bravery and good conduct of your party. But henceforth be more careful how you expose yourselves, for we cannot easily replace such men as your boat's crew, and we count you no longer as part of the army, but as attached to the fleet."

Woodside bowed low to his superior, and his hopes of promotion and advancement seemed brighter than ever, but the army officers around him and the dignitaries of the engineer force exchanged curious and bitter glances; for already the evil seed was sown which was to utterly and shamefully estrange ad-

miral and general, marine and grenadier, seaman and soldier, to the utter ruin and deep disgrace of all.

A party was sent out to scout through the blazed line, but came upon a heavy force of Spaniards, and were repulsed with some loss; but the Americans had been dismissed for the time, and found that Gibbs had not been unmindful of their comfort. He had fished from the rocks with good success; killed half a dozen parrots as a flock disordered by the noise flew overhead, and had found in the woods to the southward a few pineapples and limes. These he had properly prepared and cooked, exchanging a part with an officer's servant for some bread, sugar and rum; and upon these healthy viands the men feasted, tempering the vapid water of the shallow springs with the juice of the limes and bananas, and the more fiery spirit of St. Croix.

"The captain says that we may yet be called upon to haul our boat across the island, and lead an attack of the yawls and cutters on St. Louis de Boca Chica; for he thinks the mortar battery ill-placed, and the engineers slow and inefficient."

Thus said Woodside to Hay as, after supper, they went down to the nearest point of rock, and cooled their heated faces in the ocean waves.

"I'm sorry," said Hay, "that at this time there should be any cause for ill-feeling between the fleet and the army, for we who are of no rank will be ground to pieces, as corn is between the upper and lower millstones."

"You say truly, Hay, and I would it were other-

wise; but we who are on detached service have some chance of escape, and it may be that fortune or providence will send us an easy victory, and end all in triumph."

Chapter XVII.

Opening the Trenches

The next day and the next came, and still the Massachusetts troops were not landed; and at last Woodside's party, in the midst of their constant and varied boat-service, found themselves, one sultry afternoon, going alongside the huge Prince Frederick; which, as one of the "crack 70's" of Lestock's division, had, under the command of Lord Aubrey Beauclerc de Vere, been put into complete preparation for the final terrible bombardment, which must sooner or later end the contest for the possession of Boca Chica.

A light awning covered the whale-boat, and protected the colonists from *coup de soleil;* and as they came under the side of the huge man-of-war, many an idler and officer peered out from under the awnings and the heavy quarter-galleries, where such as were of sufficiently high rank languidly puffed away at mild Manila and fragrant Havana, or sought in vain to cool their feverish thirst with tropical fruits, and choice clarets and Rhenish wines.

"There's our captain," said Hay, eagerly, as he swept the long, sharp boat deftly in between a heavy twelve-oared yawl and the ladder. "I wonder what brings him aboard this vessel, and what has become of our old skipper of the Two Friends? Please to let us know—will you, lieutenant?"

Woodside lowered his voice as he spoke: "God

help them if they are here; for the yellow fever, they say, is getting worse on board the fleet, and the captain, as you know, was hardly himself when we spent our last night on the schooner. If I can get permission for you to go on deck, I will; and you shall have all the time I can spare to see your comrades."

The generous young Englishman leaped lightly to the ladder, and ran up the side almost as nimbly as a topman, so much had active employment, out-of-door life and fitting food done to re-create the strength and health impaired by wearisome delays, crowded quarters, and disgusting and insufficient aliment. For a moment only he was lost to their view, when he again appeared at the gangway, and beckoned to them to ascend. Their old, kind-hearted commander stood beside him, but the strong, grave face was strangely wan, and the thin lips had lost their quiet firmness, in the pitiable tremors that tell of a vitality sapped to the last foundations of life.

The bronzed oarsmen swarmed up the side, and took his cold hand with a grasp, which in spite of themselves told of love, pity and despair; but the weak, weary voice bade them welcome cheerily, and praised their little exploits with a heartiness which forbade all thought of the existence of envy or jealousy in that brave, true heart. "I wish you would come back to me when your errand is done," he said to Woodside, as the latter took the folded despatch from his waist-belt. "I've a favor to ask, and God knows when I shall meet you again."

For a moment the men stood silent, as Woodside

passed on to the door of the great cabin, while Stewart seemed to lose himself in an enthralling reverie, which ended in a heavy sigh. "I beg your pardon, sergeant," he said to Hay, "I suppose you would like to know how it is that I am here, and something about your old friend Skipper Clarke?"

"That we should indeed, sir," replied Hay. "I hope nothing has befallen him."

"Surely he was well when we bade him 'good bye,'" said Gibbs, anxiously.

"He has sailed northward, but unless the terrible experiences of late are false teachers, the fever was in his veins and in those of half his crew. Twenty-five of our men were put on board this ship and there are ten on the Falmouth, and five on the Dunkirk, that fourth-rate astern."

"And how do you find the quarters and provisions on board here, sir?" asked Hay.

"It is no use to conceal the truth, Hay. Our men, like the sailors of the fleet, are half-starved from the disgraceful state of the provisions and lack of water; which, in such a climate, is needed in large quantities to supply the loss by perspiration; and as officers we fare but little better than the men. As I am a physician, I have had some extra favors shown me, but I have lost flesh and strength of late, and I fear am going as only too many poor fellows have gone before me," and he pointed significantly over the side to the surrounding ocean.

"You must not talk so, sir," said Hay eagerly; "and you must take a trip with us on shore for a day or two. Mr. Woodside will, I know, get per-

mission of Captain Knowles, and there is plenty of room in the whaler. A change of scene, and plenty of fruit and fish will make a new man of you."

"It can't be," said Stewart gravely. "I have my duties, and must, if it be God's will, die at my post. Half of my own men are sick, and I have a boat to visit them daily; and we are told to keep in readiness to serve at the guns in a few days. It would never do for me to be pleasuring with you. I should think of the poor fellows crowded together in their filthy quarters, where but a few ever leave their hammocks in life."

"Can we do nothing for you? It seems wrong that you should be cooped up here. But here comes Lieutenant Woodside; perhaps he can see some way out for our poor comrades, that will give you a chance to rest."

"A word with you, Captain Stewart," said that officer hastily, and the two drew as much as possible apart from the sailors and soldiers who thronged the over-crowded decks.

"I find that my errand here concerns rather the Americans on board than anyone else. The engineers ashore open the trenches to-night, and need axemen and scouts. The regulars are neither, and the negroes are too stupid for such delicate service. As you know, many of our comrades from the southern colonies feel aggrieved at having to perform such service."

"It should excite no surprise, sir," said Stewart a little haughtily, "that we should not delight in the praise of a proficiency as axemen, which is given us

by those who feel themselves disgraced by similar duties."

"This feeling," continued Woodside, "I can readily understand and heartily acquiesce in; but so deep have been the murmurs and so sensitive are the fears or jealousies of those in charge of the expedition, that already over half the American contingent are looked upon as disaffected and far more likely to join the Spaniards than to fight them."

"Join the Spaniards? not fight? 'Tis ridiculous," said Stewart. "And yet we are strangely enough kept on board the fleet, when it would seem that we were needed on shore."

"Depend upon it, I am right in what I say. And now for my errand. I want skilled men for pioneer and picket work ashore, and Lord Aubrey has directed me to ask you to parade your men and ask for volunteers. I will take you to the other vessels, and will carry your answer to Mr. Moore, the engineer, on shore."

Stewart at once gave the necessary orders, the drummer sounded the assembly, and the men began to fall into line; but the wan and faded appearance of many terribly shocked their more fortunate comrades. Still they were for the most part desirous of more stirring service, and as they ordered their muskets and listened to his words, they showed in every look and gesture the stamp of that individual intelligence and character, seldom to be noticed among the stolid faces of the ship's marines.

"I am asked, men," said Stewart, with some of the old, quiet humor in his manner, "to beat up vol-

unteers for pioneer service ashore; a service I am assured that we can perform as well, if not better, than any other troops in the army. It is, however, to be performed under fire, and it may be that some parties will be ordered to especially dangerous duties.

"You will bear me witness that I have ever treated my men as gentlemen volunteers, and I have had no part in the attempts made to degrade us to the level of rebellious slaves and ignorant negroes, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the army, nor will I ever acquiesce in such degrading associations.

"But I know that you are not afraid to labor, and that you will not shrink from danger, while it may be that many may find in a needed change of air, and perhaps of food, a cure for their ailments and benefit to their general health. I, therefore, volunteer to go and take an axe myself."

"So do I," said Woodside, and close behind him his boat's crew echoed his words, with a smile of encouragement and willingness on their bronzed faces.

A hoarse murmur rang through the ranks, "I will go! I will go!" but at a word from their leader all were silent as became men under military discipline.

"Shoulder arms," cried the captain, and the firelocks came up with precision sharp and soldierly despite their short service. "Now let every man who is willing to go, keep his musket at his shoulder when I give the command to order arms. Company, attention! Order arms!" The wearied voice rang out clear and soldierly, but no rattle of band and

ramrod followed, for not a man stirred from the position first taken. "I thank you, men," he said, proudly. "Now get ready to land at half an hour's notice. Port arms! Break off!"

Before night the remnant of the company, some fifty men in all, were encamped with the New York and other levies; still deemed sufficiently reliable and orthodox to be landed from the floating hospitals of the fleet and transports.

In the cool of the afternoon a heavy detachment, armed and provided with mattock, spade and axe, were marched as silently as possible toward the point chosen for the breaching battery, a rocky elevation surrounded by a dense growth of tropical vegetation. Already the lines of ditch, parapet, banquette, glacis and *terre pleine* were marked by white stakes, and as they left the beach they had seen the boats towing shoreward heavy barges, which sustained one or more of the 24-pound breaching guns and their carriages. A detachment of sappers and miners, and some score of Jamaican negroes rested under the trees, awaiting the word to begin, and already a score or more of the latter had cleared away with their *machetes* all the underbrush on the acclivity itself.

Stewart, as senior captain, was directed to begin the work of clearing away the smaller trees in rear of the works, and carefully cautioned his men against felling any tree by daylight which might rouse the suspicion of the enemy by its absence.

Only four hundred and fifty yards lay between the battery and the fortress of Boca Chica, where

ninety-four guns and a full garrison of soldiers and sailors, stood on the alert to open fire on the first object which even excited their suspicion.

A score or more of his best men were sent forward to act as scouts and form a picket line on the edge of the jungle, which came up on the land side to within three hundred yards of the fort, and Woodside, at his own request, was permitted to lead with his own boat's crew upon this dangerous duty.

"We will keep to the south and west, sir," said he to Moore, the engineer, "until we are at least half a mile inland. Then, if you please, I will fell a few tall trees and draw their fire, unless too strong a force stops our progress."

"You must do nothing of the kind, sir, just now; but you may make a circuit around the fort and, if possible, surprise a picket or two on that side; and if you will light a bonfire that shall burst out after dark, you will probably effect as much in the way of misleading the enemy. The sergeant will give you a fireball and fuse; all you have to do is to collect sufficient dry fuel, light the fuse and place it therein."

About an hour before dark the scouts started, and pushing in single file through the tangled woods, for half a mile or so, found themselves in the road crossed by the party in their flight from the Spaniards, and as it was bordered by clumps of detached bushes Untequit was sent to follow it up toward the fort. In about five minutes he came back, saying that a picket guard of four men were posted a hundred yards or more around a bend of the road, and

that with an equal number of men he could capture them.

The detail made, however, was larger, and comprised twelve men who, in Indian file, wound through the woods until half their number under Hay could take position just above the thoughtless picket guard, and between them and the castle.

Untequit and four others, all old Indian fighters, stole like serpents through the grass, until only the very clump by which the Spaniards were posted lay between them and their foes.

The tallest, a bearded Catalan marine, stood idly leaning on his musket; the other three had placed their guns against a palm three or four yards away and were rolling and smoking the inevitable husk *cigarito.*

"Thou sayest, Carlos," said one of the smokers, "that these English fought like devils."

"*Caramba!* So they did, if they were English; but I count them rather of the *Americanos* who sometimes cruise upon our coast. We had them, as we thought, at point blank range of the *pateraro* and killed only a black slave, and they killed and wounded ten of the best men of the Gallicia."

"But thinkest thou they will come through the forest again, Carlos?"

"Why not, O most timorous Pepe! Surely, as long as their tents stand over yonder, there will be parties ranging the woods, were it only for the wild fruit of the island. But trust me, they shall not come on us unheard, were they to slide through the bushes like a serpent."

"Methinks I heard one just now, Carlos," cried Pepe, about to rise in alarm; but before the three could get to their muskets, the scouts stood over them with levelled weapons, while Untequit, with a leap like a wildcat, had hurled the huge Catalan to the ground.

The four were bound and gagged; and, while the main party prepared a huge pile of fuel deep in the jungle, Hay and the Indian hastened to make their way to the outlet of the woodland path. They found no other force inside the forest; but the reserve of a dozen men lay by their fires half-way between the wood and the castle.

On their return they found the alarm fire ready, and at Hay's suggestion the muskets and boarding pistols of their captives were heavily loaded and placed in the pile of dry boughs, amid which the fuse as they retired gave out an occasional warning spark of the conflagration that in an hour or two at most must ensue.

The return was difficult, but owing to the woodcraft of their leaders and the use of a pocket compass, and a vial of phosphoric composition, they succeeded in reaching the place selected for a battery, and being readily recognized by signals previously agreed upon, came within the line of pickets. Here row on row of dim and carefully shaded lanterns lit up the trenches and two thousand men bent over their task of throwing up the huge mounds and excavating the deep ditches below and around them.

All worked in absolute silence and without loss; although from time to time a shell or shot whistled

high overhead in search of the English camp beyond them.

"You have done well," said the engineer, as the report was made, "and if your bonfire alarms them in that direction to-night it will perhaps help us greatly, and certainly save the lives of some of our poor fellows, for they have the range very prettily."

The prisoners were placed in charge of the reserve guard, who were bivouacked midway between two heavy working parties; for, by the light of the lanterns, several hundred men were rolling up large casks, which, set on end, secured by fascines and pickets, and filled with sand, grew rapidly into the desired proportions of a battery for large siege mortars.

Pepe and two of his companions in misfortune were garrulous and womanish in their lamentations at the untoward fortune of war; but Carlos, the Catalan, bore his evil destiny quietly, and, instead of throwing himself down beside his weeping companions, seated himself against the half reclining trunk of a stunted cedar, and, asking a light, by signs, of a good-natured grenadier, seemed, as far as could be seen in the darkness, to be wholly occupied in the constant rolling and smoking of innumerable cigarettes; and as the sentry strode back and forth, he could easily discern the heavily bearded face and fiery black eyes, as an occasional puff of more vehemence than its fellows lit up the little nook of overhanging foliage.

Suddenly, a mile or more away, a deep-hued radiance lit up the midnight sky above the woods, and

as the scouts and engineers listened, three or four dropping shots, fired in quick succession, were followed by a scattering volley, and, after an ominous pause, by a heavy fire from castle and shipping.

"They have fallen into the trap," said Moore, rubbing his hands, "and I doubt if they dare send out a party to reconnoitre. Go, Mr. Woodside," said he hurriedly, "take your crew and carry those prisoners on board the Weymouth. I would not for a whole company's lives, that they should escape now to set those stupid dons right as to our whereabouts. Off with them at once; and by the time you are back to-morrow, I hope you will see the parapets well forward and our men beginning to lay the platforms for our twenty-four pounders."

Woodside started, little loath; for the scene, though striking, soon became monotonous, and the strange effects produced by the uncertain and fitful glare of the lanterns on gay uniforms, tropical vegetation and the constantly changing array of busy workers, were insufficient to distract the attention from swarms of mosquitoes, clouds of gnats and the myriad other insect plagues with which a tropical forest generally abounds.

With an order for the prisoners Woodside approached the guard reserve, and the major in charge with unnecessary zeal routed up from their slumbers Pepe and his co-prisoners, who, with a vague idea that they were ordered for instant execution, burst into a passion of tears and entreaties, interrupted by sundry appeals and genuflections made to tiny reliquaries, heretofore concealed under their

coarse linen shirts. Carlos alone seemed unmoved, as the red coal at the end of his *cigarito* gleamed from under the shadow of his brass-fronted military cap.

"That beggar's good stuff, if he is a don," said the major gruffly, indignant at his prisoners' fears. "However, you must go too, so come out of your seat and be jogging. Do you hear, sirrah. Fane, make him come out of that."

The man, little loath, stepped into the shadow of the cedar, but the next moment sprang out stammering and shaking with fright. "'Tis the devil that sits there," said he tremblingly, "and no mortal man. His eyes are like fire, and he has no beard, though when I saw his face by the lantern he was bearded to the very eyes."

"Nonsense, sirrah," said the officer angrily; "how dare you tell such a story, when the man has sat there smoking for the last hour. Come here, sir," he continued, drawing a pistol from his belt, "come, sir," he added more savagely, cocking the weapon as he spoke, "move at once, or you are like to lie there forever."

Woodside was about to speak for the prisoner and suggest that perhaps he did not understand the order, given as it was in a foreign tongue, but the report rang out and the bullet was seen to cut a shower of splinters from the bough against which the head reclined; but still the bright coal at the end of the *cigarito* remained immovable, and the major fairly foamed at the mouth as he drew his second pistol.

"If you can't be frightened, you may be hit, ras-

cal," he cried savagely. *"Ven aca hombre, presto! presto!"* he essayed in Spanish, but no movement followed, and this time the hat flew off and the body fell to the ground. The men rushed in, but only to find that Carlos had taken advantage of the carelessness of the guard and the shadow of the tree to use a part of his garments and his hat in constructing a rude imitation of the upper part of a man, to which the semblance of a lighted *cigarito* was added by fixing a bit of lighted "spunk" taken from his tinder box, on the end of a stick.

"Idiots," roared the officer to the perplexed soldiers, "if he escapes it shall cost you dearly, for no man could pass through your lines unless you knew it or were sleeping."

"Thet's so," said Jones, in his peculiar nasal tones, "but he never did, I reckon."

The major turned in utter wonder at the *sang froid* of the American in thus addressing him, but Jones was intently eyeing the somewhat perilous bridge by which the Catalan had passed out of the cordon of sentinels who had surrounded him. A single greenheart tree grew close beside the cedar, and up and down its smooth trunk, alternately embracing it and the branches of the cedar, a multitude of creeping lianas, from the size of a ship's cable to that of a small line, offered a ladder by which any man of moderate agility might climb to the broad and spreading branches. One of these, the largest, stretching out some twenty-five feet, overhung the opposite limb of a huge macanilla, which stood surrounded by some low thorny bushes, and which from

its supposed poisonous qualities had been studiously avoided by the soldiers.

"There's plenty o' chance fer two to go abreast over thet bridge, an' the on'y wonder is thet he didn't make noise enough among them climbers to be heard by some one."

"Silence, fellow!" thundered the irate major. "Be off with you and try to cut him off, for I see he has not tried to cross the opening here. Twenty guineas for him, alive or dead."

The men, with a hoarse cheer, obeyed, scattering into the woods in all directions, only to be turned back by their own pickets, who assured them that no one had passed the guarded covered way, which, cut to an uniform width of two rods, lay just inside the belt of vegetation left to cover their siege operations. Stephen and Untequit, with Gibbs and Jones, still in a state of boundless indignation at what they termed the "hastiness" of the major, took a different course.

"'Twas no fool that played us that trick," said Stephen quietly, "and when the rear's unguarded and he knew the shore, he wasn't likely to put his head right into the trap, I think. Unless you think otherwise, sergeant, let's take the other line of guards."

Heading to the northward, they rapidly questioned each sentinel until they were told that but one more stood between them and the sea. "'Tis a long tramp he has sure, an' I've not seen him fer a good half-hour; an' thin he said that he reckoned he had heard some one behind him down by the rocks beyond."

"That's it," cried Jones, with a strange mixture of triumph and horror in his tone. "Thar was somethin' in the bushes, an' I reckon somethin' worse than a painter. Look out fer your throat, Pat, ef thet's your name. Come on, boys, we've no time to lose," and leaving the puzzled sentinel they rushed down toward the beach.

The beaten path before them lay open and untenanted, but they saw the sentinel, as he stood looking out across the sea where the great war-ships lay at anchor, and the bomb-ketches from time to time emitted vivid flashes and reeled beneath the tremendous recoil of their huge mortars.

He heard the rush of the coming feet, and turned quickly to challenge the party; a white form leaped upon him, felled him to the earth, and the next instant was leaping like a deer toward the fortress of Boca Chica.

"After him, boys!" shouted Stephen, as he dashed across the low plain tangled with thorny cacti, vines and low bushes, while Jones, Gibbs and the Indian with vengeful shouts and at varying angles, essayed to cut off the fugitive, who made for the low cliff above the sea, leading down to the hard sands below, for the tide was at ebb. Stephen fired from the brow of the cliff, but missed, Jones tripped and fell into a thicket of thornbushes from which he emerged sadly torn and out of temper, while Gibbs, firing at long range but practicable distance, inflicted only a slight flesh wound which made the fugitive run all the faster.

Untequit alone, silent after the first burst of ex-

citement, followed on down the cliff and up the winding beach, making, despite his heavy accoutrements, wonderful leaps, that carried him safely over every impediment, and rapidly reduced the distance between him and the fugitive.

But now the Spanish lines were close at hand, and Carlos uttered a despairing shout of "*Hola! Amigos!*" and saw not fifty yards away the figure of a Spanish sentinel on the verge of the upland, while close by the beach the rattle of rowlocks and a hoarse hail warned Untequit that his chase was like to be in vain.

Dropping on one knee, he fired at the instant the heavy breech struck his outstretched hand, but though a bitter exclamation, half prayer, half curse, broke from the Catalan's lips, the soldier kept on up the cliffs, whence the reserve were already opening fire on his daring pursuer. Untequit was in the act of turning to retreat when he gave a last glance backward. The white camiso of the Catalan gleamed close against the top of the escarpment, when suddenly the strong arms relaxed their hold and Carlos rolled like a log to the sands below.

Drawing off out of range, scratched and breathless, but sternly triumphant, the little party stood over the dead sentinel and drew from his breast the needle-pointed blade and silver-studded handle of the Catalan's knife; and later reported to the choleric major and Col. Moore, the chief engineer, the result of their chase.

"I am glad you shot him," said the latter quietly, "for although he was a brave and daring man, he

could have done us great mischief, had he told them of what he has seen us doing here. You think, then, that he is certainly dead," he added, turning to Stephen.

"Untequit said that he sighted him by his white shirt, and that he fell from the top of the cliff, which he had nearly reached, to the beach below. It was unlikely that he could speak when taken up."

"We will hope so," said the engineer doubtfully, "so keep your men hard at it, to get sufficient force under cover to work the flying sap. If the man is dead we shall have our battery ready to open in forty-eight hours; if he can tell them where we are we shall have warm work before daylight."

Lieut. Woodside, in the absence of most of his party, had handed over Pepe and his companions to the charge of a midshipman found on board the flagship, and Hay and his men, joining Captain Stewart's company, plied axe and spade until the birds began to call to one another, and they knew that the first dawn drew near at hand.

The lanterns burned wan and lazily flared under the smoky glasses; the colonists weakened by their long confinement on shipboard staggered under the burdens of timber such as they had often borne with ease in the shipyards of the north, while the negroes, with no noise or excitement to stimulate their brutal strength, plodded along with barrow and fascine like wearied oxen, and almost fell asleep over pick and shovel.

Suddenly the clear call of a bugle rang out from the hostile battlements, and was followed by a single

gun from the Barredera batteries in the isle of Varu.

The large shot fell near the mortar battery, ricochetted, and striking a fascine of the principal work, killed with splinters two negroes engaged in filling it, and struck a shovel from the hands of a third.

A general stampede began which was promptly checked by the guard, while the engineer in charge attempted to soothe their fears.

"'Tis only a chance shot," said he, "and not unlikely fired at some boat from our fleet that has ventured too near the shore. Drive on the work, gentlemen, until daylight, for every hour that they let us alone—"

The words were never finished, for instantaneously from castle, batteries and fleet, a storm of heavy shot and shell searched every part of the woods occupied by the besiegers, and so well directed was the deadly shower that even the best trained troops fled for shelter.

Trees were broken down or despoiled of their branches; fascines splintered, thrown down and destroyed; the casks of the mortar battery pierced and shattered, and the half excavated ditches, deserted by the whilom crowd of busy workers, were left strewn with writhing sappers and horribly shattered fragments of what a short moment before were living men.

Woodside moved his squad of workers into a deeper angle of the ditch and encouraged them to increase its depth and their own safety; and other small parties at salient angles of the works, hastened all the more to raise the thick mounds and prepare the ground for the platforms of the heavy guns.

But all the while the storm came heavier and fiercer; the pickets and their reserve, the axemen and the negro woodsmen, with *machetes* and bill-hook, and even the regular engineers, with their attendants and instruments, fell back one by one from the more exposed situations, and drifted by the advanced works toward the safer encampment. It was just dawn when Col. Moore drew his horse up by the battery, where a twenty-four pound shot had just dashed an American volunteer twenty feet into the air, having picked him out from the very centre of a group of four or five engaged in setting a fascine.

"You may draw off your men, lieutenant," he shouted, "for we are discovered and must approach by more regular and slower means. They have found us out, and 'twill be a longer job than I had hoped to make it." He wheeled his horse and galloped off just in time to escape a shot which ploughed a deep furrow through the mound where his horse's hoofs had rested, and the men, awaiting a temporary lull in the storm, went back to camp, to find that the guns of the Barredera batteries, across the strait, had already sent their shot with fatal effect into their very leaguer.

For several days thereafter, with smaller parties, work in the trenches was resumed with fair progress and comparatively little loss from the direct fire of the fleet, and castles of Boca Chica and St. Joseph; but the enfilading fire from the batteries on the opposite side of the entrance became so destructive and fatal that it was decided to send a boat expedition

by night to spike, and if possible destroy the cannon of those works, which could not readily be silenced by the fire of the fleet.

Chapter XVIII.

The Barradera Batteries

In a few days the new fort became a formidable work, and the mortar battery added its missiles to the bombs of the fire-ships and the shells of the Ludlow Castle; which ship being provided with a large mortar, gave Don Blas, the Spanish admiral, who commanded at Boca Chica, more employment and mental anxiety than by the more direct fire of her heavy battery.

On the Isle of Varu, opposite, the palms moved gracefully in the sea breeze, the great ceibas and greenhearts rose majestically from copses of carob, myrabolans and cedar; the sandy beach, glaring snowy white in the noon-day sun, lay skirted closely by the living green of the jungle, and along the whole line of the strand one at times could see naught that betokened the presence of man.

Then, like lightning from a clear sky, jets of red flame and white smoke would issue from the wood, and the twenty-four pounders of the masked batteries that lay ambushed by the tropical forest, swept the parapet of the new works with their shells, and even slew the grenadiers in their very quarters in the main encampment, until the engineers, representing the inadequacy of the force on shore to the work to be performed, besought the admiral that he would take measures to silence the enfilading fire of the Barradera batteries.

The admiral consented, not without protests and implied censure of almost everything done or left undone by the land forces, as may still be seen by the letters and minutes of the siege, published by him after the great armada had miscarried; and on the 17th of March, at a council of war held on board the admiral's ship, it was determined that a boat attack should be made on the batteries, whose fire had proved more devastating than all the other defences of the port.

The barges and pinnaces of the fleet were told off, each having fifteen seamen armed with cutlass and pistol, and provided with hand grenades, who were chosen to attack the works, while ten marines were to follow in the reserve, and meet the charge of the Spanish infantry in case of repulse. In all the three divisions there were nearly a thousand men; and Capts. Watson, Norris and Colby, of Vernon's, Ogle's and Lestock's divisions, commanded on the right, centre and left, respectively, while Capts. Boscawen, Laws and Coates were to command the marines on shore. The arrangements were made with the utmost care as to every detail of movement and equipment, and so quietly was all made ready, that even on shore, in the British camp, none but those high in rank knew of what was to be done that night.

The Americans, although detailed to act with the others, knew nothing of the work in store for them, and lay in their contracted quarters among the guns, looking out over the water, watching the woods which covered the Barradera batteries, and trying to

judge of the extent and force of the annoying works. Their lieutenant stood talking with Boscawen—the captain of marines, who was to lead in the attack—on the break of the quarter-deck, not far distant, and caught a part of the following remark made by Hay, in answer to something Coggeshall had said of the number of guns in position.

"You may be right as to the number of guns, but there are either two batteries there, or a very long breastwork with guns on both flanks."

"How do you know that, sergeant?" asked Woodside, quickly.

Stephen rose to his feet and saluted, then sprang into the lower rigging and pointed to the battery in question, which had just discharged several guns.

"When the guns nearest us are fired," said he, "the smoke rises slower and lies longer than from those just fired. There are guns planted almost on the level of the sea there and, I think, in swampy ground."

"You may come up here, sir," said Ashton, the lieutenant on duty. "Williams, my glass. Now, sir, let us see if your eyes are any sharper than ours."

Hay took the glass, and watched the cannonade, which was heavy and continuous, although every gun was evidently carefully pointed before firing. "There are at least three guns this side of the dead tree that stands near the second point," he said.

"'Tis impossible," said Boscawen, a little obstinately, "no man in his senses would put cannon in such a place as that, with high land and a better range on both sides of him. There's only one work to carry, I'll lay my life."

Woodside laid his finger on his lip, while Ashton ahemmed significantly, but Hay gave no sign that he comprehended the significance of the remark, as he answered, "I may be wrong, but I think I can catch the gleam of a brass gun through the foliage. There is a man below, however, who can beat any of us when it comes to the strongest and quickest eyesight. Let him be sent for, and just ask him if he sees anything where that line of cedars looks broken and open."

The Indian came, and was pointed to the spot. For a moment or two he looked steadily through the long tube, then laid aside the glass and turned to Woodside: "I see a brass gun just this side of yonder dead tree."

"It can't be," insisted Boscawen. "There may be a pond or slough with the glint of the sun upon it, but there are no guns, except those of the battery whose fascines you can see plainly enough on the hill."

"Well," said Ashton laughingly, "we shall know all about it before many days, I hope. You may go, sergeant. No! stay a moment; this way, if you please."

"Can you land me on that beach tonight?" asked the officer in a low tone.

"The sea is too high now to do it safely, and it is growing worse every moment. We shall not go tonight, sir," said Hay, quietly.

Ashton stared at the speaker. "Who has dared, sir,— There, never mind that. Let me advise you to keep whatever you think to yourself, for a common soldier should not know—"

"Too much, you were about to say, sir," said Hay composedly. "'Tis a lesson we Americans find hard to learn, and especially in matters of life and death. If Captain Boscawen lands us, however, under cover of that point, God grant the Spaniards know nothing of our approach, or we are like to lose more brave men than we can spare."

"A score, more or less, we can spare," answered Ashton haughtily; "and I know you will not let your fears keep you from doing your duty. If I did not, you should pass the night under guard and in irons."

"Ah, sir!" said Hay sadly, "such men as I are out of place here, for I count every life lost to no purpose, whether for want of proper food, attendance and shelter, or through useless delays and reckless leadership, as a terrible offense for which some one must account before the last dread tribunal hereafter. But if I speak plainly to you, I am silent among the men; and to you I would offer one piece of advice. If you land yonder, get your men into yonder cove as soon as you may."

Ashton nodded slightly in token of dismissal; but Hay knew from his thoughtful mood as he walked briskly back and forth, that he would not slight the warning he had given. The attack, however, did not take place that night, for a slight gale came on, and the fleet had much ado for the next thirty-six hours to hold their anchorage and replace cables and anchors lost on that foul mooring ground.

On the 19th of the month, however, the sun set clear and beautiful amid an almost oppressive calm, although in the twilight the land breeze rose, cover-

ing the sea with a gentle ripple, and helping to drown the sounds of brisk preparation which began with the first shadow of night.

By eight o'clock the men were in their boats, with theirs arms loaded, their matches cased but burning, their oars carefully muffled, and at the signal—the hoisting of a lantern at the peak of the Boyne—the boats moved noiselessly out from under the lee of their respective ships, and led by Captain Watson, in the twelve-oared barge of the admiral himself, moved silently toward the Island of Varu, not a league distant.

Near him and within hail, the light whaleboat moved like a wraith, under the long, silent strokes of the colonists, and Woodside wondered at the deathly silence as he looked to either side and saw the other divisions moving in beautiful order, in parallel lines with the central boats.

"There's the point," whispered Hay, suddenly, as the low, dense wall of the jungle rose close before them, and the next moment a musket flashed out of its cover and the ball struck close to the boat.

"Give way, men," said Watson, sharply. "Run her ashore and charge into the woods at once." The men rose at every stroke of their oars, and the next moment half a dozen boats were stranded, their seamen rushing, cutlass in hand, into the cover, and the marines more deliberately forming on the beach.

Woodside's party were with the foremost, and as Stephen saw before him a wall of fascines, defended by sharp palisades, he bethought him of the brass piece, seen through the ship's glass, and catching

Woodside's arm drew him to the right to flank the battery; and as the grenades, with their sputtering fuses, began to fly over the parapet, he saw the discharge of the first cannon and heard the cheers behind him turn to groans, curses and screams of agony.

"On, to the rear boys," cried Woodside. "Down with the palisades," shouted Ashton; and while the axes of his boarders rang against the tough ironwood, Hay took from the ground a huge picket and, placing it between two of the posts, called to the men to pry down the obstruction. A dozen rushed forward to add their strength to his and, although the steel of the axes broke like brittle glass against the tough *quebracha* wood, the sandy soil could not resist the strain, and a section bent outward, the fastenings gave way, and a moment later half a dozen logs had been thrown down, and a stream of men were pouring over the palisade, striking, thrusting, shouting, careless of life and fearless of death. Pitting pistol against musket, the short cutlass against rapier and Toledo, and opposing catlike agility and native courage to the heavier weapons and better vantage ground of their adversaries, the English sailors writhed through palisades, *chevaux de frise* and the narrow embrasures, swarmed over fascine, gabion and parapet, and after a brief but bloody contest found themselves in possession of a small lunette, mounting five guns, and advanced some two hundred yards to seaward of the main battery, where the long roll was already furiously calling its defenders to arms to repel the unexpected attack.

For a moment or two there was some confusion and needless bloodshed where Hay and his companions had entered; for a few of the Spanish artillerists, with their sponges and rammers, had terribly mangled several of their assailants, and it needed all that authority could effect to make them give quarter and reform for the greater task before them.

"Fall in and fall on!" cried Boscawen, waving his sword, as he stood in the centre of the work. "Five guns are well enough, but we want the fifteen up yonder."

As he spoke a gun thundered on the hill above, and a shower of grape shot rattled into the works, killing and wounding several around him.

"We must take it or lose more men," cried Coates, a brother officer of marines, as he dashed out at the rear of the work. "Forward, men! save your fire and go in at the point of the bayonet."

A second gun thundered from the battery, cutting a gap in the swarm of advancing sailors, but they only cheered in answer and dashed on at speed, brandishing their cutlasses and blowing their matches to keep them alive and red.

"Away with you, Burfords!" "On with you, Boynes!" "Don't let them beat you, Suffolks!" "At them, Tilburys!" cried captain, lieutenant, reefer and warrant officer, as with a rush they reached the brow of the eminence, took without flinching the musketry fire from the black ramparts above them, and, launching a shower of grenades into the fort over the parapets, followed them with an *elan* which carried all before it; and by the time the slower ma-

rines had entered the fort, it was taken, its guns were spiked, and all was ready for the heavier but no less important work of destruction.

Strong parties were at once detailed to follow up the retreating foe sufficiently far to give timely warning of a coming attack, and then the victors gave themselves to the work of destroying the trophies, which they could not hope then to remove.

The guns were spiked and dismounted, the heavy platforms torn up, and the materials, with the massive carriages of the cannon, the rammers, sponges, buckets, and other ordnance material, piled together, and the whole given to the flames, together with the camp equipage of the garrison.

Then, giving a final cheer of triumph, the victors moved off to their boats, and in good order returned to the fleet, whose battle lanterns had been lighted in the open ports, and whose crews at their approach greeted their comrades with applauding shouts, which were taken up by the army on shore, and passed on from the camp to the trenches, until even the reserve of the picket guard made them heard by the mortified enemy.

It was a sore blow to the hopes of Don Sebastian de Eslava, the governor of Cartagena, and more especially to Don Blas, the admiral of the fleet and commandant at Boca Chica; and the very next day a strong scouting party was sent out across the island of Tierra Bomba to see what communication took place between the forts and the city, and whether farther reinforcements were sent to defend the entrance of the port.

Two days later, they reported the arrival of new guns and supplies, with small reinforcements from the vessels of war lying near the city walls; and when, on the 21st of March, the new batteries began to play on Boca Chica, an occasional shot from the Barradera batteries, fired with the old annoying precision, did far more execution in camp and trench than the heavier, direct fire of the sorely pressed Castle of Boca Chica.

A ship, ordered to drive the men from the guns, failed utterly, as, after her fire became too heavy, the Spaniards simply got under cover; and, as in those days direct fire with shell was unknown, the vessel and her crew suffered materially, and as soon as she retired out of range, the Spaniards began again to rake the breaching battery on Tierra Bomba.

It soon became necessary, therefore, to repeat the exploit of carrying the batteries; and, as no one knew with what force the enemy had reoccupied Varu, it was decided that the second attack should take place by daylight, and should also be followed up by a reconnoisance in force, which should enable the fleet to make a strong demonstration on the castle of St. Joseph, opposite that of St. Louis de Boca Chica.

Previously, however, the American brigade, with such of the Jamaican negroes as had not been killed by the enemy's fire, in a single night, that of the 20th of March, laid low all the dense forest of tangled vines, shrubs, trees and lianas, which, like a mask, had covered the heavy batteries erected under

the superintendence of Colonel Moore. These included the grand battery of twenty-one twenty-four pounders, and the mortar battery of two large and twenty-four small Coehorns, so called from the inventor, Baron Coehorn. These light mortars of bronze, provided with a simple carriage consisting of a block of wood with two handles by which even two artillerists could move them from place to place, could, nevertheless, send their small shell with great force and accuracy into besieged places, and were at that day justly considered of great use in assaulting large works.

It was with great surprise that the Spaniards, on the morning of the 21st, saw a levelled forest, and batteries which seemed to have sprung from the ground as if by magic, and, for a time, they quailed under the tremendous fire of the guns, which were chiefly worked by details of men from the fleet; and the garrison suffered heavily from the steady rain of huge bombs and small shells from the fleet and the battery just noted. But they soon found that their walls were as yet tenable, and returned the fire with an accuracy and intensity which argued ill for the besiegers, and determined the admiral to oppose a part of his fleet to the seaward face of Boca Chica; which could be done by a limited number of ships, without coming under the fire of the Spanish fleet and the large fort of St. Joseph.

Chapter XIX.

The Taking of Boca Chica

It is difficult at this day to determine, which of the leaders of the English forces were most to blame in the incessant disputes and evident ill-feeling, which, thinly disguised under the seeming calm of official verbiage, is nevertheless fully patent in the orders, communications and petitions which, in later years, were published for the attempted exculpation of the various branches of the service, from the deserved condemnation of the British public.

Certain it is, however, that on Col. Moore, the leader of the engineer corps, no deserved reproach seems to rest; and in the light of similar modern achievements, it would seem that the erection of effective breaching and mortar batteries within less than ten days, under the fire of four forts and batteries, and as many heavy men-of-war, should have satisfied even the doughty and energetic Vernon himself.

But, although the fire of the battery, when once begun, never slackened by day or night, and red-hot balls, round shot and shell, alternated with rounds of grape, rapidly reduced the curtains of Boca Chica castle to rubble, and materially lessened the force of seamen and marines which, under Don Blas, the admiral of the fleet, seems to have constituted its only defenders, Vernon chafed angrily at the delay; and ever saw the mighty apparition of the combined

French and Spanish fleets coming down with the trade winds, to catch his weakened ships between their recruited forces and the still formidable defences between him and Cartagena.

Therefore, on the 22d of March, after much debate, he determined to allow a part of his fleet to bombard the seaward face of Boca Chica, and the Spanish vessels; and accordingly, Commodore Lestock, with the huge Boyne, Suffolk, Prince Frederick and Hampton Court, was ordered to take part in the bombardment.

On the morning of the 23d, the division deliberately moved in with the sea-breeze, and, taking position between the captured castle of St. Jago and Boca Chica, anchored as near as possible to the shore of Tierra Bomba, and, by means of springs upon their cables, under a tremendous fire worked silently into position, until, their guns having been brought to bear, they were lost from view under the murky smoke of their heavy batteries.

Moving more to starboard, Sir Chaloner Ogle sent in the Princess Amelia and Norfolk to batter St. Joseph and also the Barradera batteries, which already had several guns in position; and these ships were further supported to some extent by the Cumberland and other ships, less boldly advanced, while the rest of the great fleet lay idly at their anchorage; although some brave captains, like Knowles of the Weymouth, who had desired permission to grapple and cut through the boom, saw no reason why such a force as theirs should not silence the guns of the forts and take the four ships of Don Blas.

But partial measures prevailed, and all day long the heavy, suffocating vapors covered battery and war-ships, where, choked with sulphurous fumes, and fainting under the tropical sun, Spaniards and Englishmen struggled uselessly for victory; uselessly, we say, for at nightfall, when the ships drew off, with a heavy loss of men and material, the Spaniards still stood to their guns, and the cannon of the Barradera had proved their efficacy in camp and battery; killing in the latter the brave Col. Moore, as he stood watching the effect of his steadily and carefully directed fire.

Indeed, it became painfully apparent that only in a concentrated assault of men, batteries and ships could lie a reasonable hope of immediately securing the possession of the works of the besieged; and again the men of the fleet were told off for another attempt on the outworks of the island of Varu.

But on the next day the same ships repeated the bombardment of the day before, while Capts. Watson and Coates under cover of the smoke landed on Varu, carried the guns lately mounted, utterly ruined the works for further use, and burned a small sloop, which had conveyed thither the cannon, men and ammunition; returning to the ships with little loss, although the attack was made at high noon.

But the ships, although partially successful in silencing the guns of the fort, found the metal of the Spanish war-ships and St. Joseph far heavier than their own, and were glad to haul off in the afternoon, with heavy loss.

Lord Aubrey Beauclerc De Vere, of the Prince

Frederick, was slain on his own quarter-deck. Lestock himself let the splendid Boyne lie too far out in the swift channel, and she was mercilessly raked until her bulwarks were torn to splinters, and her masts and rigging so cut up, that Lord Vernon, in very desperation at the state of some of the best vessels of his fleet, ordered, on the 25th, that the assault should be made at nightfall; and Capt. Knowles, with grim joy, received orders to join his brother officers, Watson and Coates, in a diversion on the Barradera batteries and the isolated castle of St. Joseph.

Accordingly the boats were got ready, with the same complement of ten seamen and fifteen marines to each as in the former expeditions, while the barge of the Weymouth was furnished with several swivels and Coehorn mortars, with which to create a panic among the defenders by a shower of shells and grape shot.

At dark, the storming party were in the trenches, led by the forlorn hope of twelve grenadiers under their sergeant, and ready with lighted matches to throw over the walls a shower of the destructive missiles which were formerly the peculiar arm of their service. A picked body of fifty of their comrades on their left formed the reserve, who, with bullet and bayonet, were to ascend the precarious footing and deadly *trou d'enfer* of the still scarcely practicable breach; and six hundred men of Bland's and Whinyard's regiments, with small parties of the colonists and the Jamaican negroes with scaling ladders, axes, fascines and grenades, were ready to act on the flanks.

As the sun went down, the fire slackened and died away until only an occasional shot thundered across the water or hurtled over the bullet-seamed interval between the forts; but Don Blas felt in the air the coming of the storm, and, feeling that his forces were inadequate to the struggle, began to make preparations for flight, rather than for a resistance to the death.

And so while the soldiers lay like hounds in the leash, waiting for the word to advance, and while the boats were stealing silently out from under the shadow of the war ships to the shores of the Barradera, the seamen on the walls knew that their boats lay ready to bear them to the distant city; the combustibles were ready piled in barracks and hold; and the apertures which were to sink across the channel, the huge hulks of the Galicia and her sister ships, only awaited the finishing blows of the axe, which should let in a torrent which scores of pumps and the strength of hundreds of men should essay in vain to diminish or counteract. A great calm fell over all as the hour drew near, and the gunners as they stood by their charged pieces, the engineers who saw the matrosses holding their portfires by the three Coehorns whose shells were to be the signal for attack, and the surgeons awaiting in the cockpits the shock and thunder of the ready batteries, were silent as the grave or spoke only below their breath.

At last the final preparations were concluded and the word was given. The matrosses applied their matches, the shells hurtled into mid-heaven and fell

one after another into the enceinte of Boca Chica. Then from battery, frigate and war ship hurtled a shower of missiles to which the heaviest fire of the previous days was as the opening skirmish of a decisive battle, and the Spaniards on the battered walls shrank from the hail of grape, langrage, bar and chainshot, bursting shell and red-hot balls, which searched every foot of parapet and traverse and wrought sad havoc even in the ships beyond them. Then the fire of the shore batteries slowly slackened as the head of the advancing column advanced, led by a Spanish pilot, who, prompted by the hope of reward and menaced with instant death by the bayonets of his guard, walked before the forlorn hope.

At the very foot of the breach they stood, amid shattered masonry and splintered palisades, and the men, opening their pouches, began to blow their matches and handle their grenades before their presence was discovered; and as the first musket shot its fire into their faces, they raised their war-cry and dashed up the ascent of the breach. Few, indeed, lived to see the result of the shower of grenades which hurtled from their hands into the mass of dark faces and levelled tubes before them; but the reserve came on fiercely close behind, and, although Col. Whinyard was killed, and Col. Gooch was carried to the rear, wounded in both thighs, the troops dashed in and the fort was won.

Then burst upon the night the flames of the great St. Phillip, her eighty guns exploding as the conflagration, fed by masses of combustibles, swept from

deck to deck and writhed from spar to spar, and the bay was lurid with light, as her sister ships, the great St. Carlos, Africa and Cassadada, deserted by their crews, were seen to go down at their anchorage beside the huge floating boom, which, with the exception of the castle of St. Joseph, and the Gallicia, the flag-ship of Don Blas, alone remained of the strong harbor defences of Cartagena.

In the meantime the boat expedition had safely landed its men, who moving carefully up the shore of the Baru had occupied without resistance the deserted batteries, and pressing on beheld the short defense and final capture of the principal fort, while seeking to approach the island castle of St. Joseph, and with mingled rage and disappointment found that nature had proved stronger than art, and that deep mud and tangled mangroves, covered waist deep with water, were obstacles not to be overcome by human agility or the most desperate courage. A few marines and sailors essayed in vain the impassable slough, while the rest, scarcely noticed by the flying enemy, gazed at the sinking ships and deserted forts. But suddenly a commotion was noticed among the bushes, and the light whaler, drawn by her crew and a few stragglers, was set down at the water's edge. The example was quickly followed, and half a dozen or more of the lighter boats were emptied of their heavier appurtenances, borne across the island and launched into the inner bay.

Fort St. Joseph was first visited, but no fire was opened from its deserted bastions, and the portal stood open, the draw-bridge lowered, the lanterns

unlit, while all around were the evidences of hasty flight and careless desertion. Only one man, maudlin with over-much wine, brandishing an unlighted torch beside the tar-smeared door of the magazine, and bearing the evidences of recent wounds, in a bandaged shoulder and an useless arm slung in a silken kerchief, remained of all the men who for two days had so sternly answered the fire and quelled the courage of Lestock's trained seamen.

When seized, his hand, as if instinctively, sought the sheath at his belt, but it was empty, and with a laugh, grim even in its maudlin inebriety, he yielded to the will of his captors and sank into a drunken sleep in a nook beside the southern platform; while the boats, leaving a small guard, rowed off to the Gallicia, on board of which some score of men were still to be seen.

These, however, deserted by their comrades and unable to fight or flee, yielded without question, and by midnight of the 25th of March, 1741, the first great move on the chessboard of the siege had been won by the English, and to all appearance the speedy fall of Cartagena was a foregone conclusion.

As for our friends of the crew of the whaler, they were kept busy until daylight, when they lay down in the captured vessel to rest after the fatigues and excitement of the night before; but as they did so, Coggeshall turned to Stephen, and remarked:

"Did you notice thet drunken fellow at the castle last night? It seems to me thet I have seen him before."

"Very likely you have," answered Stephen, quietly.

"Untequit here did not kill the Spanish marine, as we thought; and if he had not left his knife in the sentinel's heart that night, we might, some of us, have lost more blood at the hand of Carlos, the Catalan marine, as poor Pepe used always to call him."

"We'll hev him hung to-morrow," grumbled Jones angrily.

"What for?" asked Hay, sleepily. "'Twas his duty to get off if he could, and it was not his fault that he had to use subtlety to make a short knife better than bullet and bayonet. He's a brave fellow, and I hope will get well of the bullet you gave him, Untequit."

And, without farther conversation, they incontinently fell asleep.

Chapter XX.

News From the Expedition

It was nearly a month after the events described in the last chapter, that news of the first success of the combined forces reached the northern colonies; for, although Admiral Vernon promptly despatched the Spence sloop under Captain Laws with despatches to England, via Jamaica, it was only by letters sent to that centre of British naval operations, and afterwards forwarded by packets and privateers, that the press and people of the northern colonies learned of the first victories of the great expedition.

It was on the morning of the 1st of June, next ensuing, that, as the household at Ploughed Neck had seated themselves around the breakfast table, set out with snow-white, but coarse linen, on which were arrayed the huge pewter chargers, platters, plates, porringers, mugs, and other articles of metal no longer known to the descendants of the men of those days, that the road of a heavy gun came up from the bay to the north and east on the ocean breeze, which, just strong enough to rustle the fringy foliage of the great locust tree by the foot of the lane before the house-yard, gently rattled the cheap shades of stout green paper, which, after the fashion of all careful New England housewives in summer time, had been lowered "to keep out the flies," and, we fear, the sunshine.

Deacon Hay had just lifted his hand and commenced the blessing, which none of his household had ever known to be omitted in joy or sorrow, health or sickness, whether many or few were gathered around the hospitable board never forbidden to any, however poor; never deemed by the sturdy farmer too humble to supply the "creature wants" of the noblest and proudest of the magnates of his time; but, although at that day a gun at sea might well betoken the presence of marauding enemy or merciless pirate, the somewhat prolix form of prayer was not one whit abridged, nor the homely fervor of the speaker the least abated, as he prayed "for those upon the seas, and warring against the enemies of the king."

Lish, however, was less self-contained, and the prayer was scarcely concluded when he had flung aside his chair and was heard rapidly ascending to the garret, whence by a trap door he reached the roof, and levelled an old ship's glass toward the distant waters.

"'Tis the Viana, father," he was heard to shout. "Her flag is flying at the main mast head, and there goes another gun from her deck. I'll be bound Uncle Zenas has bought a swivel for the sloop, and is firing it to let us know of his coming."

"'Tis scarcely that, my son," said his father in his habitual grave, self-contained tones, "Mr. Freeman is not like to waste so much powder for naught. Depend upon it he has heard some great news, perchance of the fortunes of our men and the great fleet."

"Perhaps he has letters for us," said his wife, the moisture standing in her sweetly patient, loving eyes, and her sensitive lip trembling, in spite of the strong power of self-control then practised under the stern rules of life and thought, followed by our sires of the Puritan and Pilgrim colonies, "and perhaps—"

"Perhaps he has come!" broke in Tempie, bursting into a passion of smiles and tears. "Perhaps he is on board, my dear, beautiful brother. He was to come in the spring with the leaves; he said it, and she said so too," and the child, crying and laughing, broke down into one of those strange hysterical cli maxes of emotion, so often seen among the feminine descendants of the pioneers of New England.

The mother's arms were at once around her child, and her deft fingers gently unloosened the neckties of the plain dress, as smoothing back the jetty hair from the pale temples, she drew the sobbing child to her breast in speechless sympathy.

It was the nearest to a caress that any living person had seen Deacon Hay offer his faithful companion, when he laid his arm kindly across her shoulder, and with his hard, brown hand, touched the soft cheek of his youngest daughter, nor was it until after an evident effort, that he spoke in his wonted calm, cold tones.

"It may be he brings news, but I expect no letters and least of all the return of our friends. If they have taken a city they will have to garrison it, until the king sends troops to relieve them, and our last news was of long delays and sore losses. It were

not wise to hope for so great a blessing from the Lord."

"Well," said Lish somewhat impatiently, "he's burning powder for something anyhow, and I move we harness up the horse and go down to the harbor to meet him. She'll be at anchor before we get there, and in an hour or so you will know why Uncle Zenas has kept the sloop's ensign wearing out in this stiff breeze, and set half the militia along the coast to thinking of musket and cartridge box."

"I had thought," replied his father quietly, "of fencing in the new wheat field by the Brush pasture, but Joshua and I can get along I reckon and you can bring back Uncle Zenas and the things he was to purchase for me in Boston."

An hour or two later the heavy farm wagon returned and in it Uncle Zenas, red as a boiled lobster with sea-tan, enthusiastic loyalty and, we fear, a little Santa Cruz. A large audience, considering the size of the little hamlet, awaited him at the door of the Hay mansion when he drove up and, leaping to the ground, kissed his daughter, whom Tempie had run to summon, and then turned to tell of the receipt of the news of the taking of Boca Chica; which tidings had reached Boston on the 29th of May, nearly two months after the surrender.

"You ought to hev seen the town," cried the old captain, "when the news became known; the harbor was full of smoke from the guns of the shipping, the Common an' streets alive with the townsmen, an' the country people coming in to hear the news an' see the rejoicin's. The taverns an' ordinaries

were full of good fellows an' officers drinking success to our brave boys an' his majesty's arms; an' 'tis said thet more men will be raised at once, an' the Spanish dominions on this side the water utterly wasted an' occupied.

"Then in the evenin' thar were bonfires on all the heights, an' such rockets an' bluelights as I hev never seen since I was in Canton among the heathen Chinese, who are more curious in such matters then any other people I ever saw."

"But is Cartagena itself taken?" asked Hay, soberly. "If I understand you they have only cracked the outer covering of the nut, and the harder shell still lies between them and the kernel."

"Aye! aye! So 'tis I take it," answered the old sea dog. "An' as far's I know there are several forts, an' more than one stout ship between them an' the walls them boasting dons have called 'the defiance of the world,' for so a Portagee told me they hed hed cut on the outer arch o' the city gate. But, howsomever, ef Vernon hasn't got the city before now he never will, fer thar's a worse thing to fight then Spaniards thar at this season, an' well the admiral knows it."

"What is that father?" asked Margaret, anxiously.

"'Tis the Chapetonadas, child, es the Spaniards call it," answered the blunt old seaman, a little uneasily, as if some dim sense of thoughtlessness had begun to intrude itself on his dull apprehension, "so called because only the Chapetones, es they call the strangers who come thar from other parts, are liable to hev it. 'Tis a kind of fever, child, an' many

a poor sailor hes died of it in times past in Cartagena an' Porto Bello, too."

"You mean the yellow fever, don't you, uncle?" asked Lish, quickly. "You know Steve has had that in the Young Eagle privateer, an' is not like to have it again."

"Wal, I 'spose it's like yallow fever, an' still thar's a difference es I'm told, but ef he's 'scaped Yallow Jack, as they call him in the West Indies, we needn't worry, though many a good man, they say, hes died already of it in the fleet an' army."

"Are any of note gone?" asked Hay, gravely.

"Wal, thar's the Rev. Mr. Pigot, thet used to be settled down to Marblehead, an' Mr. Ramsay, a surgeon, died just afore the fleet left Jamaiky, an' of Prescott's company over a score went with the fever, besides Lieutenant Flagg an' Ensign Goffe. 'Tis a bad climate an' tryin' service, an' I hope Vernon hes taken the city ere this."

"But did you hear nothing from our Stephie himself?" asked Tempie, tremblingly.

"Yes, dear child. I met an old shipmate who went out on one of the transports an' got rid on his load of flour an' pork, shortly a'ter the fleet got fairly at work at the forts. He says thet Dr. Stewart's leftenant, with Stephen, Bill an' three or four more men, hed taken a whaleboat an' was kind of scoutin' like fer a man-o'-war, an' Steve sent home this letter fer his mother an' one fer—"

"O father!" said Margaret, with downcast face, while Lish's face whitened a moment and then flushed red as blood; but Mrs. Hay looked upward

in thankfulness, seeming as Uncle Zene was afterwards heard to say "a'most like one o' the marble saints, in them palaces up the Mediterranean?"

But little Tempie, almost wild with joy, flew to the side of the old sea-captain, as, with a strange mixture of burly good humor and tenderness, he extracted from the pockets of his small-clothes two letters, each written on a single sheet of the coarse, unruled paper then in use.

With annoying deliberation he adjusted his large spectacles to his satisfaction, spelled out the superscriptions, and gave them to the child, who, covering each with kisses, bore them respectively to her mother and Margaret.

The little missives were simply folded and secured by a spot of wax, for in those days envelopes were an unknown refinement of civilization; and on their long and devious errand, the once white paper had acquired certain smutches, creases, and strange odors of tar and tobacco, scarcely inviting to feminine tastes; but no perfumed and dainty billet could have been more welcome to the mother of Stephen Hay.

She was about to break the seal, but turned to her husband: "Read it, Elisha," she said, placing it in his hands; and he, with hands trembling visibly as he did so, opened and read the first letter received since the transports of the Massachusetts troops left the waters of New York harbor. It ran as follows:

"Boca Chica, Mar. 28, 1741.

"Dear and Honoured Mother:—This is to let

you all know that William and I are Well, and so far in Good Spirits, although many Poor Fellows have passed into An Awful Eternity. We have taken the Harbor Forts, and are but a few leagues from the Town, and We hope to take it before the Rains set in. Our Captain Stewart is very poorly, and I fear cannot live long. He is worn out with Service, having proved himself a good Souldier, and a healer of Body and Soul to his Men. It would grieve Any one to see how Changed he is from what he Was; but he says that he has no Doubt of meeting his Dear Ones Again. Truly, I doubt not Thereof, but it must be, I fear, in those Heavenly Mansions, in which, dear Mother, may we all Meet again when Life is over. Give my love to my Honoured Father and all Inquireing Friends and Especially to dear Little Tempie, who will, I know, be Patient if I come not till the Snow falls. Tell her to Fear not, whatever may betide; for I have—I know not why—the Full Assurance of Coming back to Home and those I Love.

"Nevertheless, should this prove but a Delusion, I have faith through Christ's love that I may be Numbered among His Saints, in which Hope Dear and Honoured Mother I subscribe myself

"Your Loving and Obed't Son

"Stephen Hay."

That evening, as the household knelt beside the family altar, Deacon Hay heard around him stifled sobs as he offered up the accustomed form of thanksgiving, to which in simple words he added thanks for the brief message, which, in spite of many

chances of war and wreck, had safely reached its destination:

"We thank thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, and the special privileges thou hast so lately accorded to us, but above all for the inestimable gift of thy dear Son, who for us endured the cross, despising the shame, and became an acceptable propitiation for our sins. Grant, O most merciful Father, the safe return of those dear and faithful ones far distant from us, but if it be thy will reconcile us to earthly separation, and give us hope and trust in a never-ending life in thy kingdom."

In such manner, clear, distinct and unimpassioned, ran the prayer of the father, and to many ears the words will convey little of the deep and tender paternal love, which for generations back has underlain the undemonstrative, outward man of the descendants of Pilgrim and Puritan. As the lava lies under the ice of Hecla, so every strong, true and deep emotion known to noble natures, lives in the hearts of the men of New England. It is not for light cause that they break the bonds of hereditary self-repression, but a thousand acts of generosity, self sacrifice, tenderness and courage, have given the lie to the charge, which ascribed to austerity and narrow selfishness the customary moderation of New England character.

And so little Tempie knew and felt that night, as her father drew her to his side and laid his heavy hand upon her curls, that her father loved her and sympathized in her hopes and fears, and she went to

bed comforted; although she would have liked to kiss those firmly-set, smoothly-shaved lips, and feel them return the mute caress of filial tenderness.

But Margaret carried her letter homeward and under the blossoming apple trees, seated herself on one of the low wind-twisted trunks, and read her first love missive.

It was dated, folded and sealed like the other and ran something as follows:

"Miss Margaret Freeman:

"I have written several letters both to you and to my Honoured Parents, the which I have cause to Fear have never reached you, as the whole Sea is thronged with Picaroons and Privateers, and We hear Almost Daily of the Loss of our Vessels. Let not that Misfortune dear Friend, lessen your Trust in my Love, which dwells ever on your Perfections and knows no Change with Absence, but rather like Hunger grows with Deprivation. I have written the News to Mother, which will also come to you through the Newsletter more fully. Also the Packet has her Signal flying, and my Time is short.

"This, however, I would say, that although I Myself doubt not of Returning to you, yet as I daily see Many cut off in the Midst of Life, and I see no present Hope of Speedy Return, I Hereby freely release you from your Promise of Betrothal; if at the End of a Year and a Day from the Date of my Last Letter I appear not to be Among the Living. And in such Case I beseech you fear not to favor a more Fortunate Servitor, lest I although Dead grieve at his

Happiness, for I protest that I so much Love you, that I would not bind you to any except such Bonds, as Love makes light, and Honour glorifies.

"Speak not of this to any, for Tempie would grieve as also my Loving Mother. I would that you and I could see together the Strange Beauties of this Fair Land, but Death goes Hand in Hand with Beauty and the serpent often lurks under every Flower of the Forest. I would Fain walk with you under the Apple boughs again at Home, but Duty and Honour keep me Here in the King's Service, and until His Majestie's further Pleasure I can only subscribe myself

"Your Devoted Servitor and True Friend,

"Stephen Hay."

A slight rustle startled the young girl as she ceased reading; and as she turned in alarm, she saw close to her shoulder the swarthy face, coarse white hair and beady eyes of Molly Pognet, who stood leaning on her long, horn-handled staff, regarding her with a strange smile, half sneer, half pity, which, as Margaret in after years declared, "made her blood run cold to think of."

For in that day, scarce two generations removed from the sad scenes of the "witchcraft delusions," which left so terrible a stigma on the fair fame of many of New England's noblest sons, belief in the supernatural, although perhaps not more general than now, was more honestly and openly avowed, and attested in almost every neighborhood by tales of the prowess of reputed witches, of strange ap-

paritions, wonderful sounds, and indubitable evidences of the machinations and subtle devices of the enemy of souls.

Mary, or Molly, Pognet stood first of the few strange characters who, among a population singularly pure of thought and deed, and universally habituated to at least the outward forms of a Christian life, were more than suspected of partial idolatry and of the practice of impious rites whose origin was lost in the night of tradition, and whose secrets have been for the most part forgotten with the extinction of the sept of powwaws or medicine men.

Far and wide, her skill in making healing salves and soothing embrocations was established; and the best housewives acknowledged that their own efforts with the costliest dyes fell far short of the hues which old Molly could produce from the wide range of simples known to her native pharmacopœia. And there were many fair matrons who, when pressed, had to acknowledge that she had held their hands and told them of their destined husbands, perhaps unknown to them, and far away amid the icefields of Baffin's Bay, or stretching off across the southern Atlantic to the fatal west coast for gold, palm oil, and perhaps, alas! slaves.

She seldom exercised the gift for money, and never unless interested somewhat in the individual, either through favors done or insult offered, and in more than one weary watch it was told how one stout captain, who had roughly berated her as "an Indian beggar fit only for the gallows," had heard from her in reply only a single sentence, " 'Tis you that should

fear the rope, bold captain," and six months later, had been carried down in the tangled fakes of his own line when fast to a huge sperm whale.

"And so he has set you free, Margaret Freeman," said the wise woman, coldly, as she looked intently into the girl's swollen eyes. "It is well; when one can hold his own no longer, it is wise to give away that which he knows must be taken from him."

"How came you to know—I mean how dared you read my letters? I should think you would be ashamed," said Margaret, brokenly, but the dame raised her hand, and in spite of herself she was silent.

"Listen!" she said, almost pityingly, and so gently that Margaret wondered at the human softness of her tone. "I can read and did, for I hoped to learn of my good son, who went as comrade and friend with Stephen Hay. I dare do anything, and I am not ashamed that I looked for tidings of the only living descendant I have on earth. But tell me," she continued, "how long is it since the talking paper started to come across the great sea?"

"It was written more than a month ago," said Margaret, quietly, "and all were well, as he says, then."

"Many things happen in a single moon," said Molly, solemnly, "and I know that much of harm may come in a single day to the bravest warrior and the wisest man. But see you," she continued, more calmly, "he has done wisely in setting you free, as he has said."

"But I am not to be free for a year and a day from

the date of his last letter, and that will be eleven months at least," said Margaret, hurriedly. "Besides he will come back before then, and I shan't want to change at all."

"When the bird struggles in the net it is not in love with its bonds, and I know, girl, that you at least begin to be weary of a promise. Be content; he will not come back to complain that you have broken it."

"What do you mean? You frighten me. Have you also heard from the fleet?" and the young girl, weak, trembling and agitated, turned as if to fly from the spot.

A hand, strong despite its age, was laid upon her shoulder, and the Indian sybil spoke once more in tones which convinced, in spite of the strangeness of the message: "How I know I may not say, but I have seen both since yesterday at noon, and both are wounded and Stephen Hay is a prisoner. Yet I fear not but that I shall see my boy again, for the hurts are slight, but long months may come and go before either come back to the land of the Massachusetts; so if you care for the man and your word to him, fear not, no matter what you may hear, but that you shall gaze on his face again."

She turned to go, but Margaret stopped her with a word, "Shall I tell his parents of your words?"

"Say what you please, and yet, as evil news comes fast at its slowest, if you say nothing, it may save a moon or two of sad and bitter thoughts to those who love him. As for Molly Pognet, she is no white woman, that she should carry long stories from one house to another."

With a wave of the hand the aged woman departed, still erect and active, as if nearly an hundred winters had not blanched the long coarse hair, which plaited and tied with a plain dark blue ribbon, fell almost to her knees from under a pointed cap of woollen cloth, ornamented with a few coarse beads of wampum. Margaret watched her until she had crossed the high road at the foot of the lane and disappeared beneath the shadow of the woods beyond; then turning, re-read the missive she still held in her hand. As she read the tears gathered in her eyes, and at last burying her face in her hands she sobbed aloud.

Then rising, she dashed away the tears almost fiercely as she said, "There, I won't cry any more. He's good, too good for me; unselfish, generous, brave and handsome, and I ought to be true and glad to give myself to him; and yet he is too grave and thoughtful, and when he talks of duty, he frightens and vexes me by turns. Why should life be all duty? and why cannot men and women be happy as the birds, who have no care, and do in all things as they please?

"Now there's Lish, always merry and full of fun, but not bad I'm sure, though he is a little selfish at times I do think; but he'll get over that in time, and I'm sure I should be happier with him than Stephen, although I know—" but leaving the sentence uncompleted she sauntered off toward the sea, struggling with a vague sense of disquiet; for the poor, petted child, unaccustomed to self-denial and discipline, felt that she of all women could least afford to sac-

rifice a love strengthened by duty, and a heart that, whatever the temptation, would never be false to her.

The way led down a gently undulating pasture, flecked with ponds, by which the killdeer plover stalked and fed, springing into the air when startled, with their strange, querulous cry; and flocks of purple grakles from time to time swept up from the verdant maize fields, and blackened the bronze green leaves of the great trees of the western swamp.

Beyond the latter, the great green marsh stretched many a mile west and north, defended from the sea by the huge sand hills which mark where ages ago the first reef of white sand shut off from the sea a part of its waters, since made solid land by the silt of the tide, the drainings of the inland springs and the wash of the upland hills.

She was sad at heart, and she found in the wide landscape and its accessories a silent companionship fitted to the conflict going on in her heart, and she drank in the odor of the ocean and the strong aroma of the broad marshes; as if they were the health-giving perfumes of mediæval Italy in the days of occult pharmacy.

She gathered sprigs of aromatic pennyroyal, and tasted the delicate inner shoots of the sweet calamus, sighing as she thought of the old days, not so very long ago, when the brothers in boyish gallantry had made of such simple gifts, the sacrifices of their budding admiration, the proofs of their nascent devotion to the embryo woman; and wished that the swift feet of Time could have passed her in his

course, and left her the tiny coquette of the district school, the girl pet of a household whose only aim was to make her happy.

The roadway became sandy and less grassy as it entered a low growth of scrubby oaks and pines, here and there dotted with heavier groves of walnut, and thickets of wild grape vines, where herons sprawled about the loftier tree tops, and the marauding crow, conscious of the price set upon his thieving head by the laws of the colony, spread his huge black wings and sailed off across the marshes, uttering his rough cry of warning, to be taken up and repeated from every copse for miles away.

She recalled even here some memories of the past which had led to her present doubts and questionings; how Lish had risked life and limb in climbing the highest monarch of the grove for the crow's eggs, still hanging on the rosary of nidarian spoils which ornamented her Venetian mirror, beside which again, neatly handled, as a delicate brush, hung the tail of the first fox which had fallen to the sure aim of the elder brother.

Under the shadow of a great vine, whose wide leaves, supported by a stunted cedar, formed a broad canopy, she sat on a carpet of soft short herbage, and gave herself up to thought. Her mouth grew parched, and she plucked the young shoots of the aromatic checkerberry and ate, finding here and there a berry which had escaped the winter snows and the close search of the hare and squirrel, but the longer she vexed her soul with thought, the less pleasing seemed the prospect of a love which en-

tailed long and perhaps hopeless waiting; of an union in which her own heart told her that happiness could only be secured by a recognition of the sovereignty of duty, and a forgetfulness of self.

"I could sway him much," she murmured, "but he would blame himself for letting me, and he is too clear of sight to be long blinded by love. If he were only less thoughtful I could love him, but I feel that I fear him, and the man I choose must think me the most perfect woman in the world."

She plucked the vine leaves from the lower shoots, and plaited a chaplet, as she had done often before at school, and, removing her hat, with short thorns fitted it over her jetty curls, and here and there set in the coral berries with the aid of a tiny pocket-mirror, a present from her father on returning from one of his long voyages.

"That is pretty, but my eyes are red and swollen, and make me look like a perfect fright. Well, I must be going, or aunty will think I am lost, and visit half the neighborhood to find out where I have strayed to."

Swinging her light hat by its strings she was stepping into the road when she heard a resonant whistle, and a brisk step, which she well knew could belong to none other than Lish, who at the next moment came round the turn of the road, carrying over his shoulder a slender fishing-pole, and in his hand a fine string of brook trout, strung by the gills on a withe of alder.

But as he saw who stood in his path the joyous whistle ceased, and his springing step grew heavy,

while into his face there came a hot flush, succeeded by the pale and listless look which had made Deacon Hay, even in the press of his "first hoeing," insist that his best and quickest assistant should "leave off work and get a mess of big trout."

Margaret too felt the same strange heaviness at her heart, although she, better skilled in the art of hiding her feelings, greeted him gaily enough as she saucily readjusted her leafy chaplet.

"O, what beauties, Lish! Where did you get them? Father went fishing yesterday, down to Scorton, and brought back a long string, but all small fish. Why, I haven't seen such trout this year."

"I went clear to the head of Freeman's Brook, and then struck across Spring Hill way up into the swamp, takin' them one at a time, for I know every hole and eddy; but they seemed to want to be caught, and if they hadn't I was in no mood to take such shy fish as these are."

"Why, what's the matter, Lish?" she asked, innocently, but with a slight tremor in her voice, which seemed strangely distinct to Lish's ears, for he fixed his eyes keenly on her face, which flushed blood red, and then as suddenly paled again.

"Your wreath becomes you," he said quietly, "but after all you're not looking well of late, kind of worried and pale, it seems to me. You mustn't worry about Steve so much. He'll come back all right, I'm certain, and rich enough too, if all the stories are true about the gold and silver those Spaniards gather together in Cartagena. I'm sure I wish I had gone instead of wasting life and heart here on Ploughed Neck."

"I can't tell you how glad I am you didn't go," broke out the young girl impetuously. "'Tis bad enough to think of Steve, and of Black Bill that I've always known, exposed to battles and fevers and all kinds of dangers, and see everybody else sad and worried about them, until even you that used to be always cheerful, are now almost as grave and solemn as your father himself."

"I shall never be so merry again, Margie," said the young man gloomily, "for there don't seem to be anything ahead in life to hope for. I'm sick of farming; sick of work without pay, and life without pleasure, and I'm heartily sorry now that I didn't go as Steve did to the wars, where, if I lived, I might gain wealth and glory and—"

"And what if you died, Lish?" broke in Margaret plaintively. "What if we should hear that you died of fever, or were torn to pieces by one of those dreadful shells that father tells about?"

"Why then I should be at rest, and know no more weariness or sadness. Why, as I looked down into the depths of the great cold spring up yonder, I almost felt as if I could leap in and settle quietly down into the cool, clear water, and know neither pain nor disappointment nor weariness more."

"Stop, Lish! do stop! you frighten me," cried Margaret, and then burst into tears. And then Lish, with the usual consistency of his age and condition, became as penitent and self-accusing as he had before been abnormally desperate, reckless and despondent."

"I do think you are too bad, Lish," she at last said

through her tears. "I've had this letter from Steve, and it made me so sad; and I came down here alone to think over matters, and cheer up if I could. But first old Molly Pognet must steal up behind me and read my letter, and then frighten me half to death with her strange talk. You all seem to think I'm very happy, but I've many things that trouble me to keep to myself, for I don't want to make others needlessly unhappy."

"Then tell them to me, Margaret," broke in Lish impetuously. "Steve and I never had a quarrel that lasted over night, and when we parted, the last thing he told me to do was to be kind to you. 'She's been like a sister to us both,' said he, 'and now that she's promised to be my wife, should be dearer than ever to you all. So if the time ever comes when she needs a true friend, do for her all that you would do for me.' I know I'm careless and thoughtless," Lish went on, blushing as he spoke, "but I can keep a secret, and would do anything in the world to save you from pain or sorrow."

"I believe you would, Lish," she said gravely and scarcely above a whisper, and then silently handed him the letter. Lish trembled as he took it, but read it, changing color the while, and then as silently handed it back again.

"Old Molly told me, as we stood up yonder, that both Steve and Bill were wounded, and that neither would return for many months. And although it don't seem right to trust to such things, yet I know father, at least, would be worried to death if he heard it. There, Lish, I've told you all; at least, al-

most all that troubles me, and you must not say a word to any one, for it will only worry others as it does me."

As she spoke they passed out of the wildwood into the open fields, and soon passed under the half-lowered bars into the house yard, where already the men with their clean-scoured pails, were going to call the cattle from the pastures beyond the maize fields.

Lish left his pole against the gable, and his fish in a great crock filled with cool water from the depths of the mossy draw-well, and went forth to his evening labor. But his heart was full of conflicting thought and feeling, in which were strangely blended past despondency, the old love and new admiration of his brother's noble nature, and half-formed hopes and nascent expectations born of the train of thought suggested by his brother's missive.

"If he comes not before the orchards are again in bloom, she is free to wed another," he said within himself, as he lowered the bars for the entrance of the sleek kine. "Will she be sorry if the news should come, that poor Stephen has fallen in battle, or died of those fatal fevers?"

And then he stamped his foot impatiently, as if angry and horrified at his own thoughts—as Cain may have done in the land at the borders of Eden, when first he wavered between fraternal love and that jealousy of a brother's better fortune, which grew in time into the bitter and accursed fruit of his vast remorse for the first fratricide.

Chapter XXI.

The Last of Earth

Captain Stewart had taken an active part in the latter days of the siege, although it was evident to all that the extraordinary duties of captain and surgeon, unflinchingly performed by him, had so lessened his vitality and enfeebled his constitution, that any attack of acute disease would probably prove fatal.

He had, however, found the duties of the siege and the comparative freedom of service on shore, some alleviation of the terrible discomforts endured on shipboard; and when the grenadiers rushed through the crumbled curtain of Boca Chica Castle, his Americans were close at their heels, although assigned a place several hundred yards behind the reserve of regulars.

Colonel Gooch, their commanding officer, was wounded, and Captain Washington of Virginia is incidentally mentioned in the annals of the siege as acting with great bravery and decision. But all that English contempt for colonial troops could do, was done to leave in utter obscurity the services of the provincials, and succeeded so well, that only the story of their degradation to the most menial service, and the terrible record of their mortality, is left to their descendants.

But when the narrow portals of the lagoon were opened to the fleet, Vernon hastened to place his

ships in safety, and then, leaving Lestock's division to clear away the obstructions and embark the forces landed, made his way up the lagoon to attack the inner defences which lay between him and the city.

The embarkation was fatal to many of those wearied with want of sleep, and the excitement and labor of the siege, for they went back to narrow quarters, noisome smells, and the spoilt rations, and stinted water supply, which had for so many weeks kept the hospitals full of patients, who seldom quitted them but for the coffinless grave or the depths of the sea.

But there was no disputing the orders of the admiral, and the men after almost ceaseless labor in removing their siege and camp equipage, and embarking the heavy cannon, with much exposure to mud, water, and the chill night air of the miasmatic lagoon, found themselves almost swooning by day in the hot sun, and shivering by night, as the fatal mists, rising from mangrove marsh and pestilential swamps, drifted before the light land breeze and covered the warships with a misty veil which was indeed "the shadow of death."

The good captain was one of the first to feel the change, and on the evening of the third or fourth day after the taking of the castles, Lieutenant Woodside, who with his boat had been sent down to communicate with Commodore Lestock, visited his comrade and found him in a high fever, yet persistently refusing to take to his berth. "If I lie down I shall never get up again here," he said, quietly; "and I

must be ready to go in the boats when the army lands."

"But my dear fellow, you know it won't do," pleaded Woodside good naturedly. "We want you to rest and get well, and we're not yet past the Castillo Grande, although night before last we destroyed the Manzanilla fort that covers the other side of the channel, and are going this evening to shut up the Cavallo Pass to the west, so that no provisions can be got to the city. When Castillo Grande falls we shall want you and the rest of our boys, and in the meantime you must take good care of yourself you know."

"It's no use, Woodside," said Stewart quietly, "I've got the fever, and I'm doing the best I can for myself, although in another's case I should have little hope. I won't be killed by one of those ignorant surgeon's mates, who bleed, blister and purge, as if the fever didn't have victims enough without their aid, and if I give up I shall be delirious and fall into their hands. You won't betray this confidence, will you, Woodside?" he added earnestly.

The honest, brave, generous fellow hesitated and answered disconnectedly, for he felt that his superior was in great jeopardy, and he felt that rest and attention were all that offered a hope of recovery. "Yes; no; Oh, certainly. There, Stewart, I don't know what to say to you, you know. How can you ask me to leave you to yourself under such circumstances?"

"Have you ever looked into the sick bay since we lay here?" asked Stewart, quietly. "If you have not,

just step down a moment, and you will see the surgeons and their assistants at work. Then come back, and tell me if I am not better off when left to myself."

With a strange sinking of the heart, such as the honest lieutenant had never experienced under the fire of the enemy, Woodside inquired his way to the sick bay or hospital, whence, in spite of the open ports, a horrible stench issued, and constant moanings and delirious cries reminded the stout soldier irresistibly of the tortures of the damned. Nevertheless he resolutely pushed forward and soon saw before him some six or seven score hammocks, hung so closely together that they formed an almost continuous bed, in each of which a sick or wounded man lay awaiting the visit of the surgeon and his mates.

The former, a fine looking, well dressed man, stood in a small open place, surrounded by the appliances of his calling, and a set of bloody instruments told that some painful operation had just been concluded. He stood now, however, engaged in directing the operations of his assistants, who, divested of much of their clothing, and clad otherwise in their worst raiment, visited one by one the overcrowded sufferers, by creeping beneath the hammocks and forcing their heads up between their patients, not unfrequently eliciting heart piercing shrieks and groans in the operation.

This done the state of the patient's symptoms was called off in a sing-song tone of voice, and the surgeon in answer briefly ordered whatever in his judgment should be done. After which dressings, plas-

ters, etc., etc., were renewed or applied, and the lancet was so freely used, that there was scarcely a hammock that did not show the marks of its recent use.

But to Woodside the *coup d'ocil* was awful. Men with amputated limbs, mortal wounds, spinal injuries, and splintered arms and legs, lay among the many victims of the persistent fluxes and raging fevers, which of late had so terribly increased; and the merciful stupor of imminent death, the ravings of delirium, the varied emotions of men aghast in the expectation of dissolution, presented a scene which it were almost blasphemy for the pen to describe.

Sick at heart the soldier staggered from the hospital to the deck, and found his friend awaiting him in his narrow quarters, with a calm smile upon his flushed face. "Here, take this cordial," he said, pouring a mixture from one of a case of bottles on the table before him. "Pardon me for exposing your untried nerves to such a shocking exhibition, but I knew you had no idea to what torments your kindness would consign me."

"'Tis horrible," said Woodside, feverishly draining the proffered glass, "but surely an officer would not be consigned to such a pandemonium. I would rather die than be carried there."

"There are no officers of the regulars there," said Stewart, meaningly, "but several of our colonial gentlemen have died in that very place. I do not really think that I should fare quite so badly, but the officers' hospital is equally crowded, and the attend-

ance almost as bad. I have done all that I could to alleviate the terrible misery of both places, but I can no longer bear the labor, and must try to save my own life. Don't, for my wife's and daughter's sake, take away the only chance that is left me."

"Capt. Stewart," exclaimed Woodside, warmly, "you shall have your wish, and I would that I could stay with you to help and care for you. Is there no one who can be hired to wait on you until I see you once more?"

"Would I do, your honor?" asked a weak, childish voice; and both saw, standing near them, one of the ship's boys,—a favorite of the ship's crew,—who had been under the care of Dr. Stewart during the voyage from Jamaica. "I'm not very big," he continued, "and I'm not able yet to do much; for I'm quite weak, an' somehow, sir, I don't seem to get stronger. But he did so much for me an' t'other poor fellows, that I'd be glad to do anything I could to help him until he's well, sir."

Stewart's eyes glistened as he spoke:

"You've a kind, brave heart in your little body, Frank, and it's easy to see that this is no place for you. How could you ever leave your mother to go to sea, my poor boy?"

"I've no mother," the child answered, quietly; "I mean, sir, she died a year ago, and my uncle was going to put me on the parish. So I ran away and shipped as powder boy; but I think I would have been better off even in the workhouse, for there I should be taught something, at least. But you'll let me help you, sir?"

"Yes, Frank," said the doctor, gratefully, "you shall be my little nurse, and I'll try and build your strength up if I can. Woodside, you'll see the first lieutenant, and get permission for Frank to hang his hammock here, won't you?"

Woodside did as requested, and, having arranged matters to Stewart's satisfaction, asked if anything more could be done for the invalid's comfort.

"You must be off to your duty, my dear fellow," replied Stewart; "but if you have time after your expedition up yonder, bring Hay with you, for I must see him once more, if I can, before I grow too weak to talk with him. If you could bring me a canteen of fresh water from a spring, it would be a great luxury here, for our water is almost putrid now."

"There's no time like the present," said Woodside abruptly; and at once, going on deck, he called to Hay, who came quickly on board, bringing a small keg, and a native bag of coarse, tough grass, both of which he brought into the captain's quarters.

"Here are some limes," said Woodside heartily, "and the water, if warm, is sweet and pure. Come Frank, let us leave the captain for a moment." And taking the boy by the hand, the two went out upon deck, and stood silently looking out over the lagoon, whose sluggish tide swept slowly past the refuse, cast overboard by the ships.

Suddenly a splash was heard some fifty yards away, and amid a *melange* of shavings, drift weed, lumber and other refuse, the great dorsal fins of two or three sharks were seen cutting the water, and then the water flew into foam as they tore and

tugged at some object which could not be distinguished.

"What can they be fighting over?" asked the lieutenant curiously; but he felt the little hand tighten on his, and looking down he saw the boy's face whiten and the blue eyes almost convulsed with horror.

"They say that shot are getting scarce, sir," he said with an effort; "an' we do see such things every day, but I can't bear it. Don't let them throw me over so when I die, will you, sir?" And Woodside in his turn saw with horror, that the sharks of the lagoon were tearing to pieces the swollen corpse of an European.

"Don't fear, my boy. I hope to see both you and the captain well and hearty yet, and if we get home to England, there's a good home where you shall never want for food or shelter while I live; but if not—"

"If not," said the child quietly, "you'll carry me ashore, will you not? I'm very light and little, they say. Don't take too much trouble, but I would like to sleep under the trees, as my mother does in dear old England."

"Don't fear, my boy," huskily answered the stout soldier, "you won't die, and I shall see you strong and happy in England yet. But here comes the sergeant, and we must leave you for to-day."

Stewart shook his hand heartily as he took his leave, "You will be kind to the men I know, if it chance that you take my place over them. There are few left now, but they are good brave fellows and

deserve better fortune. Come back if you can. Good by and God bless you."

"Come lieutenant," said an officer kindly, "Knowles is getting out his boats, and the signal of recall is flying for you," and as men must in time of war, they turned from their friend in his extremity, and in a short time were pulling up the lagoon.

"What had the captain to say to you?" asked Woodside, after some time spent in utter silence and deep thought.

"We had some little conversation, sir, about various matters relating to his death, and the disposal of his outfit and share of plunder; but his great anxiety was that he might receive Christian burial at our hands."

"Do you think then, Hay, that he will die. He seems strong and in his senses."

"Aye, sir! He has his faculties, and is resigned to God's providence beyond all I have ever seen so near to death, for he talked of his decease and burial, as if of a trip ashore. But I've seen such cases as this before; the doctors call it a walking case, sir, and he'll die beyond a doubt in a few days at most."

That afternoon the Weymouth, with the cruiser sloop, sailed over to the western arm of the lagoon, where a narrow channel leads between the western end of Varu and the main land, affording a passage to the outports of Tolu and Sina, whence supplies to the forts and city had been easily conveyed since the commencement of the siege. The forts commanding this were two in number, mounting four and eight guns respectively; but no defense was

made, and the sloop and the boats dashed up a creek on the main shore, meeting with no opposition save a few harmless volleys of musketry, which were quickly silenced by a shower of grape poured into the wooded slopes surrounding the river.

Near the plantation, at its mouth, were moored six or seven large "Sinu hulks," as they were called, being canoes constructed from gigantic trees, some of them fifty feet long and of a burden of twenty tons, yet so thin and light that their draft was something almost miraculous.

A few of the boats landed, their crews foraging with fair success, and the little flotilla returned to the fleet, and the next day, as nothing especial occurred, Woodside visited his friend, finding him weaker, but calm, if not hopeful, and sedulously attended by the little powder-boy, who seemed to enjoy the fruit and wine which Woodside had procured for their comfort, but he seemed to grow weak almost as fast as his older companion.

So strongly impressed was Woodside with the belief that both were dangerously ill, that he proposed to stay on board that night, but Stewart negatived the proposition.

"No, Woodside, it must not be; you have your duties, and to-morrow you tell me the fleet are to move on Castillo Grande; you will need rest, and I if I cannot fight can still watch and pray, and bear what the will of our Heavenly Father has ordained. Come to see me whenever you can, but don't take a man from his duty for my sake."

That night, as the morning drew near at hand,

Stewart called to his little nurse, whose hammock lay within reach, and asked him to hand him a drink from a shelf beside him. The child aroused himself and essayed to pass the cup, but it dropped from his fingers on the deck and was dashed to pieces.

"What is the matter, Frank?" said Stewart quickly. "Do you feel any worse, dear boy?"

"No, sir; only very weak and cold. I—I think, sir, I am going to my mother. I am sorry I broke the cup."

"Never mind that, dear," answered Stewart. "I'll try and make some one hear outside, for I feel too weak to rise, and think I am going with you. Are you afraid?"

"No, sir, I'm not afraid to die. Mother said that I must keep myself pure and good, so that I could come to her in heaven, and that God would love us then, and never let me weep or suffer any more."

"Give me your wrist, Frank," said the doctor, his old habits for a moment clouding his mind. "One, two, three, four, five,—h'm! weak and thready." But the little fingers sought his own, and soon the face of the child was drawn close to the breast of the dying man.

"We shall have no sorrow there, child," he said feebly; "neither sorrow nor crying, for the former things have passed away. And yet, my wife and children—it seems hard to pass away with none of all my loved ones to say farewell, without one whose lips I can kiss in token of parting."

"I love you, sir," said the child; "and I am sorry that your children are so far away. I've never

kissed anyone since mother died; but I would like to kiss you just once, for you have been so kind to me."

The dying man with an effort raised himself, and pressed his lips to those of the lad. "May God bless you, my child," he said, "and take you into His eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Exhausted, he sank back upon his pillow, and Frank scarcely knew when the strong, brave spirit passed away, save that the kindly grasp relaxed and the loosening fingers were strangely cold and chill.

Then the child broke into a weak but bitter cry which brought the watch to the scene of death, and, as in the grey of the morning Woodside pulled alongside, anxious about his comrade, the body of the good captain had already been prepared for burial, being sewed up in the hammock he had occupied while living.

With little difficulty he obtained permission to bury the body on shore, and hastily rowing to the inner shore of Boca Chica, they excavated a shallow grave beneath the shadow of a huge mahogany tree and laid their sorrowful burden therein.

On their return to the ship, Lieutenant Woodside visited little Frank, who was visibly sinking fast. "Don't weep, sir," said he, "I am glad that I am going. I shall soon be with my dear mother and the good captain. I am sorry that I could not have gone with him last night, and been buried with him under the trees and flowers, but God knows best."

A rough old sea dog sat near at hand, fanning away the flies, and striving to create a coolness in the stifling atmosphere. Woodside turned to him

and said, "You know, comrade, what Frank wants, and I must go to my duty. Here are five guineas. Take care of him well, and if I cannot return, do for him what I would do if I could."

"Avast there, sir, Ben Moreham doesn't take money for such service, an' there isn't a man in the ship, that 'ud see poor Franky here want for anything, alive or dead. I thank your honor though all the same, an' unless we're engaged, all shall be done as he wishes."

"O, thank you, Ben, and you too, Mr. Woodside. I am so glad that I shall sleep my last sleep beside him."

The great tears were rolling down the face of the captain of the main-top, and Woodside and Stephen could no longer restrain their own emotions.

"God bless and keep you, dear child," said the latter, lying his hand gently on the pale young brow. "Good bye until we meet again, here or hereafter."

Stooping he kissed the childish lips, and received a thankful smile that told but too sadly of the vast thirst for and wealth of love, which had so long been restrained and pent up in the orphan's heart, and then went with a heavy heart to the waiting boat.

Woodside would have spoken but could not, and pressing the tiny hand, kissed the child in token of parting, rushed upon deck, and pushing off into the still lagoon sought the side of the Weymouth, whose boats were already in the water, and preparing for service.

Two days later, the English lieutenant heard from Ben Moreham that Frank had died the same day,

and had been buried beside the grave of Captain Stewart.

The will of the latter, as contained in the register of probate for the County of Suffolk, Mass., Vol. 34, Folio 480, and the inventory of his estate in the succeeding volume, are all that are left to tell of the fate of this brave soldier and good man, who doubtless died a martyr to his exertions in behalf of his comrades; whom he saw perishing around him through a lack of food, pure water, shelter and attendance, and the utter inefficiency and culpable jealousy of their commanders.

Through those papers it appears that he left a son, John Viscount Stewart, who was married and possessed a son, but of the subsequent fortunes of his family nothing can be substantiated, for the newspapers of the period do not contain even a brief notice of his death.

Chapter XXII.

Castillo Grande

But, in war, the death of a friend is but an incident soon overlooked, if not forgotten, in the intense interest of the greater tragedy which war presents to the spectator and actor alike; and Woodside, on reporting the death of his senior officer, was at once recommended by Captain Knowles to take command of his men, and to leave the charge of the whaleboat to his sergeant, Stephen Hay.

"He is perfectly competent," said Woodside magnanimously; "but I hate to be parted from him; and the life of my poor men on board the fleet is not so pleasant that I like the prospect of returning to it."

"I don't blame you, sir," said Knowles pleasantly; "but duty must be obeyed, and I think I can promise you, that our future operations will be more decided and successful than those of the siege below."

"I obey," said Woodside; "but I would rather stay with my men as a simple lieutenant than take my step, and lie stifling on board those motionless hulks down the lagoon."

That night the boats of the Weymouth were manned at dusk, and the officers in charge were met on deck by Captain Knowles, who gave them their orders in person.

"As you know, gentlemen," said he, "we have to force a passage closed by seven sunken galleons, except a channel guarded by the Conquistador 66, the

Dragon 60 and the Castillo Grande. It is important that we should, so far as we can, shut up the garrison in the fort and take them with the men of war and their crews. It may be, however, that they may determine to reinforce the fleet and fort, and fight for the city at this point, and therefore you must see that they do not get men and ammunition down here without our knowing it, or send out a flotilla to surprise this or any other vessel of the fleet.

"You will therefore keep as near as may be to the enemy as you can without risking a broadside, and in case of the approach of boats will warn each other, by the flash of a pistol, and, if the enemy is in force, by the sending up of the rockets, with which each boat should be provided.

"You will be provided with food, and extra spirit rations will be given to the men thus exposed to the night air and fog; and I have no doubt, gentlemen, that you will give us a good account of your night service."

As the officers were about to embark, a midshipman summoned Sergeant Hay to the captain's cabin, and entering with some little trepidation at so unwonted a summons, Stephen found only the commander, who looked up quickly from a mass of plans and papers, which from his capacity as engineer of a fleet, engaged in siege operations, ever lay on the table of his great cabin.

"I expect a service a little out of the common from you to-night, sergeant," he said quickly. "I want to send one boat inside of the Spanish line, and have chosen your whaler and her crew."

"You do us great honor," said Stephen, gladly. "We have made paddles for her, and can go almost as noiselessly as an Indian canoe, and as to draught, a foot of water is all we want."

"That is excellent," said the commander, rubbing his hands, "and now to your duty. The council of war seems to expect a deal of fighting here, but I think it doubtful, and shall keep my boats ready to act, should the Spaniards sink their men-of-war and try to escape in boats. So I want you to pass through or over the sunken vessels, or up the lagoon of La Quinta here to the right, so as to observe any movement in the inner bay, and, if you see the Spaniards leaving the fort for the town, send up the signal rockets with which you are provided; but if a strong force comes to reinforce the castle you may return as quickly as may be without signaling. The service is one of great peril, but I think you may always escape by way of the lagoon to the westward."

"I thank you heartily," said Hay, as he rose to go, "but is it asking too much, to request that the other boats may be detained half an hour after I move off, with orders then to move until within sight of the Spanish picket boats off the fort. I think we may then pass without danger near the Manzanilla side."

Knowles smiled. "The idea is a good one, but not audacious enough to give the best results. I will send the boats at once to the Manzanilla side, and let them fire a rocket or two if need be to attract the notice of the guard boats. In the meantime you will pull to the inland side of the fort, and paddle, close in under the land, into the inner harbor."

"It shall be done," said Stephen, as he turned to go. "It is easy to see that your plan is better than mine, for they won't dream of our daring to pass under the muzzles of their cannon."

Ten minutes later the yawls and cutters with muffled oars were gliding up the lagoon to the right, and at the expiration of fifteen or twenty minutes the crew of the whaler, with noiseless strokes of their greenheart paddles, impelled their light craft toward the island of Tierra Bomba, from whose southern extremity a long neck of land, bordered by mangrove marshes, extended and formed the natural break-water of the inner bay of Cartagena.

As they shot in under the shadows of the land, they saw an instantaneous flash afar off to the right, and a moment later a score of musket shots, farther up the harbor, told that the advance had suddenly encountered a Spanish guard boat.

"Drive her hard, boys," whispered Hay, as he swerved off from a projecting clump of mangroves and felt his steering paddle strike on a submerged root. "We're well up now and inside the Spanish boats, I think. Now not a word; there's the fort ahead, and we must go by it, or we are prisoners to the Spaniards an hour hence."

The men at his whisper sent the boat flying over the shallows, until in the darkness the white walls of the fort seemed almost within reach, and then, as the word of command passed from one to another, the paddles struck slower and more silently, until they glided under the shadow of the pier which projected into the water in front of the massive walls,

in whose embrasures a light here and there gave to view the forms of Spanish soldiers and marines, engaged, as it seemed, in preparing their arms and equipments for immediate movement of some kind.

Suddenly Hay turned the prow in under a portion of an old wharf, evidently little used, and catching at the rotting piles arrested the progress of the boat, while, at the same moment the sound of paddles was heard and a long low canoe came swiftly by the colonists and drew up beside the masonry sea wall, not fifty feet away. The arrival was expected, it seemed, for several men at her coming appeared at the landing, and aided those she contained to ascend the face of the wall.

As they disappeared in the darkness, Hay pushed on under the old pier until the boat emerged on the opposite side of the wharf, and paddling eastward they soon rounded the point, and saw the lighted inshore ports of the Spanish war vessels between them and the outer bay.

"We're in at last," whispered Hay to Coggeshall, who pulled the after oar, "and now for a look up the harbor. We must keep inshore, I think, and cross over well up the bay."

"Yes; but I wouldn't keep too fur in, although our best holt is the woods; in case we're cut off by boats. We can al'ays get down to Boca Chica by land, ef so be they don't send out a party from the fort."

"Hush! there are boats coming," whispered Untequit, and looking up the bay, a long string of clumsy objects were seen approaching through the darkness, and keeping well in under the shadow of the shore.

The boat's grapnel was let down and the crew, crouching below the gunwale, loosened the pistols in their belts and awaited with patience the coming flotilla. The first boats were large launches and long-boats filled with men, and by the light of one or two horn lanterns, Hay saw that they were armed and ready for service. He accordingly abandoned the idea of signalling the fleet and began to count the passing boats, which soon became less crowded but of larger size and evidently intended for carrying heavy burdens. The voices of negroes, whose heavy oars splashed heavily at every stroke, also told that no attack was intended, and almost before they knew it a great Sinu hulk shot past inside them, impelled over the shallows by long setting poles and the ebbing tide.

"We're right in the middle of them," said Jones, nervously, "an' thar's a big one coming right down upon us. Cut loose thar, Untequit, or she'll be over us."

He was about to rise, but Hay laid one hand upon his shoulder and the other upon his mouth: "Silence!" he whispered; "leave all to Untequit. He will carry us clear if—"

In the darkness the blunt bows of a huge Sinu hulk seemed close upon them, but the Indian, with a stroke of his paddle, warded off the coming blow, and then threw himself down into the bottom of the boat as the tree canoe rubbed and grated past.

There were expressions of surprise and alarm from those on board, and one man dropped his setting pole and ran aft to seize the waif, as he took

the boat to be, but the speed of the hulk was too great, and as she disappeared in the darkness, Hay ordered Untequit to take in the grapnel, and sending his men to the paddles struck off across the harbor to the westward.

With the greatest care the men paddled silently off, Untequit peering sharply into the misty darkness and Stephen keeping his course by the aid of a star in the occidental heavens. Suddenly a muffled rap was heard on the bow, and Stephen, recognizing an old hunting signal, swerved his boat to the right, and laying aside his paddle seized his musket and listened intently to the sound of oars drawing nearer and nearer.

"'Tis a guard boat. Give way, men," he whispered hoarsely, and taking to their oars the men pulled for life, and Stephen, plying his paddle with desperate energy, headed his light craft for the harbor's mouth, where an occasional battle-lantern showed the presence of the Spanish ships.

A startled and confused hail behind them told that their presence had been discovered, and the quick rattle of unmuffled oars close behind, grew indistinct but tardily, though the men bent the long ash oars like slender poles, as with long regular powerful strokes they almost lifted the boat above the waves, in her rush toward the dangerous pass where fort and warship, picket boat and sunken wreck, lay between them and safety.

"We're close aboard the fleet, now," muttered Jones, as he turned his head; "they ain't more then twenty rod away. Why don't you keep away

to the west'ard by Manzanilla, whar some of our men landed tother day an' burnt the fort?"

"The boldest way's the safest," said Stephen, in low clear tones which thrilled every man in the boat. "Keep the oars going, and your weapons ready. I'm going right along side of this ship ahead."

At this moment the black hulk of one of the men-of-war was just ahead, and by the light of a lantern or two Stephen saw that no boats were alongside, or at the booms, while her open ports showed the yawning muzzles of her lower deck guns, almost even with the water's edge. An impulse to pull along side struck him, but bold as he was he shrank from so reckless an act, and the next moment he saw before him the line of dusky objects which he took to be the cordon of picket boats of the Spanish fleet.

There seemed to be a score of them, more or less, but they lay in nearly equal numbers to right and left, and Hay determined to take the middle channel and trust to his boat's speed for safety.

Again the men bent to their oars until the boat seemed fairly flying through the water, and Stephen, as he neared the broken line, expected every instant to hear the brief, hoarse challenge and the quickly succeeding volley, which could hardly fail to wound or kill at such narrow quarters.

The line was not a rod away when Untequit uttered a word which raised a load of uncertain apprehension from every heart. "Masts!" was whispered from one to another; and as they shot past, Hay saw that they were indeed the masts of the vessels sunken to close the main channel.

At a word from their sergeant, the men now took in their oars and paddled cautiously along the line of wrecks toward the port side, until they again saw the white walls of Castillo Grande and its lighted embrasures; but this time half a dozen boats were seen lying between them and the bay.

Silently, the men simply reversed their seats, and paddled, stern first, back along the line of obstructions, keeping close to the masts and rigging, amid which the ebbing tide eddied and gurgled, leaving amid them rafts of sea-tangle, and the varied flotsam and jetsam of the lagoon.

Once more they lay in the main channel; and this time, as no boats were in sight, Hay determined to trust to fortune, and make a straight course for the ship. He accordingly ordered his men to lay aside their upper clothing; gave them a dram from the extra rations ordered by Capt. Knowles; saw that every man had his weapons ready for instant use, and then felt the light craft tremble and writhe beneath him under the Herculean efforts of his crew.

But, to his surprise, no angry hail or sudden musket shot greeted his ears; and after a mile of exhausting rowing, he deemed the picket boats eluded, and saw not far away the lights of the Weymouth and her consorts.

"Take it easy, boys," he said, and was about to replace his coat, laid aside in preparation for the dangerous adventure he had achieved, when he heard to the left the splash of oars, and saw a boat emerging from the gloom behind.

A bright flash seemed to blind, a crashing roar

deafened and stunned him; the next moment he was in the water with the wreckage of the whaler around him, and a blow on the head placed him beyond the power of knowing aught farther of the misadventure.

When he came to himself, however, it was nearly day, and he lay in his hammock on board the Weymouth, which seemed to be under way and preparing for action, for her crew were at quarters, and the rattle of blocks and cordage came to his ears, with the utterance of the quaint orders incident to nautical manœuvres.

At last the rattle of the chains were heard, and the splash of the anchors as they fell into the sea; and as at rest the ship lay motionless upon the tide, the roar of half a dozen heavy guns made her reel and tremble, but the gunners, as they reloaded and ran out the cumbrous engines of death, waited in vain for an answer that never came, and soon laid aside port-fire and rammer, while the boatswain's whistle called away the boats of the first and second divisions.

Stephen would fain have sprung from his hammock, but he was strangely dizzy and weak, and was glad to lie down at the command of Untequit, who, from an open port, had been watching the results of the ship's fire.

"It's no use, master; the whaler's gone, and the other boats are full. 'Twas the enemy's boat that sunk us with her swivel, but you were the only one hurt, although several muskets are lost in the bay."

"And the fort?"

"This morning the vessels are all sunken, and the castle shows no sign of life or answer to our fire. The boats are already on their way to take it, if any enemy waits therein."

A moment later and hurrahs broke from the men in the leading boats, and as the charging seamen and marines poured up the covered way and into the fort a hoarse cheer from the ship's crew answered the exultation of their comrades, while Stephen, feebly joining in the cry, groaned the next moment as he thought of the misadventure; which had lost him the happiness of reaping the full measure of triumph.

Untequit quickly comprehended the cause of his pain. "Do not care," he said. "The captain knows what we did, and was glad when I told him of the boats which passed us and the way we came out into the bay. He asked many questions about the ships and sent the men to quarters, for he said the Spaniards were running away."

"They've given up the fort then," said Stephen, "and now only the city remains. I hope this blow isn't going to keep me here long."

"The doctor said you would be all right tomorrow, but must sleep all you can to-day; and I think you had better obey orders at once."

So saying, he replaced the wet bandages over the bruise,—for it was little more, the cutlass having turned in the seaman's hand; and when at dark Stephen awoke, rested and clear in mind, he learned of the day's results.

Castillo Grande, it seemed, had been deserted the

preceding night, the Spanish force having previously spiked the fifty-seven guns there mounted, sunk the Conquistador and Dragon, and thrown their powder into the water-cisterns of the castle.

On the 1st of April, one hundred regulars and fifty seamen were landed, several guns put in condition for service, and, the fleet having moved up from the lower harbor, the Conquistador's stern was hove around with the aid of powerful purchases and the tide, and the Burford, with the bomb-ketches and two twenty-gun ships, warped through.

The next day, April 2d, the bomb-ketches and several guns of the fort opened fire on a French man-of-war lying near the town, which was soon seen to burst into flames, and was completely consumed.

Chapter XXIII.

Texar De Gracias

Meanwhile Stephen had recovered from his injuries, and with the crew of the lost whaleboat went back to duty, and to the narrow quarters occupied by the small remnant that was left of the hundred men, who had sailed from Nantasket the fall before, full of courage, loyalty and brilliant expectation.

Already the rainy season was fast approaching, and an occasional rain storm, which made the scuppers a running stream of water, accompanied by almost incessant lightning and terrible crashes of thunder, added much to the discomforts of the soldiers, and gave promise of greater hardships to be endured, when only the canvas of their rotten tents should defend them from the incessant rains of the latter part of April.

But, for a time, the progress of events was rapid and encouraging, and every day brought some new and exciting phase of war, under the eyes of Stephen and his companions.

On the 3d of April the Weymouth warped into the inner bay, and although the guns of the town opened fiercely, she received little damage, and that same evening, with the three fire-ships and the Cruiser sloop, warped over to the southwest shore undiscovered and unmolested.

On the 4th the sloop, towed by the boats of the little squadron, made her way with the young flood,

up a narrow creek, bordered by profuse vegetation, toward the plantation of Texar de Gracias, formerly occupied by the factors of the famous or rather infamous, South Sea Company. A canny Scot, named McPherson, who had spent some time in the country, acted as their guide, and warned the captain of the sloop that it was more than likely that on attaining a certain reach, where the creek widened, his boats would be fired upon.

Accordingly all but two were recalled, and these, working alternately, carried out kedges from either bow, to which were attached long ropes by means of which long lines of men, walking steadily aft, warped the small vessel rapidly toward the head of the estuary.

The sloop had just reached the bend of the creek, and had the kedge in use nearly under her bows, when the yawl sent to lay the second kedge returned hastily, the officer in charge reporting, as he came alongside, that they had seen Spaniards in the woods. The boats were at once ordered under the cover of the vessel, the men sent to the starboard battery, and a spring made fast to the stream cable to bring the batteries to bear promptly in case of need.

The kedge under the bows was got inboard, the second warp manned by all who could be spared from the guns, and as the boatswain's whistle rang out merrily across the still lagoon, the measured tramp of the men as they walked aft, and the ripple of the water under the bows, told of creditable progress and sufficient steerage way.

They neared the kedge, and still no sign of life or human occupancy appeared. The last fifty feet of warp was fast coming inboard, and the captain must soon expose his men anew, or anchor in a position which might prove a perfect death-trap to both vessel and crew. The captain, however, like most of those commanding the light vessels of Vernon's fleet, was a man of decision and action, and his voice rang out from the quarter-deck to the men at the warp:

"Lay aft! Lay aft!—handsomely, men! Bowse her along! Out with the other kedge, Mr. Fordyce! Keep a look-out there, forward, for the enemy. Let her fall off, steersman, if—"

His words were lost in the roar of cannon, and the whistling of grape and round shot from an innocent-looking copse of cottonwoods and cedars, which crowned a little elevation at the head of the creek; while from the woods a scattering fire of musketry opened on every hand. Luckily, the fire of the battery, although it raked the vessel fore and aft, was either too high or too low, and did little damage to aught but the hull and rigging; but the fire of the Spanish infantry was more fatal, and several men dropped in the boats and on the deck of the vessel.

"Port your helm! Hard down!—down, I say!" roared the captain, angrily; and as the spokes flew between the hands of the quartermaster, the bows of the sloop fell off until, describing a quarter of a circle, she lay with her larboard battery bearing on the masked breastwork at the head of the reach.

"Let go the anchor! Out with that spring aft,

and watch the drift of the tide! Clap a stand of grape into those starboard guns fore and aft, and sweep the woods on either side. Are you ready, fore and aft?"

A second discharge from the head of the lagoon sent the splinters flying from the bulwarks and tops; and the men fairly growled their hoarse "Aye, aye, sir!" as they hurriedly swung their carronades and light sixes, and stood by their tackle at quarters.

"Then, fire!"

The light craft reeled under the recoil as the overcharged guns poured their double charges of round and grape into the woods, whose slender palms, striped and splintered by the iron storm, showed for many years thereafter the effect of that heavy broadside. The musketry ceased as if by magic; and, sending his men to the larboard battery, the captain of the Cruiser soon silenced the fire of the enemy, and compelled them to retire the few light pieces they had placed in position.

By the evening of the 5th, the transports had been brought up, and the arrangements for the landing were completed. Nearly every boat in the fleet was made ready with picked crews, and detailed to attend the several transports, which at midnight raised a colored signal lantern at the mast-head; and the boats, as fast as their quota of troops were received, rendezvoused under cover of the Weymouth in the inner bay. Nearly fourteen hundred men, including about seven hundred Americans principally from the northern colonies, were detailed for this service, under the command of Brigadier Blakeney,

who, having made his final arrangements for the important step about to be taken, paced the quarter-deck of the Weymouth impatiently, now trying to sweep the shore, still veiled by the waning shadows of night and the heavy morning mists; now casting a hopeful glance at the eastern sky, just tinged with rosy light, the herald of the coming sunrise; and again surveying the long lines of silent men standing at their guns and the black squadron of crowded boats lying under the lee of the man-of-war.

"Will they make a fight, Knowles?" he asked, as for the twentieth time he turned with his companion at the break of the quarter-deck to resume their limited promenade.

"I really don't know," replied the sea captain, quietly. "I open on yonder woods as soon as it is daylight. Our brave tars will land you while the smoke is heavy, and at the worst you can hold your own on one flank while I cover the other with grape."

"I am sorry," said Blakeney, gravely, "that we have so few men to take part in today's action. Fourteen hundred men are not enough for three thousand in the field, and Don Sebastian de Eslava has more than that number within his works. We ought to have five thousand men to start the dons, and keep them going until we are in front of the walls of the city itself."

"I think so too;" said Knowles, under his breath, "but the less we say on such matters the better for both. We must do the best we can with the forces at our disposal; let the blame of defeat, if any, rest

on those who issue the orders by which you and I must be guided. But the light is growing stronger, and the trees of La Quinta are becoming more distinct, to my thinking. Mr. Ashton, tell the men to stand ready for the signal, and see that every gun is laid properly after every discharge. No round shot are to be used, and the guns must have greater elevation to make the grape tell at this distance."

The east grew bright, the sun, like a red hot iron globe, rose above the breakers beyond the walls of the besieged city, and slowly the white fogs shrouding the mangrove marshes rose above the dreary green of the water forest, and gave to view the narrow strait of the Texar de Gracias, across which a narrow wooden bridge connected the main land and the fortified island of Manzanilla. The woods came down on either side of a narrow roadway almost to the very landing, and in and out of the shadows of the slender palms, great cottonwoods and evergreen cedars, darker shadows, which could only be men and enemies, moved with caution from cover to cover, and displayed here and there a glint of steel, at which the waiting gunners eagerly pointed their pieces, and even more impatiently longed for the order to fire.

At last it came, and the stately Weymouth, Wakeman's tiny Cruiser and the light guns of the bomb ketches opened a furious fire with grape, searching every rood of forest with a deadly shower of mitraille, which left no cover unsearched which might shelter more than a handful of men. The outer fortress of San Lazaro opened at a range too

long to seriously damage vessels or men. But the signal was given and the oars of the leading division beat the lagoon into foam, and, as the first boats entered the narrow channel, the grenadiers rushed up the wooded slopes and formed rapidly on the level bridge head, taking ground to the front and right as fresh troops were landed. Here and there a man fell pierced by a bullet from the forest, or an oar flew into fragments, as a spent shot from San Lazaro made its last short *ricochet;* but by six o'clock the troops were landed, and the grenadiers, some seven hundred strong, under Col. Grant, were ready to lead the advance. No body of the enemy had as yet been able to appear in the field, so constant and searching was the fire of the ships; but now for a mile the path to be followed was a mere wheeltrack, where two carts could barely pass each other; and those Americans detailed to scout on the right flank, or inland side of the force, soon found themselves struggling through a growth so close and interlaced with thorns, lianas and hanging vines, that, despite their greatest efforts, the heavy but regular march of the grenadiers far outstripped their most agile rangers. Several men fell in the front platoon, but the veterans closed up promptly, and the ambushed foemen, retiring unharmed, were soon seen running across an opening beyond the defile, entering which, the grenadiers halted to allow their scouts to close up, and to make ready for the decisive moment, which now seemed close at hand.

On the right, the plain sloped down to the lagoon, here not more than two or three feet deep, and

thickly filled with mangrove trees, the haunt of many wading birds, which rose alarmed at the unwonted intrusion and the roar of artillery from the distant ships; although it was noticed that they heeded the latter far less than the presence of man.

Hay and his Indian comrade were on the left flank of the line of scouts, and therefore, when the colonists were once more sent into the woods, some twenty paces to the right of the road, were close to the grenadiers, who in serried platoons, four ranks deep, with their bayonets fixed and muskets at the charge, advanced with steady step against the Spaniards, who, to the number of some hundreds, just then took up their position on the highroad, which at right angles crossed the way leading to La Quinta.

Keeping a little in advance, Hay and his companions several times discharged their muskets at outlying Spaniards, mostly citizens or hunters from the inland estancias, who, with their long-barreled, small-bored Spanish guns, were preparing to fire on the officers of the grenadiers. One of these, a red-haired and bearded giant, fell at the report of Untequit's musket, and as the ranger came up to his victim, he very speedily slung his own clumsy piece, and, appropriating the arms and accoutrements of the fallen man, proceeded to use them against the Spaniards.

All at once, as the distance between the approaching foes narrowed, the Spanish skirmishers, with a last ineffectual fire, ran in, and the front rank of the enemy fired a volley which filled the road with dust

and smoke, through which the red flashes of a second discharge broke fiercely in the very faces of the grenadiers.

But, as the smoke cleared away, the veterans, with accelerated step, closed up the ranks, swept up to within half gunshot of the foe, raised their guns to the level of the breast and fired. The crash was almost like that of a single cannon, and the effects fatal, although Hay and his comrades looked at each other, with a curl of the lip that bespoke unspeakable contempt for such machine-like firing, where no aim could be taken.

"They've skercely teched one," said Gibbs, "an' I declar' to gracious they're runnin'. Look at 'em turnin' about, an' thar's them bloody Spaniards a hollerin' an' hootin'."

The wild and contemptuous yells and curses of the Spaniards, and their Indian allies were indeed distinctly audible; and, as Hay sprang into the bough of a ceiba to look, he saw the head of the column break, and for a moment he feared the worst. The next instant, however, he saw that the first platoon, after delivering its fire, had parted in the centre, wheeling to right and left, while the second, marching straight forward, delivered another crashing volley and wheeled in turn, giving way to the third platoon, and so on, until the bewildered and stricken Spaniards, seeing each platoon by some inexplicable manœuvre deliver its fire nearer and nearer every moment, incontinently turned and fled, while the grenadiers, pushing steadily after them, entered at last the high road to Cartagena.

Hay dropped lightly from his perch and rejoined his old comrades, who wide-eyed and open mouthed, had for the first time witnessed the passage of a defile by disciplined troops.

"I swan," said Gibbs, "thet was pretty, thet was. I don't believe anythin' could stan' ag'inst them grenadiers."

"Ef they could shoot straight they could whip anythin'," said Jones, contemptuously, "but I reckon ef the Spaniards hed held thar fire they would hev ben piled up like cord-wood in yonder lane."

Untequit said nothing at first, but Stephen, anxious to know what the Indian thought of the novel spectacle, said to him pleasantly, "What think you, Untequit?"

By this time they had reached the spot where the first of the English wounded lay in their scarlet coats and clumsy trappings, few in number, and already under the care of the surgeons in attendance. The Indian ran his eye over the whole space, counting rapidly, "One, two, three, four, ten, thirteen—bah! Untequit has forty charges at his side. Alone he could have killed more men than the Spaniards have slain all the way from the beach."

"'Tis true the Spaniards shoot poorly, and the English made more noise than they did execution, but 'twas a pretty sight, and the defile was well carried; but now we can push on, for here are houses, orchards, farms and open fields, and we can keep ahead of the regulars instead of letting them lead us."

For the first time in the expedition, the men felt elated and sure of success as they pushed on, and saw close at hand the fortress convent of La Popa, the estancia of La Quinta and the fortified hilltop of San Lazaro, and beyond these the crowded battlements of Cartagena and its island suburb Xexemani or Gethsemane.

Better had it been if, like ravening wolves, frantic from hunger and suffering, at the heels of their hunted prey, the soldiers of the landing detachment had pursued the flying Spaniards and captured them under the guns of the city, or pushed on to carry San Lazaro before the foe had recovered from his defeat.

But the traditions of the army and the time-honored rules of Vauban, and other famous engineers, were too strongly instilled into the minds of the generals and engineers who directed their operations, and that night one-half the force landed, kept the picket line scarce half a mile from San Lazaro, while the remainder, except a small party thrown into La Popa, lay on their arms under the sheds, brick kilns and low cottages of La Quinta.

Chapter XXIV.

On Picket at La Quinta

Hay and his companions, having from the nature of their service as skirmishers, been more widely dispersed than the grenadiers and marines, were not of those soldiers placed upon the main picket guard, and forced after the excitement and exertion of the skirmish and pursuit, to expose themselves to the discomforts of anxious watching and broken repose amid the dank cocoa orchards and jungle in front of the advanced citadel of St. Felipe de Barras, otherwise known as San Lazaro.

With the usual forethought of their race, the colonial troops landed fully equipped with all the essentials of their soldier's outfit, and, in spite of some hesitation on the part of Colonel Grant, occupied at night the farm buildings of a small *Hacienda,* or farm, attached to the large plantation known to us only through the official records of the siege as La Quinta, or "The Residence"; for the name of the Spanish gentleman, whose country house has thus been handed down to posterity, by some curious oversight or ignorance, never appears in the brief annals of the military operations carried on before the city itself.

Woodside, although only captain by brevet and second in command under Captain Goffe, of another Boston company, had, through his English birth and the friendship of Colonel Blakeney, sufficient in-

terest to have his way in such a matter, and, having agreed to keep up a strong picket guard in the interval between his bivouac and the fortified hill of La Popa, secured thereby comfortable quarters for his men, during a night of almost interminable discomfort to the majority of the force.

For as the sun went down, the air grew heavy with vapor, and the sky black with drifting clouds, that from time to time poured down sheets of rain which almost instantly flooded the ground, and completely soaked all not defended by more substantial covering than a soldier's watchcoat or such rotten tents as had been landed. The men first detailed for duty went on picket at six o'clock, and the officer who posted them came back drenched to the skin. At nine, Hay, with Untequit, Jones, Coggeshall and Gibbs, were to take, with others, their turn until midnight. Fires had been kindled here and there on the floor of pounded and levelled clay, and from a supply of dry twigs, were kept sparsely fed to supply the want of candles and keep warm the kettles of hot water, with which the officers replenished their cans of punch and toddy, and the commissary sergeants mixed the modicum of raw spirit, ordered for the behoof of the unfortunates whose term of duty had expired.

As the hour approached for relieving the guard, Untequit placed on the fire a large camp-kettle in which he had prepared for supper a kind of hotch-potch or stew, compounded of the heterogeneous plunder of the day's reconnoisance. Dried beef and fat salt pork, fowls, parrots, ducks and rabbits, plan-

tains, cassava, yams and service biscuit, with a liberal sprinkling of red pepper and salt, and a few leaves of the papaw, added to make the coarser meats tender and digestible, combined in this Homeric dish to form a repast so appetizing that at every fire the dish was at once copied with greater or less success. From this each of the *ci-devant* whaler's crew took a liberal lunch, or rather supper, more with the idea of gaining strength and extra warmth than from hunger, and, after looking carefully to the loading and priming of their pieces, went out into the lowering night.

At first, the change was so great from the light to the gloom of the forest that the men were utterly blinded, but following the drenched subaltern, who had posted the first watch, they stumbled through the forest path leading to La Popa, and relieved the shivering and weary soldiers whose watch for the night was over, and who gladly followed the hapless lieutenant of the guard back to quarters.

"'Tis a hard service," said Hay to Untequit, "but we are warm and well fed, and have dry clothes and fire awaiting us at the close of our watch. To my mind there is little fear of the Dons beating up our quarters to-night, but if the men keep walking back and forth, each in his allotted beat, none will become chilled, and no enemy can hope to pass our line unperceived. I will pass along the whole line and see that each man keeps in motion."

"'Tis a terrible night," said Untequit under his breath, as the lightning illumined for several seconds the line of pacing sentinels under the forest

arches, "and in the days of my fathers could only have been the work of evil magicians, for the Great Spirit does not thus afflict his children. Only the Spirit of Evil can be abroad when such storms rage, and truly I had rather fight a dozen men than face the three hours before us."

As he spoke the trunk of a tree not a gunshot away was shivered by a flash of lightning, whose following thunder-crash almost swallowed up the noise of its fall; and so full of electricity was the air that flames of lambent blue seemed to fly around the bayonet-tips, and even in some cases to form a kind of halo around the heads of the soldiers, whose faces by the unnatural light seemed livid and unearthly—all the more that most were more or less unmanned by their unwonted surroundings and experiences.

"My brother," said Hay, quietly, "in storm as well as in sunshine, in life as well as in death, the hand of our Lord, the Creator, holds the eternal sceptre, which is extended to some in mercy, and ordains to others the end of life. Even in this war of storm and tempest are the seeds of good, though to some of us it may well prove fatal under our present condition. Nevertheless, I know well that none of ours will shrink from our bounden service, as brave soldiers and loyal subjects of the king."

"Untequit is ready to answer when his name is called, whether by your voice at dawn, my brother, or by the Great Spirit when He sees fit to summon the last chieftain of the race of Iyanough. Yet I would that the storm were over, and I like not this light, which seems to make the faces of living men like the set features of the dead."

The gloom became impenetrable in the intervals between the lightning, save here and there, amid the tree-tops, where a bluish glare seemed to brood over the crest of some gigantic ceiba or lofty mahogany, and the wind came in terrible gusts, now sweeping across the whole expanse of the swaying forest, and now seeming to cut through the wood in capricious whirlwinds whose centre was a very besom of destruction.

The rain fell almost incessantly, if that could be called rain which fell in sheets of water whose very weight was nearly unbearable, and almost instantly made the level ground a pool and the forest path a brook, whose depth varied from the ankle to the knee, through which the picket guard stumbled and splashed, drenched to the skin, and almost careless of life, so depressing was their situation and the fears excited by the natural phenomena around them.

Hay passed on from man to man, and found most of them similarly affected, but responding readily to cheerful words and appeals to their personal courage and bravery, and at last reached the limits of his own line, and spoke to a gigantic grenadier who held the outermost post of the party at La Popa.

"'Tis a fearfu' night, your honor," said this worthy, a recruit from some highland tribe, "an' 'tis naething ordinar' that raises sic a storm, an' gies to thae quick the corpse-lichts that a' men ken belang only to those dead or doomed to die. 'Tis a stout carle, an' a brave, yon callant wha keeps his watch neist

mine, but he will never mair keep vigil in forest or on wa', for he is fey, indeed."

"What mean you by 'fey indeed'?" asked Stephen, as he sheltered himself beneath the trunk of a huge tree beside the Highlander. The storm lulled for a moment, and, as the branches ceased their incessant swaying, the stillness seemed almost painful as the clansman answered, strong in a belief whose origin is lost in the night of time.

"He wha has nae mony days or hoors o' life is called fey amang the people o' my ain land, an' ilka ane kens that when a man's shroud faulds him frae head to heel, death is nae far awa'. Look at the mon, yersel', where he stan's ayont thae muckle cedar."

A strange thrill of something like awe and fear filled Stephen's breast, as he turned and saw Coggeshall, who held the post, leaning on his musket and peering out into the gloom before him, every line of his strongly cut features and the very curl of his grizzled beard and moustache fully outlined against the lambent flame. Had an enemy been near, no better object could have courted deadly aim, and the effect, terrifying enough in the cases of those we have already spoken of, was doubly impressive from the completeness of the enveloping phosphorescence, or electrical halo.

With an effort, Hay retraced his steps and addressed his well tried comrade, the ex-privateersman, who turned at his voice and stepped back until his massive figure rested by the shoulders against a projecting excrescence of the cedar.

"Good night ag'in, sergeant," he said gravely.

"Your watch will soon be over, I take it, an' you'll not be sorry to get under cover ag'in. 'Tis terrible weather though fer our lads, an' will fill many a fresh grave before forty-eight hours from now."

"I hope not," said Hay, lightly. "Surely good food, dry clothes and a glass of hot Jamaica will set us all right again, when once we are under cover."

"Nothin' else can help the men so well, sergeant, an' I would thet all the officers cared for our poor boys, es our officers hev done. Keep on, es you hev begun, sergeant, an' if merit will do anythin' fer a colonist, you will soon carry the King's commission, ef you choose to bear it. I would hev liked to live to see it, but I fear me thet Jack Coggeshall hes stood his last watch on ship or shore."

"Nonsense, man," said Hay cheerily, although at heart, the dread of some approaching tragedy seemed to chill the life current at its very source, "what fear have you who have passed through so many dangers, and seen so many storms, worse even than this."

"Worse then this," echoed his companion with proud disdain, "I should think so indeed, mate. He who hes faced a norther in the Gulf of Mexico, a typhoon in the China Sea, an' a white squall in the Gulf stream, need not tremble like a woman at a bit of foul weather, in the first of the rainy season."

"Surely you do not fear the fever, or the chances of war, for I know you have passed through many a scene of sickness and battle."

"True, sergeant, 'tis only too true. I was the only one of the crew of the Black Snake letter o' marque

left alive six years agone in Kingston harbor, when we refitted after a fight with a Spanish *guarda costa*, thet sent him to the bottom, an' kept us pumping at the rate of a thousand strokes an hour, until we got her careened at Port Royal. But the pitcher goes to the well once too often with us all, an' somehow I think thet my own cruise is nearly up."

"'Tis strange, too, comrade," said the rover hurriedly as if fearful of interruption, "but since this 'weather breeder,' es we call 'em at sea, settled down among us here on watch, I got to thinkin' of old times, es I heven't thought for years. I hed no mother, thet I can remember; father was at sea all his life, except short visits home, an' a sister of his took care of the house, an' saw to our food an' clothin'. I hed a little sister, a perfect little angel, sir, an' so pretty thet every one admired an' petted her; an' she was es loving es pretty, an' the only one I had to love. She died young, wasted away sir, like a withered lily, an' left me with her last kiss, an' her last words of love alone on earth. She said, 'Come brother,' an' pointed to somethin' or somebody an' smiled. I shall never forget thet smile, an'," lowering his voice, "I hev *seen an' heard her again tonight.*

"I'm not frightened or out of my senses, sir," said Coggeshall, in calm, deep tones, "an' I don't mean to say thet she's in your sight or even in mine, when I sweep the woods, es is my duty. When I look, es the lightning flashes, I see every liana, every sweep of the trunks and branches, an' ef a Spaniard showed an inch of *serape* or *sombrero* you could trust

me to put a bullet in it, es well es in our scoutin' days just past. But in the darkness I see her lovin' little face, es when I knelt cryin' beside her little bed, an' hear her sayin' 'Come, brother! Come!' jest es well an' es plainly es when death parted us forever."

"Not forever, I hope; not forever," cried Stephen, in spite of himself, impressed by the strange calmness and conviction of his follower. "Surely life has no such charms for you, that the hope of rejoining her in a better life would not outweigh all other worldly hopes and wishes."

"One would think so, sir, yet young blood is hot an' old blood often wicked, an' God knows I am no saint, fit to walk beside her in white where they say all are pure. Do you think they will let me come when she calls me?"

"'Whosoever will let him come,' are the words of the holy Bible, and I hold that none will be shut out who truly repent of all their sins and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for all repenting sinners. I have little belief in warnings, or such visions as you speak of, and I advise you to do well your duty, leaving to God the disposal of life and death; but the dear memory of your sister should lead you to Him, through whom only we may hope for love and joy everlasting."

Coggeshall groped in the darkness for his comrade's hand, and wrung it as men do when words fail to express the strong emotions of a powerful organization, and then spoke as if relieved by the confession of his thoughts. "Well, the storm is

comin' on ag'in, I think, an' perhaps as heavily es before. How shall I know when our watch is over?"

"I shall come back with your relief, I suppose. Be of good cheer and trust yourself in Christ's mercy, and we may both yet talk together of this night's vigil, and our hope of ending noble lives in the sure expectation of the immortality of God and his saints."

"Good night, sir; I shall remember." And as Stephen moved away he saw that the mysterious light had left the person of his comrade, and seemed to be broken and passing to the tree against which he leant.

A fresh shower was now passing over, and when, after much labor and suffering, he had attained the left of the line, he found the relief already near at hand and ready to replace his wet and weary sentinels.

One by one they relieved the guards until only a single man remained between the party and the right of the cordon, and Stephen, in the frequent lightning flashes, looked with some concern for his former comrade. At last he saw him standing as he had left him, leaning against the cedar, with his face resting on his hands, crossed upon the muzzle of his weapon, and then all was darkness.

The intervening picket had challenged; Hay gave the countersign over the presented bayonet, and had whispered to the relieving ranger to step forward into his place; when a sheet of fire seemed to fill the air, a deafening crash rolled all around the party, and for some moments all was obscurity to Stephen and his companions.

When he recovered himself, Hay felt the rain falling in torrents upon his face and staggered to his feet, assisted by his men, most of whom had felt the shock even more than himself, and calling for the last of the relief, he went forward toward the post, where Coggeshall, by the light of succeeding flashes, was still to be seen retaining his observant attitude, as if utterly unmindful of the war and wreck of weather.

"He's a cool hand," said Jones admiringly. "Nothin' moves him in storm or battle, I reckon."

"He might hev' come to see ef we were all killed jest now," grumbled Gibbs, whose temper was not improved by his late exposure.

"He had no right to leave his post," said Hay apologetically; "but he ought to challenge ere now," and he cleared his throat significantly, as a hint to the careless or absorbed sentinel.

A second flash showed them the figure of Coggeshall still in the same position, but a terrible thought entered the mind of Stephen, and he sprang forward and laid his hand on the shoulder of the privateersman. As he did so a long undulating flash showed him the face of his comrade lit up with a pleasant smile, but it was the smile of a lifeless face, and the slight impetus of his touch sent the massive form with its heavy accoutrements and shattered weapons to the ground. He had been slain by the same levin-bolt which had prostrated his comrades.

Awestruck and sad at heart, they bore the dead on their crossed muskets up to the bivouac, and essayed all that their rude skill could do, to bring life

back to the stalwart frame and familiar face of their well-tried comrade, but though Hay was the last to give up trying, at heart he had no hope for brave Jack Coggeshall.

No hope say we? He had truly no hope for this life, neither did his Puritan teaching encourage the belief, that even the strange premonition of coming death, or the fancied summons of one long dead, however pure of heart, should avail to turn to true repentance a man of such ungodly life and unrestrained passions as his whilom comrade. But despite all his stern belief as he saw, for the last time, the calm, serene face of the dead soldier, ere the shrouding blanket and flowery vines hid it forever from mortal view, he turned away in hope despite of himself, that in the great and vague hereafter he should yet meet one so brave and true, so loving and tender-hearted, so calm and fearless at the last of life's long battle, as he who died so weirdly, yet so peacefully, 'neath the lightning riven cedars that fringe the base of the fortress height of Nuestra Senora de la Popa.

Chapter XXV.

The Hospital of Saint Lazarus

The succeeding day was as hot and sultry as the night had been tempestuous, but the work of encamping the army was hurried on as fast as possible under the supervision of the general, and of his engineers, now sadly reduced in numbers and *morale* by their losses from sickness and the casualties at Boca Chica.

The ground chosen was covered with vegetation, requiring the use of the mattock and axe to clear it, and the officer placed in charge of this special duty, a veteran major of marines, spared neither his own men nor the detail of colonists, who from their skill in the use of the axe were, as we have seen, doomed with the Jamaica negroes to the drudgery of the expedition. Even the men on picket the night before were compelled to take part in this labor, exposed to the full heat of the cloudless sun, and Hay and his temperate companions, who, divested of the greater part of their clothing, worked with the steady but moderate industry which the hot summers of New England had taught them was best adapted to secure the best results, suffered as they never had before in the deadliest heats of a July noon tide.

Even the negroes, habituated to endure the full rays of a tropical sun, and almost without clothing save of the thinnest and scantiest kind, complained of the heat, and evidently suffered from weakness

produced by the diffuse and immoderate perspiration, which stood in heavy beads upon their jetty bodies. The whips of their officers, for the most part overseers of Jamaican plantations, and at the best slavedrivers in uniform, were used freely, but seemed to have lost their usual efficacy, and the corpulent major, as he lay in his hammock under the grateful shade of a clump of tamarinds, smoking and sipping cool drinks prepared by his negro body servant, stormed and swore as he saw how slowly the work progressed, calling first to one brutal tyrant and then to another to "hurry up the lazy hounds."

But the unfortunate marines, although somewhat favored by their commanding officer in choice of shelter and employment in the lighter labors of the work required, drooped like delicate flowers deprived of the shade which alone enables them to bear the heat of the sun. Clad in heavy and inconvenient uniforms; with their breathing impeded by their clumsy stocks which they dared not lay aside; and being for the most part men of gross size and habits of life, they soon began to faint and fall victims to the fatal *coup de soleil.* A sergeant, who had used his cane unsparingly on his own men and some of the hapless negroes, was one of the first victims, and as if this first case was but the signal for a general yielding of overtaxed human nature, several marines and at least one American dropped as if cut down by a fatal fusilade from the forest.

With a torrent of oaths the huge major caught up his cane, and, hurrying to the spot, ordered the re-

maining marines to convey the dead and dying to the hospital, and excused them from farther duty for the day; and, turning to the Jamaican officers, ordered them to hasten forward the clearing of the ground.

A glance of his eye toward the Americans indicated a similar order, and he was about to return to his hammock and post of observation, when he saw among the colonists a movement, which at once arrested his attention and footsteps.

Among those under the immediate oversight of Sergeant Hay was a youth not yet grown to man's estate,—the runaway apprentice of a Boston ropemaker, who had quitted the long, low sheds at the foot of the Common, and the retrograde walk peculiar to his avocation, for the freer tread but more trying uncertainties of a soldier's life. He had worked for a time manfully, but just then showed unmistakable signs of distress; and Stephen at last noticed that he no longer was bathed in perspiration, and ordered him to retire under the shade of a clump of cocoas not far distant.

But as he shouldered his mattock and turned to go, the major interposed his authority, with the brutal coarseness peculiar to his profession at that day, and especially noticeable in such as, like himself, had served in the "Low Countries."

"———! —— ———! ———!" No language which we feel warranted in addressing to modern ears will represent the mingled blasphemy and obscenity heaped upon the devoted head of the kind-hearted sergeant, and the gigantic form of the vol-

unteer became convulsed with rage, as he drew himself up in conscious strength and rectitude, and fixed his eyes sternly on the blazing orbs of the maddened tyrant.

"What do you mean, you New England hound? How dare you look at me, you psalm-singing Puritan? Drag back yonder sneaking, lazy cur of a countryman of yours to his duty, or I'll bring both you and him to the halberds, and score your backs till the blood runs down to your heels."

With a mighty effort, and less from fear for himself than from dread of the consequences to his comrades, whose indignation showed itself but too plainly in their countenances, Stephen, with a success which surprised himself, kept back the torrent of his inward wrath, and answered civilly enough the outrageous questioning of his superior officer.

"The man is in danger of sunstroke, sir, and I told him to get under cover. I trust, sir,—"

"Silence, sir! Send the man back to his duty. How dare you bandy words with me. Damme, sir, but I'll put you both under arrest, if you don't obey at once."

"I am ready, sir," said Stephen firmly. "The man is in imminent danger, for I know the symptoms, and I will not be a party to his murder."

With a torrent of frightful imprecations, his huge features suffused with an excess of blood, and his stick raised for an assault upon the person of the contumacious sergeant himself, the major of marines rushed toward the immovable colonist.

Stephen had folded his arms and awaited his ad-

versary fearlessly, but with the expectation of serious if not fatal injury; for he had already experienced from frequent observation, the boundless cruelty and tyranny of many of the officers of the land and sea service of those days. His comrades were less prudent, and several were about to interfere, while Untequit laid his hand on the hilt of his knife, and Gibbs even caught up his musket, glaring sideways at the major, although his eyes seemed for the most part to be searching the woods toward the outposts of San Lazaro.

But a better ally was at hand. A strong and active form came leaping from the edge of the woods, and, ere the major could strike, John Woodside, arrayed in his new captain's uniform, confronted the astonished major.

"Out of my way, youngster, or I'll tear your frippery from your back and break your toasting iron across my knee. Out of my way, until I brain that insolent hound who dares to dispute the orders of a major of His Majesty's marines."

"It takes a man, Major Whyte, to do what you threaten," answered Woodside haughtily, "and I fear neither your sword nor your malice. I know why you were commissioned, and what is more to the point, that the service is no longer the secret which you are paid to keep. Now, sir, if you please to arrest my men, well and good; but they enlisted as gentlemen volunteers, and no man shall strike them but over my dead body."

The bully glanced upon his audacious inferior, and for a moment it seemed as if, even in defiance

of all considerations, he would visit on his brother officer the wrath which almost threatened to end his own existence; so purple had become his inflamed visage with the effect of the heat and his own unbridled passions. But Stephen heard a groan behind him, and turned hastily; the boy, overcome by fear and his previous exposure, was insensible.

Hay took the senseless form in his arms, and started for the site of the field hospital, while Woodside, at the first angry movement of the major, drew his rapier from its sheath.

"If you wear a sword for any purpose but for show, Major Whyte," said he, scornfully, "you will waive your rank and give me a meeting. If not, as soon as we ever return to a spot where courage, honor and humanity are recognized as the attributes of a gentleman, I will post you as a coward, a despot and a murderer." And as he spoke, he pointed to the limp and lifeless burden in Hay's giant grasp.

With a half-choked oath and an inaudible threat, lost in the utter ecstasy of rage, the major turned, and staggered rather than walked to his hammock, throwing himself into it as if seized with a kind of dizziness, while Woodside, turning to his men, directed them to resume their labors; and later, the commander-in-chief himself rode up, and entered into conversation with the major, who seemed to have somewhat recovered from the effects of his passion, showed the visitors the progress made, and even pointed out that part of the field cleared by the Americans as most suitable for the tents of the engineers.

Hay, who had returned to his men, suddenly saw, from the expression of Untequit's face, that a stranger was approaching; and across an open savannah a well-dressed Spaniard suddenly approached the picket line, and, after a parley with the guard, was blindfolded, and led by an officer and a file of men into the presence of the commander-in-chief.

On removing his bandages a mask was seen to cover his features, which, in fair English he begged might not be removed.

"'Tis preposterous," said General Wentworth, sternly. "Who ever heard of a man entering the lines of an hostile army, and having such a request regarded?"

"The man's richt," said McPherson, the guide of the expedition, and in this capacity a captain on the general's staff. "Gie a look at his han's, an' ye'll see why he cares na' to show his face; for he well knows that no human eye will care to look again upon the wark o' the plague o' leprosy."

"You say well, McPherson," said the stranger in a clear, bold voice, while those around him drew back in instinctive horror, "and though you have had many a brave carouse beneath my roof, you would scarcely care to look again on the features of Don Carlos D'Olivera. But you may say to these gentlemen that they have little cause of fear, and tell them that I come as a peaceful envoy from the unhappy inmates of the hospital of San Lazaro."

"I'm unco sorry to meet ye thus," said McPherson, warmly, "an' gin an arm o' me wad mak ye whole I'd

gie it wi' a' my saul. But, indeed, your Excellency may trust him," he continued, turning eagerly to Wentworth. "There was never man or woman that tint aught, by trusting to the lealty o' Don Carlos."

"Thank you, my old friend," said the masked man, pleasantly. "And to your Excellency I have only to say, that beyond that great walled compound to the left, and below the fortified rock of San Lazaro live hundreds of unfortunates, who, even in stress of war, cannot fly to the walled city, or be allowed to avoid its terrors by seeking the inland villages, where so many of the rich and fortunate have fled before your arms.

"I have known something of war, and ere long your artillery must reduce San Lazaro. My errand is to ask you to spare the helpless, and be merciful to those whom God has afflicted, for none will make our plague-stricken community a lodgment for troops, or depend on our walls for defence, at the risk of being doomed to an endless captivity and a horrible death."

"There, indeed, seems to be no necessity of opening fire on your hospital, if, in truth, all is as you say. But how may we know that these things are so? There has been plenty of time, since McPherson dwelt among you, to turn into a fortified camp even such a pest house as he has described San Lazaro to be."

"I have permission from Don Sebastian de Eslava and the admiral, Don Blas, to take within, or rather upon our walls, anyone who will undertake to visit our abode of wretchedness. I may say that there is

little or no fear of contagion from a single visit, for it would seem that only those born or long resident among us, fall under so terrible an affliction. Still, I would ask no man to lightly run the hazard of the terrible fate which awaits me and my companions."

There were brave men there who had faced danger and death freely in many forms, but none dared to essay the adventure, and a shade of sadness was in the envoy's tone as he said, "I blame you not, gentlemen; but if none will undertake the duty from chivalry and the love of God, have you none of meaner rank, whom you can trust, who will essay the peril for gold? I will give an hundred guineas to any man, who will go as your Excellency's messenger."

"There's a tall New Englander yonder," said Whyte quietly, pointing to Stephen at his work, "who seems to be given to merciful work and hospital service, who would doubtless undertake the task, if your Excellency pleases. He is under the command of Lieutenant—I beg pardon—Captain Woodside, who can best advise as to his trustiness in so delicate a matter."

"Summon him," said Wentworth briefly to an aid, who hastily brought before the general the tall New Englander and his officer.

"This man in the mask," said Wentworth, gruffly, "represents that he is the chief in authority among a certain community of lepers, established just this side of yonder fort of San Lazaro, and beseeches us to spare them in the coming siege and bombard-

ment. He has asked us to send a messenger, to test the truth of his statement. Will you volunteer for such service?"

In a moment Hay's quick glance had taken in both the noble proportions of the speaker and the terrible ravages of the dread disease, which even the cunning arts employed could not wholly conceal from so keen a surveillance. The bloodshot eyes burning with fever, the bluish lips which showed at the aperture of the painted mask, the fingers contracted and swollen at their rotting joints under the costly glove, and sundry smooth whitish swellings on wrist and neck, told but too plainly of the terrible progress made by the loathsome disease; and Hay, though no coxcomb, was proud of his manly strength and beauty, prizing them as the greatest earthly gift bestowed upon him by his Creator.

For a moment he shrank from the risk, and his color came and went between fear and decision; but at last he said, calmly:

"I will go, if it please your Excellency."

"You shall be well repaid, young man," said the Spaniard, warmly; but Wentworth went on addressing himself to Woodside:

"I have heard enough of you, sir, to know that in the fleet, you have been trusted in delicate missions of some importance. Is this man loyal and intelligent?"

"He is, your Excellency, as worthy of trust as I am, myself, at least."

"No man can say more for another than that," said Wentworth, with a grim smile. "You can go at

once," he said, turning to Stephen, "only remember to be loyal to the king, and to keep faith with the enemy who trusts you in the name of humanity."

At a signal from his guide, Stephen, keeping at a distance of some ten paces, was escorted through the lines of the grand guard and picket, and crossing a belt of low shrubbery saw before them on one hand the castellated hill, and on the other the long, massive wall, which, forming two sides of a rectangle, enclosed with the shores of Cartagena harbor, the village called the Hospital of St. Lazarus.

"You have much to see that is appalling and disgusting for our sakes," said his guide, speaking with some emotion, "and I would have you first partake of such hospitality as I can still offer. Yonder," he continued, pointing to a small *bujio* or cottage, surrounded by shrubbery, "lives my dear daughter, who refuses to leave me to despair although years have passed since she has seen my face, or even spoken to me within the bounds of the fence surrounding her dwelling; but her heart, God bless her, is ever open to her unfortunate but loving father."

As he spoke, a beautiful and queenly woman glided out upon the veranda of the low, snow-white cottage, and in tones strongly blending filial love and queenly grace, gave affectionate greeting to Hay's companion. A large but perfect form, regular features, a brunette complexion, suffused with the crimson blood of perfect health, combined with a rich and almost barbaric splendor of apparel, formed such an incarnation of tropical beauty as Stephen had never even dreamed of before.

No trace of aversion or even of that open pity, which is scarcely less trying, to those who retain amid sore affliction their high sense of pride and self-respect, was visible in the manner or speech of the daughter of the leper.

"You are welcome, my father," she cried joyously in Spanish, "and I see you are successful. Your countrymen, the English *señores*, have not been less noble than you hoped."

"Ah! You understand Spanish," said Olivarez quickly, as he saw Stephen's cheek flush and his eye brighten at the kind words of the daughter. "You are, then, no common soldier of the marines, and, indeed, now that I look, your facings are not those of that branch of the service."

"I am of the Massachusetts Bay, and a gentleman volunteer in the American brigade, which joined the fleet at Jamaica. I know a little Spanish, having cruised against your people in an armed sloop of the Rhode Island colony, and been for a time a prisoner among your countrymen, or rather I mean the Spaniards."

"Do you not class me with the Spaniards," asked Olivarez in a lower tone and with some surprise.

"I have no right to question your nationality," replied Stephen, coolly, "but if I am right in my conjectures, you will recognize this ring." And drawing from his breast pocket a small packet, he produced the jewel given to him by John Hewson, and, placing it on the point of his short sergeant's sword, conveyed it to the hands of his guide.

With much emotion the unhappy man seized the

ring and eagerly inspected it, viewing it carefully, and finally touched a spring, disclosing a minute ivory portrait of a singularly handsome youth, in the first flush of manhood.

"'Tis my own picture," he said in a voice which, for the first time, faltered with emotion. "Of whom had you this token, and when?"

"Of a man, resident among us, who calls himself John Hewson, and who sent it by my hands, that, if Providence gave yonder city into our power, his brother there residing might have, through me, gold and aid to come to him in the Massachusetts."

"Dear, brave Hugh!" said the leper, passionately kissing the jewel. "'Tis several years since I sent him, by a sure hand, this same token and saved him from treachery and a cruel death, and now, shut out as I am from human companionship, I am not forgotten or unloved."

"I have also certain monies at the camp," said Stephen, hurriedly," but did not expect to meet you thus strangely, and therefore cannot now fulfill my errand. I doubt not, however, that I might leave the package in a sure place where it might come to your hands, if, indeed, in a few days we fail to take the city."

"You must not think of it, sir," said Olivarez, sternly. "If discovered, it might cost both our lives, but certainly yours, and of the siege and its probabilities we are bound in honor not to parley more. Keep the gold, until in God's good time we meet again; and if you cannot bring it to me in peace, you are heartily welcome to a sum which I do not

need, and can never hope to use. But, dear sir, favor me with the name of one to whom I am so hopelessly indebted."

"Stephen Hay, sergeant of Woodside's company of the Massachusetts contingent, whilom yeoman of Sandwich town in the county of Barnstable," replied the young man with soldierly directness.

"Then, Señor Hay, when this officer who approaches is satisfied, you must partake of my hospitality, but say not a word of what has just passed, and be careful to speak little, for Luis de Ramon is a dangerous man, suspicious, cruel, and merciless, although handsome and courtly enough."

As he spoke, from the castle where many men labored incessantly to increase and strengthen the defenses, came a tall, slight man, in all the splendor of apparel which in those days decked a colonel of Spanish infantry, and although little was left of the defensive armor of the seventeenth century, the golden gorget which depended from his neck, and the thick masses of bullion embroidery on his uniform, seemed to promise immunity from sword cut or bayonet thrust, if unavailing against musket shot or *mittraille*.

He was handsome notwithstanding his leanness; his cheeks soft despite their pallor, and his eyes and hair were black and singularly attractive. His manner was perfect and his voice soft and sweet, although Hay fancied that its tones were insincere, and if the truth must be confessed, detested its owner from the moment of meeting him. Yet he reproached himself therefor promptly, when he re-

called the courteous manner and words with which he, a poor sergeant, in his working dress, was greeted by a Spaniard of noble birth and ancient family.

"You have succeeded, Señor Olivarez, and I acknowledge myself mistaken as to the gallantry of our persecutors. This gentleman," he continued, raising his hat gracefully to the New Englander, "is, I presume, the officer deputed to make the necessary survey. What is his name and rank?"

"He is a sergeant of gentlemen volunteers from the northern colonies, Don Ramon, and in his own land the owner of an *estancia* of some value. They seem to think it no shame to serve in the ranks, although unlike the Mousquetaires Gris of France, or the Scots brigade, they care little for show or even revelry."

Don Ramon bowed low, with a courtly greeting in Spanish. Hay, smiling pleasantly, removed his fatigue cap with a somewhat stiff but courteous bow, and in Spanish and English by turns, Olivarez duly introduced the Spanish colonel and our sergeant of volunteers.

"If you will permit me, Don Ramon, I should be pleased to offer our soldier guest a slight repast and a glass of Amontillado. Will it please you to accompany him to my daughter's *bujio*, and take from her hands the courtesy I canot offer?"

"Certainly, my poor friend," said Don Ramon softly. "Alas! that you too cannot accompany us, or mingle once more in siege and battle as of old. But how can you receive under your roof one of the slayers of your only son, the Señor Carlos?"

"If he is dead, which I cannot believe, for his comrades say he had no fatal wound when his gunners ran from the fire of the English ship, he died in fair fight, with brave men. Life had little left for me save the love of my children; but were they all slain by chance of war, I would treat every generous foe as a friend, when truce or treaty made peace between us."

"By the Holy Mother of God! Spoken like the Cid de Campeador, Señor Olivarez; neither will I be less generous, though I fear I shall never rest quietly, until my rapier has once, at least, been red in heretic blood; for poor Carlos was a brave gentleman, and so dear to us all."

"Then your quarrel *was* made up before he went to Tierra Bomba?" said Olivarez, sadly.

For a single instant a flash of latent fire shot from Don Ramon's lustrous eyes, and a tinge of color mounted to the snowy cheek, and then, with a sigh, he responded:

"I would it were so; but, alas! we had not spoken for days when he took boat for San Luis de Boca Chica. 'Twas a slight cause of quarrel—a pretty face and coquettish heart, señor; and you know young blood is hot and hasty. We even had our rapiers drawn when de Eslaya himself stopped us, for 'twas in the *patio* of the vice-royal palace itself; but just then, I would have fought in the very courts of heaven. But peace was made, and, since, I have thought myself unfortunate in having thus incurred a quarrel, which perhaps may never be healed until we meet in heaven."

"Let us hope, señor, for better things. Don Ramon, you will introduce Señor Hay to the señora Inez. Inez, you will proffer to these gentlemen the courtesies I cannot show them." And, waving his hand, the father turned from the contemplation of the white walls, latticed windows and broad verandas, nestling amid tropical flowers and superabundant foliage, and went toward the huge gate of the blank wall, within which death and decay reigned over inmates without hope of earthly happiness.

But Stephen, following respectfully, entered through the palisadoed fence into a small garden, where the cocoa bore its precious fruit under the graceful palm known to us by its nut of the same name, and the curious *donzella*, or sensitive plant, folding its leaves at the slightest touch, grew amid parterres of gorgeous flowers, and vines whose smooth, glossy leaves set off in striking contrast curious bells, blossoms and trumpet-shaped calyxes of white, scarlet and yellow.

With a confused survey of clean, cool mattings, gauzy curtains, white linen, bright silver and crystal glass, Hay followed on to where Inez de Olivarez stood beside a polished table, whereon stood a varied repast of fruits, pastry and more substantial delicacies. Seating herself, the daughter of Olivarez gracefully did the honors of the feast, to which both did ample justice; though, from his fear of compromising his host, Stephen gave no sign when an occasional phrase struck familiarly upon his memory.

"You have been too cruel, *Inez mia*," said the

colonel, after some moments of conversation on general subjects had satisfied him that the colonist cared only to make up for past deprivations by present enjoyment of the repast before him, "and I am in despair that you still reject my suit. Surely I have not so bitterly offended in my hasty quarrel with your unfortunate brother?"

"Let us not speak of these things now," said Inez, hurriedly. "They are sad and perplexing, and we have both a duty to this gentleman and the poor creatures yonder. May the Holy Mother and Saint Lazarus befriend them. Serve the wine, Tomaso," she continued, addressing a negro lad in waiting. "You will find it cool, gentlemen, although our stock of snow from the Horqueta yonder, is running low."

The servant took from a pail filled with snow a brace of long necked, slender bottles, extracted the corks deftly, and set them before the trio. Don Ramon poured out a glass for Inez and one for himself, and Stephen more slowly filled his own glass.

"Let us drink, señor, to our fair hostess," said Ramon, with the methodical care of one who knows little of the language he essays. The gentlemen rose and drank, while Inez sipped her wine and bowed in dignified acknowledgment.

"Health and thanks to our generous foes," said Inez, in turn, which being translated by the Spaniard, was duly honored, while Hay, knowing that he too was bound in courtesy to propose a health, knew scarcely how to conceal his knowledge of Spanish, and yet acquit himself with credit. At last, however, he determined to trust to his own tongue and the translation of the Spanish colonel.

"I drink to a speedy and honorable peace," said the tall soldier, rising and bowing grandly as he spoke, while his eyes for the first time, met those of his fair entertainer. "Thanks for your kindness, lady, and to you, sir, for your courtesy, but the day draws to a close, and I have much to do."

"What said he, señor?" asked Inez, as the Spaniard lingered a little over another glass of wine, while Stephen waited at the verge of the veranda, and heard the careless reply of the enamored colonel.

"I have never seen such a man. Even Carlos, your former servant, was not so tall and strong. I would wager my life, too, that he is as true and tender as he is magnificent."

"By Saint Jago! I wonder at thee, Inez de Olivarez, for thus admiring an accursed heretic; a soldier of fortune, seeking to plunder your native city. He is huge of limb, I grant, but were he of my own rank, he should underlie my challenge, when again we meet in the field; and as for Don Carlos, the Catalan, he would soon lay yonder huge carcass under the forest leaves to moulder into mother earth."

"With the dagger, perhaps," said Inez, with a spark of sudden anger. "I hear he had to enlist to save his neck from the garrote. He would never dare to face such a man, foot to foot, and steel to steel."

"*Por dios.* But I shall believe you in love with yonder Englishman. But let us cease this play and be serious, for I confess I shall be jealous if you say ought farther. As to Carlos, they say he died at the taking of the lower forts, and if he was hasty in his

wrath, he has paid his last forfeit, and we could have better spared just now a better man. Adios, señora"; and with a bow and a look full of tender meaning, the Spaniard departed.

A few paces brought them to the gate where Olivarez awaited their coming, and, in obedience to Ramon's orders, the great gate was then opened. From its threshold, Stephen saw for the first and last time in his life, that most terrible of all the refuges of stricken humanity—a village of lepers.

Before him were fair gardens and shady groves, the houses of the rich and the hovels of the poor, and around were vineyards, fields of maize, plantations of cocoa, oranges, limes and plantains, and everywhere the hands of man had secured an ample reward for their labor.

But in a kind of plaza, into which each street and by-way opened, stood several hundred of both sexes and all ages, on whom incurable disease, disgusting, hopeless and fatal, had set its unmistakable seal.

Hands that had lost their fingers, limbs rotted to elbow and knee, eyes that looked out from faces corroded out of all semblance to human expression, and forms such as the ancient masters depicted to show the terrors of eternal and never-ending pain, greeted Stephen's calm, pitiful gaze, as, after a quick survey of the walls, he turned resolutely to the sad assemblage before him. A friar of Benedictines addressed him from amid the throng in fair English, stretching out, as he spoke, his swollen wrists.

"Out of our torments we thank thee. Carry back to the living what thou hast seen in the house of the

dying. We who are about to die, salute thee in amity and peace."

"May God bless and pity you," said Stephen, hoarsely, as he turned away, leaving the multitude on their knees, and hearing behind him, as he stepped from under the shadow of that terrible wall, the grating of the huge iron-barred gate which shut in such unutterable and hopeless misery.

"'Tis a sad sight, señor," said Ramon, carelessly, "and I thank you for volunteering to satisfy your commander that no fortress is hidden there. The Señor de Olivarez will conduct you beyond the lines. It is hardly likely we shall meet again unless in battle."

"Tell him," replied Stephen, earnestly, "that I hope we shall spare each other even then. I should not like to wound a man with whom I have broken bread."

Olivarez exchanged a few words with the officer, whose reply became a little contemptuous, as he walked away with a cavalier inclination of the head.

"What said he?" asked Stephen, after a few moments' silence, for most of what had been said was undistinguishable.

Olivarez shook his head, "It would do no good to tell you, but be sure that in battle you beware of Don Luis de Ramon. Were Carlos the Catalan still in his pay, I would warn you against his stiletto, even in your camp."

"But what cause of dislike can he have towards me?" asked Stephen in amazement.

Olivarez was silent a moment, and then replied:

"He is simply jealous of the little attention paid you by my daughter; and the fact that you are an Englishman, or rather a British soldier, at war with Spain, intensifies what might otherwise be too little to rouse even his dislike; but for some reason he is in a savage and dangerous humor, and I warn you not to trust to his generosity, if chance brings you together."

Stephen was silent for a moment, and then said: "You have spoken of Carlos the Catalan. He is alive and in our camp, and nearly cured of his wounds. He was taken prisoner at Boca Chica."

Olivarez started as if a shot had struck him, and his voice was tremulous and faint for the first time, as he answered Hay's unexpected disclosure. "Are you sure, sir, that the man you mean is indeed Carlos, the Catalan? for he of whom yonder officer spoke was reported as left mortally wounded at St. Joseph, having volunteered to end a reckless life by blowing up the magazine as the English entered."

"Such a man we found there, but so drunken that he could not use his torch on the train he had prepared. As to his wound, it was not mortal, and he is now in yonder camp, and held to be a willing guide in our movements on the city."

"Have you heard aught of an officer of my name, young, brave and beautiful, as slain, wounded or prisoner among you? My only son went forth as a volunteer at the first alarm, and we have no word except that he was wounded at Boca Chica, and there captured by the English."

A memory of the wounded youth, found at the first

landing of the troops, pressed itself on Stephen's mind, and he almost shuddered as he recalled his late search in the midnight forest, and the finding of the fair, young form, still warm, but lifeless, and pierced by the assassin's dagger. Still he had no means of knowing that this man was indeed the lost youth, and he could not crush the hopes of the man before him, already so horribly shut out from human happiness.

"I know little of the prisoners," he answered at last, "having been on boat or detached service nearly all the time, and therefore cannot give you either good or evil tidings. But I will watch well yonder Catalan, and should I find out aught I will resolve your doubts, so far as I may, without prejudice to my honor as a soldier. And now what message shall I take to your brother, if it so happen that we never meet again?"

"Tell him," said the leper sadly, "how you have found me, an outcast from humanity, bereft of all hope of farther adventure, or even a soldier's death, having nothing but my daughter's dear love, the hope of heaven, and the blessings of such outcasts even as I, whom I can still cheer, aid and strengthen in their terrible journey to death. The house of Oliver, of Lincoln, is near its end, and soon only my poor boy, if he lives, will be left of a long line of gallant gentlemen.

"When I am dead, I commit my children to his care, and enough of our comrades of the coast or their descendants, are left to secure them a safe passage to Jamaica, and thence to New England. Carry

to him my dearest love and last blessing, and tell him not of the sad change that has doomed me to corruption while still strong of body, and with all my high hopes fresh and unsatisfied.

"But tell him all else freely and fully, that I am rich, influential and trusted; that I remember the youthful sorrows that we bore together, the wild plans we laid and the dangers and adventures we met in company, and the reverses which tore us apart and have since kept us separate. I will send him news by a sure hand when all is over, and you are in possession of the city, or in retreat to Jamaica; but your words will be more grateful than a written missive."

"If, indeed, you have such means of communication, I would that you should acknowledge my errand as done," said Stephen, earnestly. "It may be that I may be a dead man tomorrow, for more than one stout fellow, who was alive and well at sunrise, is in his grave ere now."

As he spoke, they reached the edge of the woodland, and stood on the border of an open plain which lay between them and the outer line of the English pickets. Although late in the day the heat was still intense, the sun poured down his pitiless rays, the air seemed visible as the rarefied vapors rose upward from the parched ground, and not a breath of air stirred the slender tendrils of the climbing lianas.

"Take this," said Olivarez, as he took from a thicket a broad thick leaf, and at the same time replaced with another a similar one which had inter-

posed between his jetty hair and costly *sombrero.* "It may save you a sunstroke even now, for we have had few days so trying as this in all the summer."

"There is a man who seems not to care for the sun," said Stephen, pointing to a picket on the farther side of the plain, who marched back and forth across an open space, which marked the course of the road into the cocoa orchards opposite.

" 'Tis as much as his life is worth to expose himself thus, and, if such is the way in which your officers waste their men, you will never sleep within the walls of Cartagena, for even we, who have spent many years here, care not to tempt death so readily and, if you will pardon me, so foolishly. But we have no warrant for such converse, so let us on to the camp and give account of our errand."

They crossed the open and, being duly challenged, passed the tall sentry, and escorted by the guard he summoned, went on to headquarters, where the general received them frankly, and not unkindly.

"Ah! Our envoy from the hospital, and our stout sergeant of the Americans. What have you seen, sirrah? May we spare all our shot and shell to San Lazaro?"

"It would be but too horrible, your Excellency, to turn upon those so afflicted by the hand of God, the wrath of man and the horrors of a bombardment. I do not believe that we could force a regiment into the open gate of yonder lazar house, if only its unhappy people stood, as I saw them, within its accursed portals."

"And the Spaniards?"

"The Spaniards," answered Olivarez in good English, "are even more afraid of the leprosy than this brave soldier, who for the first time has seen its dreadful ravages. I will promise on my honor that nothing from among us shall harm your array, though you muster under the shadow of our walls to storm San Lazaro."

"I doubt you not," said Wentworth coldly, "and yet methinks I have but little warrant to put trust in a strange Spaniard, and perhaps even a renegade Englishman."

For a moment the stranger's eyes gleamed with suppressed wrath, and he seemed about to challenge to mortal arbitrament the stern veteran before whom he stood, but with a visible struggle he overcame the impulse and answered calmly:

"I am an Englishman; once a captive of war, and doomed to servile punishment; since, by strange fortunes, risen to wealth and honor, as your guide, Captain McPherson, has ere this no doubt told you. I have seen the time when I would have resented to the death your useless taunt, but what has a leper to do with honor, or an outcast to hope in the way of generous and gallant forbearance. Furthermore, were I hale and sound, I might well stomach such affront for the sake of the hundreds yonder, who seek only the pity of man and the happiness whose portal is the grave."

"Pardon me, señor," said the gruff old war dog, "I know not why I said so unmanly a thing, and I will see that you suffer no added misfortune at my hands. Have you aught to say farther to the sergeant here?"

Olivarez took from his doubtlet a purse of gold, but Stephen raised his hand: "I went only because in conscience I could not refuse. Give to those who need it yonder, whatever you would willingly bestow upon me."

The leper turned with a courtly bow, strangely sad in its suggestion of a gallant past, and said in tones still full of manly feeling his last farewell: "Our prayers, your Excellency, will ever seek for you all blessings, except such as in honor and loyalty we cannot wish you. To you, sir," he added, "we can never repay the debt created by your charity and unselfish kindness."

A half hour later Stephen rejoined his comrades, and found that the exposure of the day had filled the new hospital with dying men, prostrated by the heat, fever and fatigue, and among the last victims of *coup de soleil* were counted the major of marines, and the tall sentinel who had paced the open road that led to the hospital of San Lazaro.

Chapter XXVI.

The Spanish Musket

"I wish I could use this gun and fight Indian way," said Untequit to Stephen, one night shortly after, as they sat in the moonlight near the door of their tent. "I don't like this way. Too much fuss and work and too little fight."

"That is true enough," said Stephen; "and the worst of it is that we are dying off so fast, that now we can hardly find men enough to do duty on guard and picket. If we had the two or three thousand men they keep on board the fleet doing nothing, we might at least be spared from guard duty one night more in the week."

"That's not the worst," said Untequit, grimly. "Those hunters that waylay our laborers and scouting parties are few in number, yet they are firing away all day long, and, if they could shoot better, would kill us all before we got ready to fight. What's the use of charging bayonets on a man hid in the woods?"

Stephen laughed heartily, as he recalled the incident which had excited his companion's disgust. A party of negroes and Americans at work amid the tangled forest growth; a fusilade from scattered marksmen, too distant to do more than wound a man here and there; a hurried call to arms, followed by the useless farce of an advance of heavily accoutred marines into the silent forest.

"I think, myself, we could have given a better account of them with half a dozen of our own lads; but our guns are no match for such a piece as you have there. Still we could keep the woods clear, I dare say, if they'll let us scout instead of working beside those blacks."

"I'd like to try it, even if I had to go alone," said Untequit, sullenly. "I'm tired of such war as this—tired of seeing our soldiers rot like sheep when they might die like brave men."

"You are right, Untequit," said a familiar voice, and turning, they saw beside them Captain Woodside. "I will see Colonel Grant tonight and get his permission to scout in the belt of timber, between the camp and the southern shore of the *Ciegna de Tescas*, as they call that lake to the eastward. How do you propose to circumvent the Spaniards, though? The colonel will want to understand it."

"When I go shooting," said Untequit meaningly, "I go where the birds haunt, sit down, keep close, and let them come within range. I think that is the best way now to hunt up Spaniards."

"I see," said Woodside, gaily, "and I think Colonel Grant will be satisfied. Wait a few moments and I will return."

Half an hour later Woodside returned with authority to send out one or more men on scouting service, but restricting their operations solely to the wooded face of the encampment, from whence the annoyance had proceeded.

"At what time will you start, and whom will you have with you," asked the captain. "You can

go when you please, and have whoever you want—except him," he added, as Untequit's eyes turned promptly toward his loved and trusted comrade.

"Then I go alone, and start tonight when the moon begins to wane. I must get two miles into the wood before daylight," and Untequit turned silently to his preparations for his solitary and dangerous task. He laid aside all his trappings except his waist-belt, and this supported only a small pouch of bullets and a long knife. A small powder horn hung from his left shoulder, and the long Spanish gun, carefully cleaned and dried, was loaded with a comparatively light charge of powder, and a ball carefully selected and patched with oiled buckskin.

Two or three hard biscuit and a canteen of water, completed the Indian's preparations for the adventure, and he laid himself down on his mat and was almost instantly in a profound slumber.

When the Indian arose it was still about two hours before daybreak, but the sky was clear, overhead, and the moon was still high enough to give sufficient light in the comparatively open country, inside the line of pickets.

He went directly to the officer of the camp-guard, who promptly sent an orderly to the major commanding the picket reserve, who, growling in turn at the untimely interruption of his nap, sent a corporal to see him safely past the picket line at the point most annoyed by the guerrilla parties sent out from the city, or seeking to enter the entrenchments of their beleaguered friends.

"They killed an' wounded three ov our min, yis-

terday, sur," said his guide, as he pointed to a dense growth of chapparal an hundred yards away, "an' we can't get at thim, any how. They'll not be long in killin' yez, all alone in there, I'm thinkin'; an' yed betther turn back while there's toime."

Untequit only smiled in reply, but at taking leave, said to his companion, "At night I climb yonder tree, and whistle three times. Let the men here know that they may not shoot when I come in," and crouching almost flat to the earth, he was lost in the thicket so suddenly and noiselessly that the soldier, as he hastily retreated within his own lines, almost persuaded himself that he had seen the last of a being more or less than mortal.

But Untequit, moving quietly southward, made his way through the dense growth of vines, bushes, and herbage, lifting out of his way each withered twig, avoiding every slender reed or palm, whose motion might betray his presence, and soon found himself inside the dense barrier, which had served the hunters of the interior for a shelter in their harrassing warfare.

Even by the light of the moon the Indian soon found several by-paths, leading from a narrow trail, which, as he judged, ran towards the city from the scattered *estancias* to the south of the great lake. At the end of each of the smaller trails, he found a covert for one or more marksmen, most of them being furnished by gigantic trees, whose lower limbs bore the marks of much climbing, while at their base the remnants of half-consumed *cigaritos* told of the lengthened watching of the enemy's scouts.

There were five such trees lying within easy reach of each other, and all were easily commanded from a sixth tree, a low, thick-set oak, which stood at the brink of a narrow ravine leading westward, and just avoided by the main footpath. The Indian had still an hour before day. He again took the trail, and, running noiselessly, approached the Spanish lines, until he saw before him the open level commanded by the guns of the fortress convent of La Popa. It was evident that no foe was to be expected from that quarter; and, returning as rapidly, he again found himself near the brink of the ravine just as the day began to dawn.

Already the hum of insect life began to break the stillness. The birds were twittering to each other in the thickets, and the tree-snakes, rustling from bough to bough, now and then dropped with undulating coils before him, hissing at the invasion of their domain. More than once he was tempted to slay the abhorred creatures with the long steel ramrod of his weapon, but he dared not risk detection, and he had made up his mind not to fail in the task he had undertaken; so he waited until the way was cleared, and passed on unassailed and unassailing.

At last he stood on the edge of the chapparal, and the path, narrow but deeply worn, as if by long use, ran through the deep grass, across a broad savannah, and was lost among broken ground, which seemed to indicate a hilly tract, dotted with copses of various woods. The sun was hardly risen

when, from behind the nearest eminence, appeared the irregulars whose bush-fighting he had come to oppose in like manner.

There were a dozen at least—strong, bronzed, fierce looking men, who, clad in the close fitting garb of the country, varied only by rough leggins of goat and deer skin, and armed with long guns and *machetes*, or Spanish knives, carried also gourd-flasks, and hunting-bags of jaguar and ocelot skin; and as only about half of them were thus provided, Untequit was not without hope that the others were come merely to scout over the ground, and satisfy themselves that no hostile force had occupied the scene of their operations.

They moved leisurely, talking and laughing as they went, and from time to time renewed their husk-wrapped *cigaritos*, or took a sip from the hunting-flasks, which, as Untequit judged, contained something stronger than water. On a nearer approach, however, they became more cautious, and looked to their locks and priming; and the Indian at once retired, following the windings of the path, until at last he saw, a little to the right, the narrow ravine before spoken of.

Entering the chapparal, he soon reached the gully, which he followed up to its head, and, finding a ledge easy of access, ascended the bank, and, entering the underbrush, crawled stealthily to a position from which he could command a view of the trail.

Ere long they passed the scout, moving so silently that they were almost close upon him before he caught a glimpse of their gay scarfs and broad som-

breros; and, having searched the ground with some care, five of them ascended the great cottonwoods, seating themselves astride huge limbs, and, divesting themselves of their flasks and haversacks, hung them upon projecting twigs near them, and secured their long guns with lanyards to the boughs whereon they sat.

The remainder kept on up the path, but soon returned, having left one of their number, as Untequit judged, to keep guard against an attack from beyond that part of the chapparal which the English troops had found impenetrable, and with a few words of encouragement left their comrades to carry on their irregular warfare; which began as soon as the sun had fairly risen, and the working and scouting parties of the English went forth to their perilous and fatiguing duties.

For some time the ambushed ranger watched the Spaniards as they loaded and fired their long, small-bored fowling pieces, weighing carefully every movement, and noting every circumstance of position and cover, of advantage and disadvantage, which might affect his chances of success or safety.

He saw that while all were more or less visible from the trail, the central Spaniard was in the rear of his two companions, who, in their turn, could not see each other, but could see the two on the flanks and nearest to the enemy. It was evident that, if in the midst of a general or intermittent fusilade he could bring down the central and rearmost man, he might hope to pick off the others at his leisure. The project was as promptly carried out as con-

ceived, and was worthy of the most cool, wary and daring frontiersman.

With his gun ready for the fatal shot, Untequit worked his way to a tree not twenty yards in the rear of the doomed creole, who had just reloaded and intently peered through the thick branches at the open cocoa orchards beyond the belt of chapparal; and again and again the marksman laid his cheek upon the inlaid breech of his Toledan weapon, and as often, with a disappointed air, refrained from dispatching the uncertain bullet. Suddenly on the left a number of dropping shots were heard, which, as the Indian thought, were from another position taken by the rest of the scouting party, and, by the motions of those before him, he judged that the party already fired upon was in motion toward the lake, for the Spaniards, with significant gestures and signals, made ready for an attack at the proper moment.

Untequit's eyes gleamed like a tiger's when crouching for the spring, and while the man nearest him again took deliberate aim at his victim, the Indian raised his piece and fired, just as the volley of bullets broke from the Spanish ambush. His aim was fatal, and the Spaniard, shot through the brain, came to the ground, while Untequit, leaping up, crept swiftly to the rear of the ceiba, stepped over the body of his victim and climbed lightly to the perch he had just occupied. A charge of grape came hurtling through the branches as he did so, uselessly rattling against the huge trunks and branches; and the remaining guerillas, reloading as

quickly as possible, fired again and again on the approaching enemy.

The Indian's second shot brought down the nearest man on his right just as he cast about to reload, and the third was killed by a bullet from the gun of his first victim. But so thick was the smoke and so great their excitement, that the Spaniards nearest such English as were vainly trying to penetrate the tangled growth, only cared to reload and fire as fast as possible, before retiring from their infuriated assailants.

Descending quickly, Untequit was soon at the foot of the tree occupied by the fourth Spaniard, who caught sight of his enemy, and tried to take his cumbrous weapon from the forked branch by which he had steadied his fatal aim. A terrible expression of helpless hate and hopeless terror convulsed his features, but the fatal shot rang out, and with a leap into midair the dying Spaniard crashed through the boughs into the thick web of lianas below him, to drop like a wounded bird, from one entangled fold to another, to the ground.

Only the fifth remained, and as the ranger dashed the charge of powder into the smoking tube and took the ragged bullet from his mouth he saw that he was discovered; for the creole glided behind his tree to shield himself from this new enemy. Unfortunately for himself, just at this instant a second charge of mitraille from the gun, brought to bear on the chapparal, hurtled into that very tree and brought him to the ground.

All the Spaniards had perished, except the scout

who watched the forest path toward Mount de La Popa, and as soon as Untequit had witnessed the unexpected fall of his antagonist, he moved off down the trail in that direction. The task was not without its dangers, for the scouting party, indignant at the loss of several of their men, and the futility of trying to charge into the entangled tropical forest, were pouring their volleys in as fast as possible, wherever fancy or hope of a chance shot prompted them. He had several narrow escapes, but the Spaniard, fearful of being cut off, retreated to find his companions, and suddenly stopped, transported with terror, as he found himself within ten paces of the levelled musket of the slayer of his comrades.

Far better had it been for many a brave man, and the future operations of the siege, had Untequit followed his first merciless impulse and deliberately shot the wretch, so stupefied with fear, that, forgetting his gun and knife and even the heavy pistols at his belt, he dropped his long-barrelled gun and sank upon his knees before him. The Indian, however, could not so easily forget his Christian training, and still keeping him covered with his piece, made him unloose and throw away his belt; and driving him before him soon issued from the forest, near the outer picket-line, between the main encampment and La Popa.

It was scarcely noon, when amid the cheers of the soldiers, the Indian delivered his captive to the guard, and accompanied him to headquarters, where, after giving an account of his adventure, he was dismissed with many expressions of approval,

and more than one bright piece of gold and silver, which, as it was a custom of those days to thus reward the brave deeds of "the baser sort," Untequit placed in his wallet with as much pride, as the soldier to-day affixes to his breast the Victoria or the Iron Cross.

That night, Carlos, the Catalan marine, having served as interpreter in the temporary absence of Captain McPherson; the prisoner being interrogated as to himself and his object in approaching the camp, fearlessly avowed his purpose, and was at once given his choice between serving in the capacity of a guide, or death at daylight upon the gallows. For a moment or two the men thought that the peasant (for such he seemed) would refuse to serve even under compulsion, but at last he begged for his life so piteously that the officers turned from him in disgust, and the general deemed that he had little to fear from treachery on the part of so pusillanimous a wretch.

Stephen had spent the day with his men, in preparations which seemed to indicate a decided movement or attack upon the outposts of the enemy; for on every hand fascines were being constructed, faggots of small twigs bound together, and long rough ladders furnished with iron hooks, indicating a possible attempt at an escalade. Rumors were plentiful of an attempted ransom on the part of the viceroy; of a boat attack on the batteries commanding Boca Grande; of a great floating battery in process of completion from the hull of the Gallicia, the Spanish admiral's flagship; and what seemed less certain, but

more likely, an attempt to storm the castle of San Lazaro.

The weather continued to alternate sudden rain squalls with fatal heated spells, and the mortality among the working parties had greatly terrified the leaders of army and navy alike; and the negroes received little aid in the construction of the breaching batteries, from which alone success could reasonably be expected.

So death and sloth for the most part reigned supreme, and, with a strange mixture of fear and languid *liesse*, the doomed soldiers saw their dead comrades hurried into the common grave-pits, and as they lolled under the trees or the steaming canvas of their drenched tents, felt an unwonted indisposition to labor, and an ever-increasing and wonderful excitation of the brain, which, varying with every mood, developed in a thousand extravagances the growing fever, whose relentless fury spared scarce a tithe of those attacked.

The Americans, less intemperate and vicious, and more inured to extremes of heat and cold, and to the sudden changes of climate experienced in the New World, suffered less, and did most of the little accomplished in hastening the preparations for the siege; but even in their ranks, almost a fourth of those landed had already perished, and rumors of the most horrible import told sad tales of the lot of those still confined, from fear of treachery, to the ships.

"Well done, Untequit!" cried Stephen, heartily, as the Indian finished his story of the day's achieve-

ments. "You've shown them what a good musket and a skilled ranger can do, and I hope you'll find the reg'lars less foolish about fighting in platoons, and charging bayonets into thickets where a man is like an alewive in a dip-net. The captain will be pleased, I'm sure; for it wasn't an hour before you came in with yonder Spaniard, that he asked me where I thought you were, and if I thought you'd get off safe."

His comrade made no answer, but a redder flush crimsoned his swarthy cheeks, and his eyes grew deeper and brighter in their glance of mingled affection and pride. He said nothing, however, but with his knife and file labored assiduously at some tiny pegs of silver cut from the worn disk of a Spanish pistareen.

"Ah, welcome, Untequit!" said a kindly voice, as the last smooth stud was driven into the rosewood stock. "How has your hunting sped? How many Spaniards may we count the less for your scout?"

Untequit held the stock of the Spanish musket toward his interlocutor, and pointed out to his captain the little row of bright, smooth studs which barely roughened the gripe of the stock. Amid a labyrinth of devices in fine gold and silver wire, the five silver projections at once attracted the attention of the captain.

"Why do you spoil such fine workmanship with these rough studs?" asked Woodside, curiously.

"There were six Spaniards alive this morning," said Untequit, quietly, "and only one remains alive tonight. For every stud in the stock, a man has yielded up his life."

Chapter XXVII.

The Assault on San Lazaro

On the 8th of April, the council of war held at the headquarters of the land forces, almost without a dissenting voice, agreed that in view of the lack of water, which was already fearfully low in the great stone cisterns of the estancias around La Quinta, and also considering that less than 5,000 men were left for service and those daily sickening and dying at a fearful rate of depletion, it was not wise to attempt to take Cartagena by the slow but sure process of investment and breaching batteries, before which the outer defences of the city had fallen.

It was also decided to attack the fortress of San Lazaro the next morning at daybreak, and when Untequit returned successful from his second day of scouting he found his comrades busily preparing for the coming struggle. But there was little rejoicing at the summons, and even Hay's calm features were overspread with the general indignation, which, when once their officers had retired to their quarters, broke out into open discontent.

"'Pears to me," said Jones, in his querulous way, "they think we're nothing more'n hosses or oxen, an' fit only to fetch an' carry for their darned grannydeers. Who wants to kerry up them pesky granadoes for another man, an' stan' fire without firin' a shot?"

"I've got a twelve-foot ladder to carry," said a

young Bostonian, "an' I'll eat my ramrod if I can't beat any one of Colonel Grant's whole regiment, when it comes to shootin'."

"They've detailed me to lug a great pack of wool," said Gibbs bitterly, and evidently feeling that long suffering had at last found its limits; "and as fer me, I'll die before any cussed red-coated tyrant shell—"

"Hush;" said Hay soothingly. "Don't be fool enough, Gibbs, to say what you cannot be allowed to carry out. We are assigned to our duty and, though we have been shamefully treated, this at least is necessary, and needs brave, reliable and active men to properly perform it, so as to enable the storming party to meet the Spaniards on the walls. We shan't need any guns until the ladders are against the walls, and planted on the wool-sacks and fascines; and there'll be plenty of muskets lying ownerless by that time."

"You're right, sergeant," said Gibbs, after a moment's silence, "but ef I ever do see Massachusetts again, I'll never take service under any but our own folks. These red-coated reg'lars care no more fer thar own men than ef they was dogs, but a colonist is no account at all, no more than a Jamaiky nigger."

"What's the use, sergeant," said the youth who had before spoken, "for us to bear everything patiently an' do our duty as we have, in spite of neglect, slightin' words an' hard usage? It only makes 'em worse to see that we do our work well, an' just the same."

Stephen's voice had in it a strange ring of tender

pity as he answered, and even Gibbs forgot his stubborn anger as he glanced at his gigantic comrade standing, fully uniformed and equipped, and ready to report, at the adjutant's quarters, the number of men available for the coming battle. "There is no sure reward for well doing, dear boy, on this side of the grave, except the favor of God as felt in the heart and the approval of one's own conscience. I have longed, even to bloodthirstiness, to blot out the insult and tyranny that I have seen, but I have borne thus far unto the end. Perhaps tomorrow will set me free from all earthly bonds, and leave you still in life to do and suffer longer. Then, when you bury me under the cocoas, remember my last counsel and go back to your homes, proud in the remembrance that you bore even neglect and insult in the service of the king."

A single bugle broke the stillness, and as its clarion call died away amid the hills to the southward, the tall sergeant joined at the head of the street his brother orderlies, who, facing to the right, marched to the adjutant's quarters to give in their report of the men detailed for the morrow's duty.

When he returned to his men, Stephen's step was lighter, but the abstracted gaze and evident difficulty with which he spoke cheerily to his men impressed all his comrades, and especially an old Scotchman, who, in virtue of a slight lameness occasioned by an unhealed wound, was as yet off duty, and privileged to wander about the camp.

"He's a gallant chiel' an' braw," said he, as at last Hay withdrew to his own quarters; "but ye'll ne'er

see him again after to-morrow's onslaught, and well he knows it, poor fellow!"

"Oh, nonsense!" said Jones, uneasily; "you Scotch are always prophesyin' evil, an', for men thet fight well, are the saddest chaps ever I met with."

"Had ye seen as mony stout swordsmen grow sad an' strangely quiet before their last fray as I ha'e," said the Scot, solemnly, "ye wadna lauch when ye see sae strang and blithe a man distraught in spite o' himsel'. I wad wage the little I ha'e, that yon sergeant is not here to call the roll o' his men to-morrow eve."

"That may be," said Untequit quietly, looking up from his work of adding to the significant rows of studs on the breech of his musket; "but, though we all perish, he will still see his home and friends again."

"An' what gars ye believe that, mon," asked the Scot half angrily. "Surely he was nae sae wicked as to seek forbidden knowledge, nor sae foolish as to trust to the words of some auld spae wife."

"The traditions of your fathers tell of death and misfortune foretold by the shadow of events still to come; there are those among my people who can see farther, and tell of both good and evil, and I set against your belief of evil the sayings of one whose words have never yet failed me." And so saying, the Indian arose and followed his comrade to his tent.

"'Tis waefu' to see how thae Indians are left to blindness an' idolatry," said the old Scot, raising both hands in holy horror. "'Tis temptin' Provi-

dence, I doubt, to seek the awfu' future, an' I doubtna that your sergeant, bein', as one may say, in the very shadow o' death, is sair sorry that he trusted to an Indian powwow or an auld witch-wife; forgettin' that the future is only knawn to One abune a'."

"Why, I reckon," said Gibbs, a little impatiently, "thet you fust began this prophesyin' an' foretellin'; altho', if all tales are true, I'd ruther trust to old Molly Pognet's sayin's then to you. But, es you're not going to fight, yourself, to-morrow, suppose you leave off these old world sayin's, thet only frighten those who must drive the Spaniards out o' yonder fort to-morrow."

"Dinna think, mon," said the old man earnestly, as he rose to depart, "that I'd be other than gay and gleg to see your sergeant come back hale and weel, aye, an' wi' his chevrons changed to gowden shouther knots; but I've seen mony a brave comrade seem thus before his last battle. But ye're weel richt anent such speech before young soldiers. So go bravely, lads, to your wark, an' leave the rest to God, who can kill an' keep alive."

As Untequit entered the tent, Hay was busy writing some letters, which, having sealed, he placed with the company papers in his orderly book, which he packed away in his knapsack, and, while doing so, came across the stiletto found on the person of the assassinated officer on the night of the landing at Boca Chica. The thought struck him that, were the attack successful, he might have an opportunity to see Don Olivarez once more; and, securing the

money belt about his person, he placed the tiny weapon under the leathern flap of his cartridge box. He next cleaned and loaded the pistols worn by the same unfortunate gentleman, and, throwing himself upon his bed of plaited husks, was soon fast asleep.

At half an hour after mignight the adjutant was heard at the tent door, calling each sergeant to awaken his men and have them in line at one o'clock. The company cooks had been up all night, and Hay saw that every man had an ample meal, and that haversack and canteen were as well furnished as the cartridge boxes of his men. These, indeed, for the most part were furnished only with ammunition, that, after placing the ladders, etc., provided for the forlorn hope, they might avail themselves of the muskets of those killed and wounded in the ditch of the castle.

At the appointed hour the regiments were in place, but the word was not given to advance; and the men, after standing an hour or more in line, were allowed to throw themselves down and snatch what repose they could until the ill-digested plan of attack should be carried out. Untequit, whose services as a kind of independent scout had excused him from the present duty, made his appearance, with his long Spanish gun, and a sharp axe slung at his back; and at Woodside's order, Gibbs and Jones laid aside their burdens and similarly furnished themselves.

At last the moon went down, the darkness and white mists left everything sombre and in shadow, and ghost-like in the open ground, into which Colonel Grant led his forlorn hope of grenadiers, guided by

Carlos, the Catalan, and followed by the Massachusetts men detailed to carry their grenades and scaling ladders.

"We take the centre," said Woodside, under his breath, "and when our ladders are placed we are at liberty to fight as best we can. On the right there is a wooden gate; follow me, and we will try to cut a way in with axes, while the rest of our men keep up a fire through the gratings."

Hay passed the word along the leading files, and as he did so the morose expression of those who deemed themselves degraded by the servile duties so persistently assigned to them, was replaced by eager interest and assured confidence, and despite their burdens they kept close at the heels of the light-armed forlorn hope and reserves, who pressed on readily enough through the wet herbage and dew-laden cocoa orchards, until only the open ground exposed to the fire of San Lazaro lay before them.

The east was scarcely tinged with the faint rose tint of coming day, but Stephen said hurriedly to his captain, as the regulars brought their bayonets to the charge: "We are on the left of the fort, and the other column must be a long way behind us. Those Spaniards are not to be trusted, and I fear—"

As he spoke the order to charge rang out in the advance, and with a ringing cheer the grenadiers dashed for the fort still a hundred yards away. Their line was beautifully correct, and, despite the irregularities of the ground, the levelled bayonets presented a regular and moving mass of steel, whose impetus threatened inevitable destruction to any merely human obstacle.

"'Tis gallantly but foolishly done," cried Woodside. "But on with the ladders, boys, and leave the grenades with the grenadiers whenever they halt."

With a terrific crash, San Lazaro, a rectangular work with three demi bastions and mounting twenty-five guns, opened with grape on the assaulting column, and three smaller works on either flank and in front poured in a withering fire of musketry and mitraille, which cut great gaps in the ranks of the grenadiers and found occasional victims in the reserves and pioneers behind them.

Following the tactics which had cleared the defile of La Quinta, and which a generation later cost the English their heavy losses at Bunker Hill, the leading platoons delivered their fire, wheeling to right and left to allow the rearward men to do the same, and closing in behind, ever advancing under cover of the smoke of their own crashing volleys. But their bullets were wasted mainly on inanimate turf and stone, and, under the fire of the works and the round shot and shell from the flanking ramparts of Cartagena and the island suburb of Xexemani, the ranks were wasted as if by pestilence, and many a tall grenadier and gallant officer marked with a crimson heap the fatal quarter of a mile which lay between San Lazaro and the cocoa orchards, now blasted, shorn and riven by the artillery fire of unconquered Cartagena.

Nevertheless, the troops swept over the nearer outworks, and Col. Grant, as he sprang over the low parapet and captured cannon, found himself in the death trap into which he had been led by the Cata-

lan, who, regardless of danger, rushed on with sword and pistol in hand close beside. The traitor saw the danger in his menacing eye and uplifted sword, and, with a quick glance around him, shot the hapless officer down and made a spring toward the cover of the ditch, now dry and defended only by its rows of pointed palisades; but a bullet from the castle pierced him, and he fell almost across his victim. The grenadiers, cheering and firing, came on despite their losses and pressed into the outworks, but leaderless and huddled together, recoiled from the deep ditch with its barbed palisades, and fired rapidly, but uselessly, on the Spaniards, who, with little loss to themselves, rested their trabucos, escopettes and muskets across the parapet and shot their antagonists down like wolves in a pitfall.

The Americans surged up against their rear with the ladders, wool-packs and fascines, but no leader was left to direct; and though Woodside moved round on the flank to the front, and attempted to fill in the ditch and raise the ladders, the latter were found to be too short, and Woodside led his men to the postern door. These, driving that part of the garrison in sight to cover with deliberate aim, kept up under shelter of the wall a rapid file-firing, while Hay, Gibbs and Jones rained on the ironwood timbers a shower of blows, which on oak or teak had speedily made way for the besiegers. But the Spanish engineer who had built the place knew well the enduring qualities of the wood he had chosen, whose hewing had dulled many keen axes, and sent their steel flying into shreds as if but brittle glass. Jones,

after a few blows, felt his arm jarred to the shoulder, and threw his edgeless weapon away, with an imprecation which, in the imminence of the peril, showed how overpowering was the fierce lust of battle, in one, whose bitterest objurgation in peace would have sounded ridiculously innocent to an English lady of fashion.

Gibbs had cut nearly through the main brace, holding the bolts and bars, when his axe, hopelessly dulled, fell from his hands useless; and soon the colonists found themselves standing before the impenetrable barrier, keeping off an overwhelming crowd of the besieged, only by the deliberate and deadly marksmanship which pierced every head and limb which showed itself at practicable range.

Untequit stood by the gate, firing as fast as Jones could reload, but found time between his quick, keen glances and snapshots to catch his comrade's eye, and wave his hand toward a heavy timber which lay beside the road, some distance from the walls.

"We can burst the gate open, I think," he cried, and Woodside with a bound led the way with twenty men toward the extemporaneous battering-ram, while the few left behind poured in a hotter fire to cover the desperate undertaking.

The huge log was lifted as if it had been a slender pole, and poised on the brawny shoulders of the men, and with a frantic cheer, headed by Stephen and Gibbs, who took the heavier end, the devoted band charged the gate, towards which an hundred maddened Spaniards rushed, screaming, swearing and firing as they ran.

Gibbs put his hand to his side and bit his lip savagely, while a deathly hue replaced the ruddy bronze of his weather-beaten cheek, but he pushed on unfalteringly, and Stephen, bleeding from two or three slight wounds, his hat shot away and his clothes torn by bullets, hoped, though the seconds seemed ages, that the human bolt might fulfil its task. Less than six feet remained to be achieved. Gibbs already had gathered his breath for a final effort, and Untequit and his brother marksmen had poured their last volley into the faces of the maddened Spaniards, when a shot from Xexemani struck the timber obliquely and dashed it to the ground, with the mangled bodies of half a score of those who bore it.

Woodside gazed for a moment on the mangled and writhing heap of what had an instant before been his gallant obedient followers, and with a cry of utter misery and dismay motioned to his men to retreat, for not two hundred yards away a sortie from the city threatened to cut off their retreat. Untequit would have remained, but Woodside pointed silently to the yellow curls of the sergeant, and he saw that only an unrecognizable mass of blood and brains was left where the manly features and great bright eyes had once beamed upon him in life; and with hearts full of despair, grief and vengeance they hastened to bring up the rear of the defeated grenadiers, leaving nearly a thousand brave men behind them on the fatal field of San Lazaro.

Chapter XXVIII.

After the Battle

Whatever may be thought of the wisdom that dictated the fatal assault, no one can doubt that the part played therein by Admiral Vernon was, to say the least, an unworthy if not a cowardly and dastardly one, for although his ships lay so near that a mortar battery was being constructed by the crew of the Weymouth only 2,600 yards from San Lazaro; although it would seem that his boats were in the water, and manned for some movement during the progress of the attack, there is no evidence that a single seaman co-operated with the army in this movement on the principal defence of the invested city.

It was only after repeated solicitations and covert taunts on the part of Lord Vernon, that General Wentworth had struck his blow with nearly his whole available force, and the garrison of San Lozaro, with the troops which during the fight issued from the city, outnumbered the assaulting force, of whose gallant bravery and useless heroism their terrible losses are the best evidence.

It had also been determined in a general council of war, that the losses by sickness, the imminence of the rainy season, and the terrible mortality which must follow upon a prolonged siege, forbade the employment of such means as had secured the capture of the heavier outer defences of Cartagena, and

having determined on so desperate and dangerous an expedient, one can hardly find words to characterize the terrible criminality or incapacity of the admiral, who saw from his quarter deck the defeat of Gen. Guise's column, and never tried to create a diversion or reinforce his countrymen.

A strange story a few days later came from one of the crew of the admiral's ship, and was carried on the wings of rumor to Europe and America, creating alternate emotions of triumph and suspicion, joy and indignation in the coffee houses of London and the homes of the New World.

Close on the heels of the news of the fatal repulse and lost battle came the rumor; a story that is hard to prove, but is far from unlikely in the light of what the meagre history and limited documentary remains of the expedition have recorded.

It was said that a day or two after the fight, a flag of truce, sent out by the viceroy of the city, invited Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth to dine with him at a pavilion half way between the lines; that at this entertainment every luxury procurable under the circumstances was provided, and that the best of feeling and the utmost courtesy was shown by the English and Spanish officers toward each other.

Several of the former, who expressed a wish to enter Cartagena, were allowed to go under a guard, and brought back pleasant reminiscences of its narrow, but clean and well-paved streets, small, snow-white, well-furnished houses, and above all of the finished courtesies of its people, who, despite the

griefs and sufferings of the siege, forgot not the lofty courtesy and free hospitality of the Spaniard. In later days, too, some told of the strength of the walls and the lofty gate, over which stood the proud blazon of the city, "The Defiance of the World."

And while these rambled through the city, it was said that their superiors arranged for the ransom of the town, and that at last, when the young officers had come back, flushed and pleased with the courtesies shown them, Don Sebastian de Eslava and Admiral Vernon parted, with many expressions of lofty courtesy, and deep regret that duty demanded that they should henceforth meet as enemies, etc., etc. Then the viceroy went back to his forts, the admiral to his ships and General Wentworth to his camp, where death hovered over every tent and gloom and the depression of defeat brooded in every heart, while out beyond the cocoa trees lay still unburied many of the brave men who had fallen a few hours before under the fire of Lan Lazaro.

And the story went on to tell how, under cover of night, strange boats came alongside the flagship of the admiral and Lestock's war-ship, the Burford, with certain treasure chests, heavy and banded with iron, which were at once safely deposited in the great cabins of the admiral and commodore.

Then went forth the rumor that Cartagena had been ransomed for nine millions of pounds sterling, which was published again and again in the newspapers of both hemispheres; but it died out in the face of the news, which fell with crushing force on the tax payers of England and the friends of the ill-fated brigade of colonial volunteers.

History has not touched upon this rumor, but the following facts in connection with the well-known corruption which everywhere pervaded the politics of that era, go far to raise a well-grounded suspicion that Admiral Vernon and his colleagues had good reasons for not taking Cartagena.

For with the exception of the construction of a small earthwork mounted with a few light cannon, and the emplacement of a mortar battery, at too great a distance to do any material harm to the besieged, nothing farther was done of moment during the rest of the siege, if we except the guerrilla warfare carried on between the scouts and rangers of the land forces and the Spanish irregular troops.

Untequit, in pursuance of his plan of Indian warfare, and rendered even more desperate by the loss of his comrade and friend, issued each day from the camp, intent only on sacrificing to the shade of his lost friend as many Spaniards as he could bring under his terrible aim.

Lightly armed and more lightly clad, he scoured the wooded plains, searched the tangled chapparal, and, penetrating even into the island fastnesses of the Ciegna des Tescas, left behind him everywhere the dead and wounded who had received the bullets of his Spanish weapon.

More than once he scrupled not to attack small parties resting by their bivouac fire, or threaded narrow paths overhung by precipitous cliffs, or bordered by shrubbery so intricate that only a bullet could find way through the abbatis of tangled thorn and knotted lianas.

To fire with deadly aim, to load with wonderful celerity, to keep up the deadly fusilade with deliberation which bordered on recklessness, and then to retreat so stealthily and noiselessly that only a blood-hound could have followed him, seemed but boys' play to the lithe, active and vengeful partisan, and when at eve the Indian returned to his quarters he sat down silently to his task of recording the number of the day's victims. He had emptied his own cartridge-box, and fired several muskets that had fallen undischarged from the hands of his comrades at San Lazaro, but he steadfastly refused to inlay more than six silver studs as the record of that day's bloody work. "I am no boaster," he said to his comrades, "and my tongue shall not lie. Six times I drew bead on a man and saw him fall but of the other shots I am not sure, for others fired besides me."

Each day thereafter he added several to the score, until twenty-five bright spots amid the intricate inlaying of the Spanish artist, told a tale more significant than the delicate arabesques and figures of bird and beast among them, and among the outlying Spaniards, strange tales were told of his prowess, and twenty miles away the armed men who guarded the country paths, trembled at every rustle of the leaves, or sough of the wind-vexed branches. To-day *El Demonio Americano*, as he was called, had slain his man close to the outposts of the Grand Guard, and a picket on the narrow isthmus between the great lagoon and the sea had been found lifeless, struck dead with the half-finished *cigarito* be-

tween his livid lips; to-morrow, a despatch party, many leagues to the southeast, had lost three men out of five, the others only escaping by flight, and had the siege continued, and such rangers as could have aided him been selected for the task, the woods had soon been cleared of all the *guerrilleros* of the province.

But on the 15th of April the engineers were seen commencing to remove and embark their cannon, and it was soon noised abroad through the camp that the troops were at once to follow, but Untequit, still eager for Spanish blood, essayed to go forth as usual, despite the remonstrances of Woodside, who pointed out to him the uselessness of farther bloodshed and the increased number of Spaniards, who, on seeing the preparations for retreat, would undoubtedly issue from the city walls in heavier numbers, and probably attack the rear guard.

"I must go," said the Indian, with intense feeling. "They should pay a life for every hair of his head, had I time to hunt those Spanish dogs to the death. It is the last day, and I will return as before, for when I go back to the old father and mother at Ploughed Neck, they will ask for their son, and I can only show them these studs which show how many warriors I have sent after him on the long pathway he has trodden before them."

He was allowed to go, and sternly, silently and stealthily hastened to seek the cover of the woods between La Popa and the Spanish lines. There was no lack of enemies, but the cover was open, and the

garrison of the convent fortress late in the day having been withdrawn, the Indian soon found himself almost flanked by two small parties of the enemy, while a third of larger numbers was advancing full upon the point where he was lying in ambush.

The scout upon his left was led by the guerrilla whom he had taken prisoner on his first scout; who had helped to lead astray one of the attacking columns at the assault, and speedily weighing the chances Untequit took deliberate aim at this man and fired.

The treacherous guerrilla leaped into the air, and shot through the brain, fell dead at the feet of Don Ramon, who had charge of the reconnoisance, while Untequit, bursting from his cover, fled toward the cocoa orchard held by the picket guard, under a fire so heavy that those who saw it deemed that he must indeed bear a charmed life.

Even as he ran, he emptied a cartridge into his musket, dropped a ball, chosen from several carried in his mouth, down the long barrel, struck the butt sharply upon the ground to shake the priming into the shut pan, and turned, with his gun at the "ready," to take a last shot at his hated pursuers.

"A thousand devils!" cried Don Ramon, as he saw the Indian almost out of range; and, snatching a musket from the nearest man, he levelled it and fired.

Untequit's weapon was poised in the air, held by both hands at the trigger guard and the breech, just in the position which in an instant more would have settled into a deadly aim; but at the crack of

the officer's musket, the well-tried trophy of so many fatal recontres was discharged harmlessly in the air, and fell at the feet of the Indian, who, with a last glance of defiance at the foes he could no longer harm, bounded away toward the shelter of the camp.

He presented himself half an hour later at the surgeon's quarters, with both wrists cruelly cut across by a ball which had creased the muscles of the right and broken the small bone of the left arm close to its junction.

His story had been bruited throughout the camp, and not only were his wounds dressed and tended with unusual care, but a purse was made up for his benefit among the officers, and after the embarkation he was received as servant to the officers' mess of a man-of-war, which some months later landed him safely on the "Long Wharf" at Boston.

But the siege was over, and only a singular episode in naval warfare remains to be chronicled in this connection, an experiment from which no good results could have been expected and which, from the dispatches of Lord Vernon, who claims the paternity of the ill-devised project, was evidently determined upon with a view of "shutting the mouths of gainsayers"; who he evidently feared, and not without reason, would severely criticise the strange inaction of the fleet during the latter part of the siege.

Therefore, while the sick and wounded are being transferred to the crowded hospital ships, where inhumanity, official imbecility, and want of attendance, food and pure air make strong the grasp of death and add discomfort and melancholy to the

torture of pain, let us note the last act of the tragic comedy which was to cheat English justice and outrage public opinion of the punishment of the great criminal, who, as admiral of one of England's greatest armadas, had wasted human life like water and fallen short of success by criminal dereliction of duty, or perhaps a blacker crime.

Chapter XXIX.

The Sinking of the Gallicia

Admiral Vernon, in spite of his apparent belief in the power of the small land force to finish the siege, was nevertheless ill at ease when he contemplated the possibility of a parliamentary inquiry into the causes of the failure of an expedition so powerful and well equipped, and from which so much had been expected. It is evident from the correspondence which passed between him and the officers of the land force, that great efforts were made to induce the admiral to concentrate the fire of as many ships as possible on the inner forts and walls of the besieged city, and thereby drive the garrison to their bombproofs and the inhabitants into a capitulation. To prove that this action could not be profitably undertaken he resorted to a device, which to his mind justified his own prudence, and the extraordinary inaction of his ships during the latter part of the siege.

The flagship of Don Blas de Lezo, the Spanish admiral, saved from the general conflagration at Boca Chica, was brought up the lagoon on the 5th of April, and sixty carpenters were at once detailed to convert her into a floating battery of a novel kind, and one which did considerable credit to the inventive genius of Vernon, compared with the conservative spirit of the naval commanders of that era.

Her battery was reduced to sixteen thirty-twos,

all on one side, and between each gun a merlon or bulkhead of heavy planking and timbers, six feet thick, was constructed and filled in with sand and earth, packed as closely as possible, forming a floating earthwork of considerable defensive strength. Captain Hoare, an officer of considerable skill and courage, and nearly two hundred men, were detailed to give battle to the whole of the remaining harbor defences of Cartagena.

On the night of the 15th the vessel was towed into position and moored by anchors carried out by the boats of the squadron, and planted, as the admiral averred, as far up on the shoals as possible. But, as will be seen further on, the Gallicia, though so heavily weighted down by her armor, was far from being aground at the beginning of the action.

In the darkness of the early morning the moorings were hove taut at bow and stern, and the brave crew lying beside their guns awaited only the dawn of day; and at about five o'clock the first heavy broadside, aimed at the barbette guns of the city wall, fell amid the wondering Spaniards or flew over the works, to carry destruction and death into the inhabited parts of the city.

The cannon of three bastions, a formidable half-moon covering the long curtain of the city wall, and a ravelin, all mounted with the splendid brass Spanish guns, which are still deemed masterpieces of the founders' art, were concentrated on this single vessel, whose brave men kept up an unfaltering fire, although the splinters flew up from the deck on which they stood and down from that above them,

wounding them by scores; for no defences of the lower deck or bomb proofing above them had been deemed necessary by the projector of the enterprise.

For seven hours the unequal fight went on, and the fire of some four score cannon, manned by renewed levies of fresh men from the garrison, bored the Gallicia through and through above and below her water line, and at last broke through their weak defences, scattering mangling splinters and blinding sand among the hapless gunners. Still, like British mastiffs, they fought on, bleeding and half suffocated with the smoke of their own fire hurried back into the ports by the strong land breeze, which kept the ship the length of her cables farther from the city than the position intended by Lord Vernon.

At length, however, the sea breeze set in, and sweeping the heavy smoke toward the city, showed to the idle fleet the battery still flying the English flag and only awaiting the clearing of the sulphurous canopy to recommence her suspended fire. The signal to cut the cables was shown from the Princess Caroline, and promptly obeyed; and driving on broadside first toward the shallows and the tremendous works beyond them, the Gallicia and her crew reopened fire and defied the terrible odds, undiverted, so far as recorded, by any diversion or attack by the rest of the land and sea forces. An hour or two later, pierced by innumerable shot, twenty-two of which were below water-mark, with six of her gallant crew dead and fifty-six wounded, the signal of recall was given; and Captain Hoare and his men taking to their boats abandoned an enterprise hope-

less from the first, because unsustained by any attacking force to hold the little advantage which might have been gained by bombardment with so disproportionate a weight of metal, and unassisted by the crushing fire which should and could have been poured in by the fleet.

On the same day the army re-embarked, to the unexpected relief and unbounded surprise of the harassed Spaniards, and devoted itself to the long and tedious preparations for abandoning and destroying the defences already reduced. Over two weeks more of fever and inefficiency did their work among the soldiers and sailors, before the captured cannon were embarked or broken up, and pick and powder had crumbled into dust the strong castles of Castillo Grande and Boca Chica.

On the seventh of May, the fleet, having rendezvoused at Punta Canoa, set sail for Jamaica, having inflicted, it is true, great damage upon the Spanish city and fleet, but having miserably failed in the completion of its work through internal dissensions, which sapped the strength and brought to naught the counsels of the greatest English armada ever fitted out for the New World.

The losses of the expedition in *materiel* were singularly small, but from 6,000 to 8,000 men are supposed to have died in battle, and from the fatal tropical fevers at sea and in the harbors of Port Royal and Cartagena.

The Americans suffered least, but as nearly as can be estimated nearly two thousand of the four or five thousand raised perished, and the disgrace-

ful treatment they received and the servile duties to which they were degraded broke the spirits of the men, and undoubtedly unfitted them for the prosecution of the farther enterprises attempted by Lord Vernon.

The story of the misery of their life on shipboard and ashore; the record of their degradation to the same service as the offscourings of the slave pens of Jamaica; the singular suspicions of their loyalty to the Protestant faith and the British crown, which confined more than half of the force during the entire siege to their floating hospitals, the so-called transports; and the contemptuous feeling of the British service shown toward everything Colonial, may be gathered from the writings of Smollett, the correspondence of Admiral Vernon, and the pamphlets which, after the defeat of his forces, were laid before the British people.

It is refreshing, however, here and there to see that our ancestors were brave, useful and ingenious; to learn from the admiral's own letters that he would have found it hard to get all his ships to sea "without the help of the Americans," who, unlike the pipe-clayed and leather-stocked British soldiers, showed themselves to be artificers and seamen of no mean merit; and to discern from many sources, even where the spirit of invidious blame is but too apparent, that the doomed colonists of the "Lost Brigade" did their duty like men and died bravely and uncomplainingly, the victims of official incompetency and English ill treatment, added to the inherent and fatal dangers of campaigning under the tropics.

Of their subsequent fate we shall speak briefly hereafter, but must now turn to the deserted harbor of Cartagena, where, amid ruined castles, useless cannon and the debris of a destroyed navy, the Spaniards, issuing from the shattered walls of the "Defiance of the World," rejoiced in their deliverance, and sought eagerly the means of future defense and signal vengeance on the baffled invader.

Small favor for many years thereafter was shown to any Englishman falling into the hands of the defenders of Cartagena, and the Spanish mariners sent to replace the fleet destroyed by Lord Vernon made it their boast that, except where rich booty could be acquired, few English prisoners escaped with life when the chance of war went against them on the coast of the Spanish Main. It was many years thereafter ere an Englishman felt himself safe among friends within the walls of Cartagena.

Chapter XXX.

Death in Life

The thunder of cannon, the crash of axes, the rattle of musketry; the hoarse cheers, oaths, curses and screams of men lost in the madness of battle or the agony of mortal pain; the alternations of despair and hope; the fearful tension of courage, nerve and strength tested to the uttermost of mortal endurance,—all these ceased for Stephen Hay when the chance shot from the outworks of Xexemani hurled the living bolt he had directed against the battered and splintered gate into the castle ditch of San Lazaro.

Through the long afternoon he lay there, unconscious, almost lifeless, cut by splinters of the beam beneath him, lacerated by fearful missiles which had at morn been the bones of living men, and so covered with the gore of his comrades and his own blood, that the Spanish soldiers and even the friars of the Franciscan convent, busy in their merciful task of comforting the dying and aiding the vanquished, passed him by as one dead, or at the best forever past hope of succor or intelligent sense of pain.

Only the quickened sense of love or hatred could excite interest under such circumstances, and Stephen would have perished, smothered in the corrupting mass of which he formed a part, and devoured by the insect pests of the tropics, had not

his long golden hair and stately proportions attracted the attention of Don Ramon, as, cigarette in mouth, he superintended the removal of the dead and the care of the wounded.

"Hola, Pepe!" he cried to a soldier who, with a draw-bucket, was raising water from the deeper part of the moat to wash away the more offensive evidences of the recent slaughter. "Come hither, and dash a bucketful or two of clear water over yonder pile of *Americanos*. Yonder tall fellow seems to have been an acquaintance of mine, to whom I should be glad to give two Spanish ells of the soil he has coveted."

So said, so done. The soldier drew a bucket of the bloody water, and, poising it above the terrible cumulus of mangled humanity, dashed its contents upon the head and shoulders of Hay, sweeping away the blood and dust, and giving to view the pale but noble features, and eyes and lips which already gave proofs of returning animation.

"'Tis he, by St. Jago!" said the Spaniard, coolly. "Hark ye, Pepe: we have little need of more of these heretics to nurse and nourish, and yonder fellow is so near eternal flames that 'tis a pity he should revive to sin longer and incur greater damnation. Pull him out of the water, Pepe, and when he is dead bury him; and a gold *onza* is thine when I see that he is honorably interred."

The man laughed silently,—a laugh horrible in its stealthy brutishness; but only his manner told of his fell purpose as he said:

"I understand, señor. I go yonder for one of the

long hooks they are preparing, and will see that he comes forth from the pit cleansed and ready for his last sleep."

"Not so, fellow!" said a familiar voice behind them. "Yonder man was a lieretic, it is true; but he shall not die if Carlos de Olivarez or the poor of San Lazaro can preserve the life of a stranger who dared to peril his life even for them." Not a muscle of the Spaniard's face showed anger or disquietude, as he turned and beheld D'Olivarez and the prior who presided over the leper village, and with quiet grace, he bowed to each, and made fitting if somewhat contemptuous answer. "I care not for his death or life, señores. He is as good as dead already, and will only gasp a little longer ere life is over. But if you will, take him to your own comfortable quarters yonder and care for him there."

"Thanks, Don Ramon," said Olivarez, calmly, and raising a whistle to his lips, he called to his side two stalwart blacks, who carried a new litter covered by a light screen from the hot sun, and evidently never contaminated by contact with the leper community. "Take that ladder, and bring up that tall man lying yonder. Lift him gently, and carry him down to the cottage."

"You can't mean it, Señor Olivarez," said Don Ramon, hurriedly. "What! put that heretic besmeared with blood and dust into the snowy litter of the Señorita Inez? Mother of God! 'twere a compliment worthy of our noble king himself, whom God preserve."

"He came to us who were strangers, despised and

avoided of men, feared almost as the plague of Aleppo, and without fee or reward, entered the portals of that lazar house to shield us from the shot of the English cannon. Since he left us with God's blessing on his lips, nôt even a single musket shot has been discharged against it—saving the stray shot of San Lazaro and Xexemani," added Olivarez, parenthetically.

"Therefore," said the priest, "though a heretic he shall be remembered in the prayers of Mary and San Lazaro; though an enemy he shall have all that tender care can give or gold purchase; and the anathema of the church, the curses of those whom God has afflicted be upon all those who would wish or work him ill."

"Truly, he is like to have due tendance," said Don Luis gently. "Where will you bestow him at present? In the wall of your retreat?"

"Not so, Don Luis," said Olivarez, hotly. "He shall have my poor boy's own bed, and my servants shall see that he lacks nothing. But forward, lads," he added, turning to his servants, "carry him gently down to the cottage and then bring back the litter; there may be more who need help."

"Pardon me, Don Olivarez," said the Spaniard, softly, as the old man turned to depart. "Remember that I am in some sort interested in yonder soldier, and that he is, if it so be that he recovers his health, my poor prisoner and the king's."

"That, living or dying," said the old man, hotly, "he shall not long be, for unless I have lost all the influence that I ever possessed, he shall be a free man before another day has ended."

"You take a strong interest in this young man, Don Olivarez. It were better, perhaps, to show less love toward one who is an enemy, though a brave one, who would fain have given this castle to the flames, its garrison to the sword and yonder city to plunder. It were better, believe me, to have him within the wall, where dagger and torch are easier defied than in yonder slight cottage."

For a moment it seemed as if Olivarez could scarce trust himself to speak; his eyes shone from within his mask like coals of fire, but he restrained himself, and when he spoke no trace of disturbance was in his voice.

"Thanks, Don Luis de Ramon, but I have no fear of such outrage, and the Señorita Inez has never lacked strong arms and keen blades to protect her or, if need be, to avenge her wrongs. Had my son, her brother, fallen in private quarrel, save in such fair conditions of honorable debate as one gentleman holds with another, the assassins could by no means escape from such vengeance as I can even yet command; and he who brings fear or danger to the bedside of my daughter will have short shrift, and such a death as shall be whispered of by men yet unborn."

"I well believe it, Señor," said Don Ramon softly. "By the mother of God, I should fear myself were I to underlie your defiance. But we speak idly. I would gladly agree to bring half my company at signal or sound of distress from your fair daughter's cottage. Command me, Don Olivarez. My best wishes to the Doña Inez. Your poor servitor, Fray

Carreno. May heaven soften to you the heavy burdens you bear."

As the old men followed the litter at a distance, the priest kept an uneasy silence, while Olivarez, more self-restrained, seemed nevertheless busy with bitter and ominous thoughts. Finally, however, Fray Carreno broke the oppressive silence, but not until they were alone in an opening between two straggling growths of glossy-leaved cocoas, and out of hearing of any intruder.

"There are secrets of which the fathers of the church must not speak," said the priest in a low tone.

"It is not unwisely thus directed," said his companion.

"Nevertheless, it is not right that the lambs of the flock should suffer, when the shepherd can warn of coming danger, or in any way avert it," continued Fray Carreno.

"He would indeed be a false shepherd, who, knowing the designs of the wolf, should let his sheep stray heedlessly in the forest."

"There are men worse than wolves," said the priest, pithily, "but he who is prudent guards well his fold, even before he hears the howling of the wolves."

"You say well, Fray Carreno," said Olivarez, vehemently, "and believe me my fold shall be well guarded."

A few moments later the old men reached the gate of the garden, where Inez awaited them, not as aforetime on the veranda of the cottage, but standing just within the gateway, holding in one up-

raised hand the Medusa-hilted poinard, whose fluted blade had slain the young Spaniard by the deserted batteries of La Chamba at Boca Chica.

"Whom have you sent to my care?" she asked breathlessly, with strange vehemence. "This was Carlos' dagger, and Tomaso found it under the cover of yonder cartridge box when the American was taken from the litter. See, the blade is dimmed and rusty. Poor, dear, lost Carlos! We shall never see him more, my heart feels but too surely. But how he died, we must know; and, if by his hand," and she pointed to the lattice of the room where Hay lay still unconscious, "he shall be dearly and speedily avenged."

Olivarez took the weapon and eyed it narrowly. "I did not know that Carlos had one of these accursed stilettos; nor should boy of mine have carried a weapon so unmanly and treacherous. Are you sure that it was his?"

"*Ay de mi!*" said Inez piteously, wringing her shapely hands in true southern abandonment of grief. "Less than a month before this merciless siege, we sat together, Carlos and I, in the veranda; and I, needing a bodkin for some embroidery, chided my little maid because she had mislaid it. Carlos, who could not bear the child's tears, sent her to his room for this, and told me to use it until more fitting one could be found. 'I have never carried it, nor ever will,' said he, 'for I will strike a foe only in the daylight and face to face; but 'tis a beautiful piece of workmanship, and cost many gold reals and many days of skilful carving, I warrant.' "

"Did he say of whom he bought it?" asked Olivarez quietly; but Fray Carreno, who had muffled his face in his hood, seemed a stone statue, so silently and breathlessly did he await the girl's answer.

" 'Twas a gift of Don Luis in the days of their first friendship," said Inez, with a faint blush flitting over her pale features. "He would have given him his Toledo rapier, Carlos said, but he refused such a sacrifice and took this, because of its rare and curious workmanship; I used it for a few days longer, and then gave it back to poor Carlos, but I have never seen it since until to-day."

"I will keep it," said Olivarez quietly, "but remember, Inez, we have a debt to pay to this youth, and time will tell whether of vengeance or gratitude. Until that time have him treated as if he were Carlos' self. Spare neither pains nor money to bring him to health and strength, and then we will reward or punish as heaven may enable us to decide. Is the doctor yet with him?"

"Here he comes even now," said Inez, and as he spoke a tall, emaciated man in a suit of rusty black came down the shaded path, bearing in his hand a small case and followed by a negro lad, who carried one of those brazen basins, which the blood-letting practitioners of that day, in Spain, used almost invariably in every case which came under their supervision.

As he came up to the group he bowed humbly, yet with a quiet, keen glance in his sunken eyes, which told of the consciousness of superior wisdom and inherent self respect.

"A sad case, Don Olivarez; a sad case. Yet there is hope, with time and care, that the young man may recover. He hath, presently, opened his eyes and breathes easier, although reason hath not and may never again return. However, with free evacuation of blood and quiet, he may yet come to himself, and acknowledge the generosity which a Spaniard shows even to an enemy."

With a punctilious farewell, the man of drugs and lancet departed, but close upon his heels Tomaso, the black servitor, came bearing in his hands the secret money belt, which he held at full length, as if desirous of keeping as far as possible from some mysterious danger.

"What have you there, Tomaso?" asked Olivarez quietly. "A snake skin! Truly I knew not that serpents of such marking were found here, though we have kinds enough and to spare."

"Tomaso took it from the heretic's body," said the slave, breathlessly, "and there may be magic in it, for it is full of gold, and of the *wanga* and other plants such as Obi used in Jamaica."

"Give me the belt," said Olivarez, sternly. "The brave fellow carried it that even in death it might perchance come into my hands; for long ago, in fair Martinique, where in every thicket the terrible *fer de lance* lurks with ready venom, I slew the reptile whose fangs would have taken my brother's life. The gold he sent with this token, for he had the skin cunningly tanned until it was soft as silk and proof against water. As to the *wanga*, you, Tomaso, should know something of its uses."

"Tomaso has seen it given in fevers, and to give quiet sleep to raving men, but Obi kills many with it who never wake again. Only a little will give sleep to him who lies muttering and tossing in the room of the Señor Carlos."

Fray Carreno turned suddenly to the group, and his voice, usually low and humble, was full of decision and conscious authority. "Doña Inez! go to yonder room and bring me word as to how the patient lies; if he be in high fever, or relapsed and weak; also if he raves or talks to himself, with his face flushed and eyes larger than is wont. Tomaso, bring me a cup of hot water, very hot, do you hear, and also a leaf of yonder plantain."

The maiden went and came quickly, all traces of anger or revenge gone from her face, now soft and pitiful.

"How is the stranger, my daughter?" asked the friar gently.

"He lies flushed and fevered, complaining not, though his chest heaves terribly at times. He talks brokenly of his home and mother and, I think, of others, for I hear the name of Margarita and other names that are strange to me in his harsh, northern tongue; but he seems strong, though feverish, and I hope your skill, reverend father, will bring him to calm reason again."

Even as she spoke, Fray Carreno took the leaf of the plantain, and, deftly folding it, made a rude funnel, into which, with the point of a thorn, he placed a number of leaves from the recesses of the secret belt and then placed the funnel in the cup

of hot water. Almost at once the liquid became nearly blood red, and as it began to grow turbid he hastily withdrew the leaves and motioned to Tomaso to take the cup, which had been scrupulously left untouched during the operation.

"See that he drinks this, Tomaso. Should he sleep beyond the first dawn, or grow chill and weak, you know the remedy. I would he had a wiser nurse, but he is in the care of heaven and I cannot enter the dwellings of men. Come, Señor de Olivarez, it is time for vespers; even now the great bell of the Lazaretto calls our fellow sufferers to prayer."

Olivarez remained a moment behind. "Good night, dear daughter. May heaven have you in holy keeping. But you are of my blood, and none of our house have been false or recreant in love or hate. See, then, that Tomaso does his duty faithfully and wisely, and fear not that the tongues of men or the merciful eyes of the holy mother will blame you here or hereafter. I would lay my life on the innocence of this man, but the future will end all doubt, in God's good time. Let loose the great dogs in the lower rooms, and let Bravo roam in the garden at night. He will not eat from a strange hand, yet see that he be fed until he will take no more. Let Pedro have all the arms loaded and arm the men servants therewith, and see that the secret door opens easily, for there are those who have no love to your charge. Fear not for yourself, for although I may never again kiss your dear face, your father's love can and will shield you from all peril."

Within the closed gate of the Lazaretto the motley throng of lepers were dispersing, having knelt before the altar where the dead Christ, depicted by a master's hand, had a generation before been placed there by the munificence of a Spanish noble, long since gone to his account, but none the less loved and remembered by the unhappy successors of the ill-fated beings who in his day had awakened his princely pity and charity.

Since the great picture had hung there, hundreds had knelt before it in helpless exile, cast out from home and love, from a mother's caresses and a father's tenderness, from the struggles and hopes of all human ambition, the soldier's ardor, the seaman's daring, the expectation of love, the universal hope of posterity. Often still strong, beautiful, nurtured in wealth and luxury, they had been brought here by force, to see, horror-stricken and despairing, scores of examples of the terrible doom from which nothing but merciful death, by acute disease or sudden accident, could save them.

Hence in this place, where life retained none of the hopes which sweeten and glorify existence, length of days was deemed a misfortune, and few lamented when they knew that only a few hours remained of their blighted existences; yet, strangely enough, even in this horrible place, marriage vows were said, though fortunately but few unhappy beings were brought into the world foredoomed to a life of hereditary leprosy and exclusion from the world. On the other hand, singularly enough, there were but few who anticipated their inevitable doom by

self-murder, for such having been ever buried in unconsecrated ground, were held to have parted forever with all hope of heaven; and men to whom all earthly joys were closed could not bear the thought of losing that immortal life in which alone they could rejoin their loved ones, pure, glorious and without stain or trace of mortality.

Here, therefore, all feuds ended between those who had in better days been deadly enemies, estranged friends, or bitter partisans of opposing factions. Here, the man of noble birth called the peasant brother; the doomed maiden of the *sangre azul* wedded the man of low estate, whose greater strength would enable him to smooth her own inevitable progress to a leper's grave. Here men called each other "brother" despite disparity in former days, and women, notwithstanding the greater love of the sex for nice distinctions of place and caste, greeted each other as "sister," under the leveling force of common misfortune and suffering. Yet there were still men who were recognized as leaders; women who moved among their kind to support, comfort and direct; the natural leaders who, under all circumstances of human society, have and ever will present themselves, to whom their weaker and less powerful brethren will do willing obedience.

Therefore, after the evening service, a score or more of the stronger and bolder spirits remained behind with Olivarez; and Fray Carreno, with a sinble admonitory whisper, left him in secret council, with a band of men still formidable enough despite the ravages of their incurable malady.

"I have called you together," said he, breaking a breathless silence, "to ask your aid in protecting the cottage of my daughter, which, for good reasons, I deem not safe from possible attack and plunder, if not greater outrage. As you all know, it was formerly occupied by my dear children, an only son and daughter, for whose sake, though I might easily have fled to other countries, where even such as we are not altogether shut out from men, I came willingly here to become one of the many afflicted poor of Mary and the holy San Lazaro. My children I bestowed in yonder cottage, and was happy in their happiness and in the love they have ever shown to their afflicted father, until my boy went out to meet the English and came back no more; whether slain in fair fight or by the hand of an assassin I have yet to decide. But his sister yet lives, and under her roof lies the brave young American, who came to our gates to assure the English general, that he might safely spare us from the horrors of a bombardment or the dangers of an escalade. And I know that he has enemies, powerful enemies, who may well lead a band of guerrillas or a mob from Xexemani to murder, rob or burn. I therefore ask how many of you are willing to keep watch and ward, aye, and be ready to do battle, for the sanctity of my house and the honor of the Señorita Inez?"

The very thought of once more bearing arms, of crossing steel in desperate combat, of feeling their sluggish blood heated by the shock and rush of battle, seemed to transform these men, but a few moments before sullen, apathetic, sorrowful, or lost

in contemplation of the life everlasting. Felix, a huge Biscayan, once noted as the boatswain of a *guarda costa*, first broke the silence.

"All! Don Olivarez, and with thanks, too. I've a good cutlass and my pistols still by me, and no longer ago than last week I stowed them away out of sight; for I minded me of many a brave fight, such as I never dared to hope of seeing more. Aye, I would watch for a year to be a man again against men, and for the lady Inez. I would gladly end life thus, rather than rot like a sheep within this terrible place."

The other men seconded their comrade in low, resolute tones—some, alas! in husky and inarticulate words, resulting from fearful corrosion of the face; and then all was silence as Olivarez proceeded:

"Do you, then, hold yourselves in readiness to the number of thirty, taking to your aid as many as you can best trust, ten of whom will stand guard every night, between darkness and sunrise, not as sentries at the house, but as scouts in the orchards which surround the clearing. The other twenty will be armed and ready at the first alarm, to seek the gate, where I or a friend will be always posted to give you exit. Felix, you will lead the first ten; José Aranda, you have too often hunted in these woods to have forgotten their secrets now, and you will take command of the second party; I will take the third yet to be raised. And now, friends, I thank you for your fidelity. Go, and prepare for our last deeds in arms!"

One by one they filed out into the darkness, leav-

ing Olivarez alone in the sacristy, where, by a single hanging lamp, he drew from his breast the antique dagger, and viewed its wondrous workmanship over and over. With dislike the old buccaneer viewed the fluted, edgeless blade, too short for open fight, so sure in traitorous hands, so deadly in that its contused wounds were ever hard to heal, though its blows were not surely given; and all the aversion a brave man feels for such weapons showed itself in every feature. The convoluted serpent folds which formed the guard, the finely formed limbs and loathsome head of the serpent-haired Medusa attracted him, however, with something of that spell which the hunter feels when he comes upon a coiled serpent in the wilderness, and stands for a second motionless, eyeing the sleek, pliant painted folds, the slender, threatening head, with its open mouth, erected fangs and sibilant tongue, and the small, cold, bright eyes, without any touch of softness, any expression of aught but resolute malignity.

Such a feeling seized Olivarez for a moment, so curiously and faithfully had the artist labored, so strangely malign was the glance of the jeweled eyes of the Medusa. In the deserted chapel, the deathly stillness seemed to become intense and painful to his excited feelings, and for a time the strong soul of the bereaved and anxious father almost yielded to the agony of its long-restrained emotion; but at last he replaced the weapon in his belt, and rose with his old stately grace to his feet.

"I had almost fancied," he soliloquized, "that Carlos' spirit was with me here and called for vengeance.

Were it not that I ever derided such womanish fancies and idle superstitions, I could have sworn that by this accursed weapon he met his untimely death. But I doubt rather Don Ramon than yonder giant American, who would slay in battle like a man, but not stab with such a serpent fang as this. Young, wealthy, the petted favorite of the viceroy, and given to all forms of dissolute life, I know that Carlos was at first attracted by his beauty, accomplishments and generosity, but was alienated by his cruel indifference to the rights and happiness of others, and the scandal and sorrow caused by his unbridled passions. He himself speaks of wishing to slay my son, even in the vice-regal palace. Nothing but a sense of the bitterest wrong could have induced Carlos to forget the respect due his host—the obedience he owed to the representative of his king. It is not like Don Ramon to forgive, they say. Carlos would hardly keep the dagger after an almost deadly quarrel, and Don Ramon is just the man to gratify an unsatiated revenge by the hands of a hired bravo."

A footstep in the outer chapel was heard, and there entered the sacristy the latest arrival at the Lazaretto, a young merchant of the city, who, suddenly attacked, had been exiled in spite of prayers, threats and entreaties, and had since remained a prey to almost utter despair, despite the consolations of Fray Carreno and the well meant sympathy and encouragement of his fellow sufferers.

Martinez de Herrera, as the heir of a wealthy merchant, and connected by blood with officials eminent in the history of the settlement and growth

of the city, had seen at his command before him all the conditions for a life of happiness which man could desire. Wealthy, graceful in person, comely in face, intelligent beyond the majority of men of his time and years, he added to a kindly and generous nature that acute sensibility which makes the success of the poet, artist and musician, and makes glorious or most miserable the life of its possessor; to whom there can in no case pertain that calm and philosophic middle course, in which alone men safely and happily bring to a quiet haven, the storm-tossed bark after the voyage of life.

Suddenly hurled from the pinnacle of happiness to the depths of despair; driven from the bosom of his family and that society which had so lately beheld him its petted favorite; doomed to a hopeless exile, and inevitable and loathsome death, he had given way to a despair in which there seemed to be no ray of hope, no gleam of consolation; and, uncleanly of person, slovenly of attire, careless of food or drink, shelter or occupation, Don Martinez had become a pitiable spectacle, even to the most miserable of the colony of lepers.

But now he appeared before Olivarez fresh from the bath and toilet, dressed in the closely fitting small-clothes of fine Biscayan linen which in that warm climate was the favorite and fitting attire of the Spanish gentleman; and his coat of amethystine velvet, laced with gold, was crossed by a narrow but costly belt, at which hung a splendid rapier and a pair of pistols of exquisite workmanship. His hair had been close cut, but was oiled and perfumed;

his collarless shirt above its voluminous ruffle was banded with a collarette of golden buttons of filagree work, and his Spanish hat of laced velvet was decked with a magnificent plume, which swept with a graceful curve around half the crown and waved daintily with every zephyr of the evening land breeze, which came through the barred lattice.

"Good evening, Señor Olivarez," he said, with much of his old vivacity; "I have come to offer myself as a recruit for your new adventure. May I hope that I shall not be refused?"

"Refused, Señor Martinez? I shall be only too glad of your assistance, though I must tell you that it may compromise all who take service under me, and perchance doom them to the gibbet or the fire of His Majesty's troops."

"I care not," said the young man, eagerly. "I have been told your object, and would readily die to secure so glorious and end. Listen, Señor Olivarez: Carlos and I were friends."

"So I have always thought," said the old man quietly.

"We were friends and together everywhere, in truth, almost inseparable, and, until that serpent, Don Ramon, came here from Spain, had never a breath of misunderstanding; but when he first came into society, all Cartagena, both man and woman, seemed fascinated and conquered by his wit and beauty. Alas! All were not able to withstand his insinuating and treacherous arts, and one, dear to me as the child of a faithful servitor, died in the hospital of St. Juan de Dios in shame and despair.

"I first feared for his victim, and denounced him as a villain; but he made me appear prejudiced and over suspicious, and even Don Carlos turned his back upon me in contemptuous pity. For a while I, myself, doubted the justice of my own attack; but when poor Maria fled from home, leaving the frenzied story of her wrongs, I showed the tear-blotted papelcito to Don Carlos, and he, confessing his injustice, was first to call the villain to mortal arbitrament."

"Why was the quarrel made up?" asked Olivarez.

"It was when the first news of the coming of the fleet reached the governor that we encountered in the *patio* of the viceroy, and it was only by threatening to shoot the first man who made a thrust, that the lieutenant of the guard prevented a duel to the death. It was, however, understood by both that, the siege once over, the duel was to take place, and each by his honor swore that neither gain, love, fear nor any other motive, should keep him from the deferred meeting."

"Then they parted not in amity?" said Olivarez inquiringly.

"In amity?" repeated Don Martinez in savage irony. "Of a truth, no! Don Ramon at that very moment drew off a balas ruby, the gift of Don Carlos, and threw it at his feet; and he, not to be outdone, sent him back several costly gifts by the hands of a servitor of Don Ramon, who a few days after, at pique with his master, became a marine under Don Blas de Lezo, and, as I have heard, died during the siege."

"Thanks, Don Martinez, for your confidence. In my service there is no hope of gain or ambition, yet I need a leader for the last ten of my company of thirty. Are you willing to take charge of it under my leadership?"

For the first time, since the day when he had been forcibly carried to the leper village, Herrera was seen to smile. "Don Olivarez," said he, "I thank God that, even in my misery I have found honors and employment, in the which I had found pleasure even in my happiest days. I may not tell you what supreme joys I have coveted, what crowning bliss I have dared to hope for, what dream of paradise in a moment blotted forever from my vision, was replaced by this terrible reality of our hopeless fate. But if only your fears may prove true; if only I may once more feel the thrill of courageous daring and the madness of battle, with the consciousness of being engaged in a cause for which even the noblest and happiest might welcome death, I have only one more boon to ask of heaven, save the remission of my sins, in this mortal life."

"Whatever your wish," said Olivarez, eagerly, "if wealth can purchase or influence attain it, I promise you in advance it shall be yours."

"Ah," said the young man, solemnly, "only of God may I obtain my desire, though to all in His good time he allots the blessing. Few there are who like me crave its speedy coming. Only to the frame racked with torment, or the heart bowed into the dust with sorrow or despair, comes the earnest wish for the peaceful calm of death."

"Truly," said Don Olivarez, with his voice for the first time tremulous with pity and his mask wet with unrestrained tears, "thou hast suffered overmuch, and art worthy of all love and trust. Thou shalt be a son to me who am sonless, the defence of a sister left brotherless by a fate not yet revealed, and God in his own time, be it sooner or later, shall reward thee according to thy just deserts. But I hear the feet of our men; they return from arming themselves for our final review."

As he spoke, they entered, to the number of nearly two-score, often beggarly in dress, with motley and insufficient arms, but nevertheless a body of men to be feared. There were men with but one hand, whose undiseased arm had acquired the strength of two; those whose features were hidden by dominos, whose onslaught few men could withstand, and even now mighty hunters of the jaguar and ocelot; and others, half deprived of sight, who with the other eye, could rival the best skill of the guerillas of the wilderness of Calamari. The hunter with his long musket, the cayman slayer with his well-balanced harpoon, the turtle fisher with his long bow and deadly arrows, the one-armed butcher with his trenchant Spanish axe, and the peasant with his *machete*, —all were represented by men who no longer needed the usual incentives of man to courage, fidelity and self-sacrifice.

They were told off to the number of thirty; the rest were to remain with Olivarez as a reserve at the guard house by the gate, and, with the first detachment, stout Felix went to his first night's scout among the cocoa orchards.

As he parted, his words drew a grim smile of approval from his maimed and stricken followers:

"Faith! 'tis a strange following to lead to battle, and yet I would not fear to meet four times our number, an' they but knew with whom they had to deal. There are many who have willingly faced ball and steel, who would not for millions take us by the hand; still less feel on hilt or hand the deadly stain of a leper's blood."

"'Tis even so," said Olivarez, under his breath, as the huge gate was locked behind the little company. "There is no courage so great, no love of gain so devouring, no devotion so unselfish and fearless that could induce the meanest of the rabble of Xexemani to join himself to our number, or take the risk of becoming so sad a spectacle of death in life."

Chapter XXXI.

A L'outrance

But for many days watch and ward seemed needless, although, as Stephen Hay slowly recovered strength, Don Ramon sent many a messenger, and more than once galloped down to the gate himself, to inquire in his courtly way concerning the health of the Señorita Inez and the state of the wounded captive. It was but too evident to the lady in question, that he felt no pleasure at learning of the probable recovery of the American, and more than once, he almost expressed a decided intention of removing Hay to the common hospital of the city prison.

He was met by too decided a negative from both father and daughter to pursue the subject further; but Olivarez obtained of Eslava, the military governor, the ransom of the prisoner, and when Stephen for the first time reclined in an easy-chair on the cool veranda, Don Ramon, coming up on his light Spanish jennet, turned fairly yellow-white with suspicious jealousy. Throwing the reins to his servant, he joined the New Englander and his fair hostess, who sat, as was her wont, beside her patient, whom she had already begun to pity, and perhaps to love, despite her dark suspicions and fears concerning the death of her only brother.

He greeted Inez politely, but went on to speak of the topics of the time, and to make inquiries concerning the affairs of the household, without in any

way answering the pleasant greeting of the convalescent, or even the slight civility of a bow.

"You seem to have forgotten the Señor Stephen," said Inez, pointedly.

"You mistake, señorita," he replied; "I have already shown him more civility than is fitting. A Spanish count has nothing in common with an English farmer, and a mere sergeant, a common prisoner of war, has no claim on the politeness of a colonel in His Majesty's infantry. I have allowed him thus far extraordinary privileges, to please you, who are my friends; but we received yesterday orders to transfer to the keeper of the city prison, the few prisoners and stragglers who were left on our hands by the sailing of the English fleet."

Inez drew from a small casket a paper bearing the seal of the governor of Cartagena. "The Señor Hay is no longer a prisoner," said she, pointedly. "Here is Don Sebastian's order for his release."

Don Ramon's pale cheek for an instant flushed with ill repressed wrath, and then he became again as calmly icily courteous as was his wont, when he had weighed the chances against him and the way to success. "I feared as much," said he, quietly, "and had hoped to perform elsewhere, a duty too painful to name in your presence. But I see that over-gratitude for the slight service rendered by that man has so enlisted the Doña Inez and her noble father in his behalf, that I must even appear cruel, or let justice triumph, and a foul wrong go unpunished."

"Whatever charge you have to make against the Señor Hay should, it seems to me, be made in the

presence of my father, whose guest he is. See, he is coming with the unhappy Señor Martinez and the good Fray Carreno. Pepe! José! bring the litter and bear the Senor Hay to the shade of the palm tree beside the gate. Don Ramon, I will join you in a moment."

Ten minutes later the parties were all gathered near the gate, and Don Ramon, calling to his servant, ordered him to bring from his holsters the pistols therein. The page, a bright young Andalusian, brought the weapons, and at his master's order laid them on the litter before Stephen, who felt that at last the gage of battle was thrown before him, and that the struggle was to be one in which either he or his powerful antagonist must die. Though still weak he arose to an erect sitting posture, and with long, wasted fingers, examined the pistols found beside the dead Spaniard at Boca Chica.

"Ask the Señor Hay if he recognizes those weapons," said Don Ramon, after courteously greeting Olivarez.

The question was repeated in English, and Hay at once answered without hesitation or evasion:

"They were carried in my belt on the day that I was wounded at San Lazaro."

"Take them to Señor Olivarez," said Don Ramon, with a malign smile. "Perhaps he can also recognize them."

Olivarez, with a natural shudder, looked again upon the familiar weapons, worn by himself in many a desperate encounter. "They were mine," he said with an effort, "and carried by my poor boy when he parted from me forever."

"From whence did you receive them, sir?" asked Don Ramon sternly, turning to Stephen, who saw, with ill-concealed sorrow, the tears of the Señorita Inez and the sullen and averted looks of the slaves, who had hitherto waited so kindly upon him.

"I took them from the body of a young Spaniard, whom I helped to bury at Boca Chica."

"How came he to his death?" asked Don Ramon, with flashing eyes.

For the first time since his fall into the moat at San Lazaro, something of his old strength of mind and body came back to the New Englander. He had never since walked upright, except when supported by two strong men, and in the main had been dull of apprehension and slow of utterance. For a moment even now, he hesitated, as if to collect his thoughts, but ere Don Ramon could again repeat the question, the answer came:

"He lay wounded in the arm just beyond the batteries of La Chamba," he cried, rising to his feet and grasping one of the slender posts of the canopy for support. "We came upon him while scouting toward the castle, and drew him under the shade of a great tree, and gave him drink. When we came back to him in the darkness, under the fire of that night's bombardment, with aid and litter, he was dead, with a dagger thrust through his gallant heart.

"We buried him like a soldier—" He would have said more, but he fell in a swoon, breaking down the slender canopy across the litter in which he had been borne to the place of meeting, and the servants, at the order of Olivarez, bore him back to his chamber.

"Are you mad?" asked Don Ramon, in amazement. "Will you still harbor a man who, is not only an heretic and an enemy, but possibly the murderer of your son. If not the murderer, he must have numbered among his comrades the perpetrator of the dastardly deed, and profited by the crime, for he carries the pistols worn by your dead boy, and confesses that he died, not by chance of war, but the stroke of the assassin's dagger. By the holy Mother! It shall not be. If you, his father, have lost the natural desire for vengeance on the slayer of your son, I at least will avenge his death, and speedily."

"Don Ramon!" said Olivarez, "this sudden zeal to avenge my lost Carlos becomes his friend, but my house is not a theatre for violence, and yonder American's guilt must be proven; for if he fell in honorable warfare even by dagger thrust given at that man's hands, he should go free cured of his wounds, and if not with our love, at least with honor."

"But how if he be guilty of cruel and cowardly murder?" asked Don Luiz, savagely.

"Then he shall die by the hands that should avenge him."

"Then, senor," said Don Ramon, "grant me the boon of avenging on his murderer the death of Don Carlos."

"Not so," cried Martinez de Herrera, "I claim a better right, for you yourself were angry at Don Carlos, and the presents you exchanged had been returned when he went under Don Blas de Lezo to the castle at Boca Chica."

"You say truly," said Don Ramon, sorrowfully, "and much have I regretted the cause and the manner of our estrangement. The holy father, Fray Carreno, could tell you that I have done penance for my sins, and though Carlos treated me scornfully in returning all my gifts, yet I would he were alive again that we could once more be friends."

"If then, Don Ramon, all your gifts were returned to you, whence comes it that this poniard given by you to Don Carlos, and returned by him to you, was found buried in the heart of my boy?"

As the fatal weapon was displayed by Olivarez, Ramon's face grew even whiter than was wont, and a sudden gleam, threatening and dire in import as the flash of the lightning, lit up his large black eyes. He scanned the face of Fray Carreno, but it was impassive and unblenching, and he knew that the dread secrets of the confessional had been faithfully kept, though he felt the vantage ground he had deemed so surely his own slipping from beneath his feet.

But in the manner of Olivarez and the face of Don Herrera, he saw the strong suspicion of his guilt growing into a certainty, and hardening into the bitter thirst of blood; but he was strong even in that supreme peril, and spoke calmly and courteously though less assuredly than before.

"I know not, Don Olivarez, what dark suspicion you may have harbored against me; but if, indeed, poor Don Carlos was done to death with yonder dagger, I only know that it was returned to me in wrath and with uncourtly message, and I angrily

threw it aside, nor have since cast eyes upon it. I may well have lost it, for this is my third servant since that day, and the two first were scant of honesty and of little conscience."

"Aye! and of bloody hand, Colonel de Ramon," cried Martinez boldly; "and especially he whom men called Carlos the Catalan, who was spared from the gibbet to fight manfully in the siege and die on the field of battle, only because Don Sebastian might not spare from the defense of the city even a hireling stabber and bloody assassin."

"Such, indeed, he was; yet it may be that even he may have been guiltless of this crime, even as I myself. Where was this dagger found, Don Olivarez?"

"Beneath the cover of the sergeant's cartridge box, placed there, as we think, because the sheath was wanting. Go in peace for this time, Don Luis, and bethink thee that were such scant justice meted to thee, as thou wouldst have measured out to the helpless stranger, thou wouldst have now lain motionless, slain by my hand."

The young soldier was about to turn scornfully away, but at the last words he again faced the assembled throng and, throwing open his loose cloak, seemed to invite the threatened bullet. "I will not go thus, Don Olivarez. Rather would I die by your hand than thus yield up your friendship, than forfeit all claim to the hand of the Señorita Inez, whom I have so long loved in secret until now. Will you deem me guilty on the word of a foreign mercenary, or the presence of a stolen dagger where I could by no means have been myself?"

Olivarez turned wearily toward the speaker, who, for the first time, seemed to lay aside his usual haughty coldness and to speak from a full heart. "Alas, Don Ramon, you alone could profit by the crime, for between you and Don Carlos there was a feud which both had sworn to end by a duel to the death. Yet can I hardly think that fear alone would have urged thee to such wickedness, hadst thou not known that the Señorita Inez would bring to her spouse such a dower, as would more than pay the creditors who await thy coming in Spain. Trust me, Don Luis, though no longer in the world, I have well guarded my child and the wealth I leave her; and from bodily harm I trust God and Our Lady to preserve us. But enough of this, the dead shall judge between us. When this American revives he shall lead us to the grave of my son, and his clothing at least will be left to tell by what means he died."

"And if yonder heretic's story be true"—began Ramon, scornfully.

"Then, Señor Luis de Ramon, guard thyself well, for there is no land so distant, no defence so strong, that distance or security shall avail to rob me of a father's vengeance on the slayer of his son."

"Hast thou no homily to read Don Olivarez, Sir Priest," said the Spaniard, turning haughtily to Fray Carreno, who had listened impassively to the conversation. "Truly he hath less charity to one of his nation and faith, than for a heretic enemy."

"Nothing that would avail," said the priest solemnly, "and why should I hold out to either of you,

false hopes or unavailing counsel. I know you well. Stubborn of heart and strong of hand are ye both. Let God decide between you, and His justice fall on the assassin or assassins, if such there be."

"A most Christian wish, Fray Carreno," said Don Luis, vaulting into his saddle, and bowing until his long plume swept his holster cases. But, as he turned away, a slight tremor of his compressed lips told that even his strong self-repression had been shaken by the ordeal through which he had passed.

Yet before his barb had curvetted and caracolled a mile, the old debonair carriage was again resumed, and an evil smile played around the sensuous mouth and passionate eyes. "Forewarned is forearmed they say, and having avoided one duel *a l'outrance*, I should take shame were I not to end at once and for ever all fear of a second. I must give up all hope of a friendly alliance it is true, but if the Señorita is once in my power, and fatherless," and he rode on, plotting how best to win by force, what he had failed to secure through fairer means.

"When go you to Boca Chica?" asked Fray Carreno, as the gay mantle of the chevalier was lost to view amid the verdure of the cocoas.

"In a few days at most; that is, as soon as the Señor Hay is able to accompany us," replied Olivarez.

"Go to-night," said the priest, meaningly, "or to-morrow night at farthest. I myself will get you a pass, and furnish you with a letter to a friend who has a *bujio* on the Isle of Varu. You can carry the sick man in a litter, and if aught should occur here,

I will see that the Señorita Inez is guarded against all danger."

"You are right. I will give orders that the great canoe be made ready, and we will start in the evening, with the first of the land breeze. It will not be hard to disinter poor Carlos and be back by night, as we shall have a fair wind until then. Fear not that I shall not have full protection here. With gold and steel, I might almost defy the wrath of the viceroy himself."

"Ah, Don Olivarez, trust not too much in thine own strength or the friendship of man; and remember that if the serpent is weak of body, his stroke is sure and his bite fatal. Truly, I fear me that thou wilt yet find this young Spaniard too strong and dangerous an adversary to be despised."

"God grant it!" cried Herrera, gaily. "I hope well that we may end all debate by sure bullet or sharp steel; but if he is guilty, and Don Olivarez fail, he shall not escape the vengeance of Martinez de Herrera."

Chapter XXXII.

Acharné

But even Olivarez could not fathom the quick revulsion from sordid love to bitter hate, from quiet security to malignant fear, from well-conceived policy to the fevered thirst of revenge which filled the heart of Don Luis de Ramon, as he urged his light barb up the wooded slopes toward his quarters at San Lazaro.

An hour later, fully armed, and seated on a strong charger, he issued from the fortress and rode into the city, having announced to his comrades that he should not return until the following day, or perhaps even later.

That evening, after Felix the Biscayan had led out his volunteer guard for the night, Olivarez and Herrera sat in the porter's lodge, listening to the storm without; for it was now in the height of the rainy season, and heavy torrents of rain rattled upon the slated roof, and almost incessant sheets of lightning followed by terrific rolling bursts of thunder, made conversation nearly impossible.

Suddenly, in the interval between two severe flashes, the gate-bell jangled fiercely, and the porter, going into the covered archway, let in through the wicket-gate an inmate of the hospital, drenched to the skin, and panting with fear and exertion.

A woman without beauty, a maiden old before her time, clad in a beggar's rags and carrying the

mendicant's alms-bag; possessed of life and energy, yet more horrible to view than the dying or the dead —such was the person who now knelt at the feet of Don Olivarez.

"What is it, Maria? and what hath brought thee from the city at such an hour as this? Surely, though shut out from the city, the empty warehouses of Xexemani had sheltered thee, as oft before. Yet say on; I will hear, and, if I may, help thee."

"I want no help," said the newcomer, in an almost indistinguishable, muffled tone; "but I know that if something be not done to help her, the Doña Inez will find herself in perilous straits."

"The Doña Inez? What meanest thou? For heaven's sake, speak quickly," began Herrera; but Olivarez, who better knew the character of the messenger, placed his finger on his lips and said quietly: "What hast heard or seen, Maria?"

"I did go to the warehouses," said she promptly, "and went to sleep in a great barrel, such as they bring the leaves of tobacco in from Cuba, but in came a lot of sailors with lanterns, and by and by the handsome colonel of the great fort of San Lazaro. He looked about a little, but did not see me, and I lay still and looked through a knot hole in a stave. Then they began to talk of killing heretics and burning houses; but the señorita was to be carried off to the mountains, for Ferdinand Balthazar, who was outlawed until the siege, was there, too, with several of his *guerrilleros*."

"When will they come?" asked Olivarez quietly.

"When the rain is over, if it clears to-night, for the colonel said 'They go to-morrow to Boca Chica, and besides, they will not look for us in such weather as this.' "

"How did you get out to come here?"

"They were some of them wet, and made a fire in the next warehouse to dry their clothes, and at last all went in there and I was alone."

"The sky is clearing, Don Olivarez," said the old porter, as he again entered and placed upon the table the wine and bread he was instructed to provide for the watch. "Will you not take a little of this kid yourself, Señor? 'Tis a fine animal and deliciously basted and browned."

"I care not for meat at such a time as this, yet, Don Herrera, before we part to gather the rest of the men, I will drink one toast with thee. I may not wish thee a speedy death, even in battle; yet, were it not that I still must watch over my Inez, I would gladly believe that, in a few hours at least, my hopeless life might be over."

"I, at least," said Herrera, "have no doubts. Fill high, Don Olivarez, and drink to my toast. To the despised, a death sword in hand; to the hand red with the leper's blood, a leper's fate."

Solemnly yet hurriedly the toast was pledged, and, leaving the half insane woman at the table, Olivarez and Herrera hastened to gather their men and collected them in the gateway, sending out one of the number to seek out the Biscayan and warn him of the approaching danger.

Felix had, as usual, bestowed his men in certain

cattle sheds and other places of shelter, where, secure from the rain and rendered somnolent by the din of the elements, they had all fallen asleep, insomuch that long before the messenger had finished his story, and the *ci devant* privateer had got his men all together and ready to take post around the cottage, they heard the deep baying of the hounds, followed by several pistol shots, the clash of steel and sounds like those of a throttled dog and a man in mortal agony.

The Biscayan did not hesitate, but crying out to his associates rushed toward the cottage, and broke into the road, just as a sharp volley rattled from the windows of the besieged mansion.

Ferdinand Balthazar had been first to clear the gateway, and Bravo, the largest of the bloodhounds, seized him by the throat and bore him to the ground, despite the efforts of his comrades, who rained cuts upon his clenched jaws and discharged pistol after pistol into his huge body. He, indeed, soon lay as if dead, but so did Balthazar; and before the bloody jaws could be unclasped from their deadly hold, the other three hounds were loosed from the stables and rushed upon the assailants, while the *major-domo* and his fellow servants threw in the fire of their muskets and pistols from the upper rooms, as we have said.

The terrible and unyielding assault of the dogs, whose headlong courage knew only to attack, did more to delay and hinder the assailants than the effect of the fusilade; and when Felix appeared upon the scene only a confused group of fighting men and

dogs was visible, and thinking himself fully able to cope with a party not exceeding his own he rushed towards the gate, raising as a war cry the shout of "San Lazaro."

But from a small copse nearly opposite the house, a volley issued, almost blinding the few uninjured by its missiles, so close were the muzzles of the pistols to the bodies of the victims; but, though the Biscayan staggered and put his hand to his breast, he turned like a wounded lion, and was soon crossing swords with the reserve of the attacking force, a dozen men at least, all of whom were masked, but evidently of the naval force, left without vessels by the success of the English fleet.

Two desperate cuts disposed of his foremost antagonists, but a third opponent, who was singularly silent of demeanor, made a single lunge with a long basket-hilted rapier, and, without a word, the ex-privateersman met the death for which he had longed ever since the first fatal plague spot had shut him out from human companionship. His slayer uttered a single ejaculation of disgust as the hot blood covered his hand and soiled the shell of his rapier, but he issued with his men from their ambush and hastened to join the attacking party at the house.

There the dogs had at last been silenced, but not before several men had been disabled by their fangs and as many more had fallen by the fire from the windows; but the survivors seemed maddened with liquor and the lust of blood, and, at the direction of their leader, tore from the palisade a heavy plank,

to be used as a battering ram against the iron bars of the windows and the barred and bolted doors of the cottage.

"Forward, forward, comrades! Death to traitors and heretics! Twenty reals for the fair Inez, and ten for the head of the Englishman," cried the masked leader, as he hurriedly directed his men to remove their fallen comrades from the narrow path, and prepare for a rush against the iron-studded portal.

With shouts of "*Mueran los hereticos!*" and cries in which obscenity and hate were strangely blended, the wounded were hastily dragged into the cover of the garden shrubbery, and the improvised battering ram made ready for the assault. The leader placed himself a little to one side of the paved way, and as he did so, a volley from the windows swept his sombrero from his head and cut down the leading file.

"*Anda! Anda!*" he cried, savagely; but at this moment a dull, heavy clang broke upon the midnight air, as the great bell of the hospital called for assistance from the garrison of the city.

"Perdition!" hissed the masked leader, fiercely. "We shall fail after all. Hola, Andreas! Let the dead lie; waste no more time over them. Up with the beam and break in yonder door. Slay the men —save the women. There is silver and gold enough for you all, and it is yours for the taking."

With a yell, the ruffians raised the heavy log and rushed headlong toward the door, this time without receiving a discharge from the windows, which seemed deserted. The ram struck the door fairly in

the centre and dashed out a small panel like a wicket, revealing the fact that it was really an iron grating filled in with precious woods.

As they recoiled for a second rush a pistol was fired through the aperture, and another man went to the rear with a broken arm; but again and again the blows were repeated, until half of the filled in wood had been torn away, and from the *patio*, or central vestibule, pistol and musket flashed angrily as the maddened horde again and again surged up against the ironwork.

Suddenly their leader, for the first time, gave his own strength to the task, taking the place of a disabled sailor, and directing the blow of the ram upon the hinges of the grating. At the first stroke they yielded; a second left the lower valve broken and awry, and at the third the door was forced inward, bringing up upon three stout pillars, but leaving a narrow aperture through which a single man might pass.

Dropping their useless burden, the ruffians drew their cutlasses and knives and attempted to force their way in, but the first, as he passed into the vestibule, now strangely silent, fell without a groan under a tremendous blow, dealt by some person of whom nothing could be seen in the darkness; and with half stifled curses his comrades drew back, refusing to expose themselves to certain destruction, and a fierce cry of *"Fuego! Fuego!"* rose upon the night.

Evidently this contingency had not been unforseen, for at the word a general rush was made for

the road, and returning one by one, each man laid against the door a prepared fagot, and the last, as he turned to go, discharged a pistol into the mass. A cloud of smoke and intensely hot flame followed, and though the incendiary was wounded, and several buckets of water were dashed through the broken door, the central part of the mass seemed too combustible to yield, and the fumes evolved made it impossible for the defenders to stay longer in the patio.

By the light of the flames, several persons were seen to disappear from their several posts of vantage, the last being a tall and emaciated man, who carried in his hands a woodman's axe; but though it was evident that the cottage was doomed, and the inner fittings were soon blazing fiercely, the triumph of the marauders was of short duration.

Suddenly from either flank of the cottage, two parties advancing from behind it, poured in a withering fire, and with the utmost fury sprang upon the marauding party, who, nevertheless, for a moment, stood to their arms stoutly, as if in disdain of even double their number of undisciplined antagonists. But when the newcomers issued into the full glare of the flames, led by Olivarez and Herrera, the boldest recoiled at the terrible aspect of men whose angry eyes shone from faces no longer human, but rather like the frightful creations with which the artists of that day filled their efforts to illustrate the abode of lost souls.

"*Los demonios! los demonios!*" they cried, long before the breathless rescuers could come within

sword reach, and only the leader stopped for a moment and exchanged a few thrusts with Martinez de Herrera, who led his friends by some distance.

"Die, fool!" was the only word uttered by the unknown, as with fatal skill he sent the rapier of the unfortunate youth a dozen feet into the air, and with the succeeding thrust felt the hilt of his sword strike against the breast bone of his victim. With a terrible cry Herrera grasped with a death clutch the delicate basket hilt of inlaid steel, so that, despite his efforts, the victor was obliged to leave his weapon in the body of the dying man; and, five minutes later, Olivarez and his following stood alone with the dead around them, and the friends they had rescued were on their way to the shelter of the great Sinu hulk or piroga, where alone they could find fitting refuge.

Over Herrera Olivarez bent in tears; the last rites for the dying had been performed by Fray Carreno, and the youth, though near his end, could still articulate his last wishes. "I have but one more wish," he whispered feebly; "let me see the Doña Inez, and hear her voice once more ere the sword is withdrawn."

At a word from Olivarez, his daughter turned back from following the slaves and litter to the canoe, and was told of the wish of the dying man. She was trembling with emotion, but at her waist were a brace of tiny pistols, her taper fingers still showed the traces of the burnt priming, and she hesitated not at that supreme moment, to speak fittingly to one who had willingly sought death for her sake.

"Martinez de Herrera," said she, softly, "you have ever been to me a true friend, and had not God for some reason come between us, I could have hoped for the love of no truer cavalier in all the cities of the Spanish Main. I can now give thee nothing but weak thanks, the promise of my prayers in life and death, and this sign of the kiss, with which I hope hereafter to greet thee in Paradise."

As she said this she kissed the tips of her fingers, and would have laid it upon his forehead, but the priest interposed his crucifix, and the dying man himself repulsed her by a sign, though his eye flashed with a brighter light, and a faint flush came back to his paling cheek.

"It is enough," he said, more firmly than before. "I thank you for your great favor to one who deems himself fortunate—. Alas! I can bear the pain no longer. Don Ramon has my blood on his hands. Draw out his rapier. *In manos tuos Domine*—" but ere the blade was withdrawn he was dead.

"There needs no further proof of Don Ramon's villainy, and he shall answer it before the viceroy at once," said Olivarez, hotly.

"Who will prefer the charge against him," said Fray Carreno, quietly.

"I, of course," said Olivarez, in some surprise at the question.

The priest took his friend aside. "It were better not, believe me, Señor Olivarez, for Don Ramon is nearly related to the viceroy, and thou art an outcast, though rich and generous. Moreover, there are those of the Holy Office, who would gladly see

thy wealth in the coffers of the church; and there are no want of those who whisper that thou art at heart an heretic and an enemy."

In spite of his tried nerves Olivarez felt his blood run chill, for he had seen only too much of this terrible power which the simply clad Jesuits could still exercise; though no one had actually expiated heresy by a public *auto da fe* for many years. At last he broke the silence.

"You are wiser than I, Fray Carreno. What shall I do in this new strait?"

"Bid adieu to us here. Take thy gold and arms, thy servants and the stranger thou hast sheltered. The ocean is wide, the wilderness is trackless, and in other lands thou mayst find the rest which even here is denied thee."

"And Don Ramon?" said Olivarez, with hardly restrained ferocity.

"Leave him to the justice of God. If, indeed, this is his rapier, and a single drop of our poor comrade's blood has mingled with his, then even you can wish him no more horrible fate than too surely awaits him. The shafts of the Caribs are less surely fatal, than the poisoned blood of the children of San Lazaro."

"Enough! I will do as you have said. Let us gather up our dead and help the wounded. I have already given you directions as to what is to be done, for those who risked life and limb for me and mine. Let all be done, as if I had fallen in the fight. Farewell, gallant Martinez! farewell, brave Felix! I may weep my own loss of true comrades in misfor-

tune, but not the death ye have died. Better to die thus than to linger out in pain and decay, until the brain yields and the body becomes a living tomb. God grant such a death as yours to me."

"It would be no miracle if thy prayers were soon answered, comrade," said the priest, grimly. "Tell no one thy course; avoid the routes of trade; hasten to bid us adieu if thou art wise."

Chapter XXXIII.

In the Wilderness

In a few hours the needed preparations were made, and, with a small crew of her own servants, and a swift canoe, less roomy than the heavy Sinu hulk which had at first been prepared; the Señorita Inez, with her maid, and Stephen, still weak from the desperate defence of the grated door, pushed off from the landing, and paddled through narrow channels, over reedy shallows, and among island patches of mangrove, toward the western shore of the great Bay of Cartagena.

Don Olivarez followed, an hour later, alone, in a small canoe of exceeding speed and lightness, coming up with the party just after they had passed through the narrow strait at Texar de Gracias, and with them turned up a deep lagoon, which, some four leagues from Cartagena, is lost amid the foliage of an almost impervious forest.

The heavy mists were rising with the first coming of day, and it was difficult to discern plainly the nature of the scenery on either hand; but Olivarez, with long, powerful strokes, led the way in his light *Balsa*, and the others followed silently enough, for Inez was almost stupefied with grief, sorrow and weariness, and the slaves were worn out with the night's perils and labors.

Suddenly Olivarez turned at right angles to their former course, and, calling to the *major-*

domo to follow, swept his canoe strongly against what seemed a wall of foliage, and, depressing his head, pierced through the interlacing branches, and, the larger canoe closely following, entered a narrow channel, which, from a deep and motionless pool, soon became a stream of considerable swiftness, whose ascent was quickly barred by an abrupt fall, above which the stream was broken by unnavigable rapids. Here dwelt a peasant, who, at the command of Olivarez, saddled half a score of mules, on which the few articles of baggage carried by the party were packed; after which the canoes were dragged into the recesses of a thorny chapparal, and hidden under a mass of lianas and passion-flowers.

Then, taking a path leading nearly southeast, Olivarez led the way by a path known only to the hunter and roving *Indio Bravo*, toward the great river Magdalena, by way of which he hoped at the close of the rainy season to penetrate to the great city of Popoyan, and crossing the mountains to take ship for Spain or France.

For the present he hoped to avoid the search which he knew Don Ramon would at once initiate, and pursue with all the untiring malignity of his nature; for, with the rainy season now nearly at its height, travel was almost impossible and almost certainly fatal to a person unacclimated and weakened by disease, or to a young girl unused to such hardship and severe exposure.

When fairly among the hills a small stream was reached, which, crossing the path, presented in sum-

mer only a slender rivulet flowing over golden sands or beds of small, round pebbles, at times scarcely moist with the scanty flow. Now it was a turbid and brawling brook, in which the lower branches of the fringing shrubbery were covered by the swollen torrent; and no one would ever dream that this safe, and in former days often traveled path, covered knee deep by the heavy rains, led to a place of safety in the ravines of the low range.

Turning the head of his mule up stream, Olivarez led the way for a mile at least until the forest covered gulch ended in a *cul-de-sac*, into which, over an overhanging cliff full fifty feet in height, the upper springs sent their flow in a shimmering veil into a foaming pool below, cut by the action of the water from a solid ledge of sienite, upon whose shelving border the mules, one by one, emerged. Dismounting, Olivarez led the way toward the fall, and visible through the falling waters was seen to partially ascend the cliff and disappear. A few moments after he returned, and motioning the party to follow led them to their novel place of refuge.

It was merely a cavern in the rock,—probably the creation of some earthquake or other convulsion of nature; for the fragments torn from the overhanging cliff had formed an ascent to its mouth, and both cavern and incline had been greatly improved by the hands of former visitors.

The cavity, equal in size to a room of sixteen feet square, had had its irregular bottom built up to a perfect level and floored with dry sand, and the mouth, closed by a wall of hewed planking, had

both door and windows; while within, certain empty barrels, boxes and wornout tools hinted at once to the initiated, that the headquarters of a gang of smugglers had undoubtedly been held here at no distant period.

Hastily the lading of the mules was brought inside; for the sky, long threatening, was suddenly overcast, and a tremendous thunder storm soon followed. The lightning was almost incessant, the rain fell in such torrents that the fall of water before the entrance became almost a solid greenish wall, and the thunder, reverberating amid the gorges, put to shame in its terrible fury the heaviest bombardment of the siege.

Nevertheless, candles were produced and lighted, and by their feeble illumination the debris left by former occupants was cleared out, and heavy screens, stretched from massive rings already set in the rocks, divided off the rear end of the cavern into an apartment for Inez and her little maid. Hammocks were slung for the others, and the horse litter in which Hay had been borne hither placed in the cheeriest nook of a place at the best dungeon-like and gloomy, but in all other respects comfortable, and—as Olivarez grimly remarked to his assistant, the old peasant—accessible but by one path, and that narrow, steep and easily held against attack.

"Many a gallant carouse we have had herein," said the old man, with a strange heartiness and boldness of manner, "and great gain have certain merchants of Cartagena, some of them dead long

ago, received from the trade in English cottons, hardware, powder and spirits, stored here and sent by night to the city when wanted."

"Few there be now living, honest Sanchez," replied the fugitive, "who know of the whereabouts of this place of refuge, for most of our companions have long since passed from the ranks of the Brethren of the Coast. Nevertheless, I hope thou hast kept thine oath, and the secret of the cave."

Sanchez hesitated an instant, but quickly responded: "There is but one who knows of this place, and he by no fault of mine, though for the sake of poor Juanita, my only daughter, I could not bring myself to slay the discoverer of the secret; and all the more that I dreamed not that it would ever be used again."

"God forbid that the dread and cruel compact should be of force sufficient to compass an useless murder," cried Olivarez, "but who has found out the existence of a place, for so many years known only to our old band?"

"Ferdinand Balthazar, a nephew of mine, the most fearless hunter of these mountains, followed to this glen a wounded tiger whose shoulder he had broken with a bullet. He told me of his discovery, and promised to keep it secret as soon as I told him that I had long known of the place."

"And this Balthazar? Where is he now?" asked Olivarez, with evident uneasiness.

"He led to the defence of Cartagena a small company of hunters, three of them being his own brothers. We have heard but little from him except that

he lost a brother in scouting, and has sworn deadly vengeance on all Englishmen. It is not likely that he will seek these woods, however, until the little summer of St. John."

"Well, Sanchez, it may not matter, but I wish he had never known of the cave. Hasten home now that the storm is over, and when the great canoe comes to-night, keep her in the outer lagoon and let no man follow you or your mules in bringing her lading hither. Get us up the food, coal and braziers first, and afterward the other articles. And hear me! I must not stay here with the others. Does the old guard hut still stand at the bend of the stream?"

"No, Señor, it rotted down a year or more ago, and you must trust to double canvas; for my part I had far rather, than live in that underground place, though, to be sure, the cave is dryer and safer in anything but an earthquake."

"'Twill serve our turn, Sanchez," said Olivarez, wearily, "for know that this Balthazar joined in the attack of which I told thee, and though he was severely wounded, will doubtless recover before we can start up the great river. Now choose like a man your part, for or against your old comrade, and go in peace to aid or betray us."

For a moment Sanchez seemed to hesitate; a great sadness settled in his eyes, and it seemed as if his throat was parched and choking, but with an effort he became again the trusted servitor and tried comrade.

"Balthazar! This will be woeful news to my

sweet Juanita, but the poor lad erred from desire of vengeance and not lust of gold I'll be sworn. However, if you say the word, he shall never again set eyes on daughter of mine. For the rest I have not forgotten the mutiny at Isle Vache, and how you saved my life when well-nigh sped. May—" but the deep voice of Olivarez cut short the intended oath.

"Let be, old shipmate! Oaths are not needed between comrades who have suffered, fought, aye, and sinned grievously for each other. Keep well our secret, warn us of danger, and thou shalt not lack for gold enough to keep thee in comfort to the end."

The clouds ceased for a time to inundate the earth, and Sanchez and his mules set out for home, from which the next day he came with a small tent and other necessaries. The tent was set near the door of the cave, but hidden by a heavy growth of palms, yuccas and other tropical foliage, nourished by the spray of the waterfall, and overhanging the further end of the broken platform under the cascade.

Here in the succeeding weeks which followed the party lived in complete seclusion, in much comfort and some luxury, for Sanchez almost daily sent up fish, plantains, guavas, yams and other provisions; and José, who was a Mestizo or half-blood Indian, made himself a bow and arrows, and brought in squirrels, parrots, iguanas and other tropical game, while pulpy granadillos, papayas and other forest fruits were to be had for the gathering.

To be sure there were unpleasant visitors at

times, such as bats, which more than once were found to have entered at night and bled members of the party while sleeping somewhat too soundly for their good, and the hair *riata* stiff and rough with bristly points, stretched in a semicircle before the entrance, turned back more than one *cascabelo* and several delicate but fatal *corales* from noiselessly intruding during the hours of darkness.

Meanwhile, Stephen recovered his strength rapidly, and by the end of July, when the "little summer of St. John" brings back comparatively dry weather and cool, refreshing breezes, he had regained his old beauty, somewhat etherealized by his long confinement, and he at length rivaled José in agility, endurance and skill in hunting. His mind, indeed, had never fallen back into the lethargy, from which the dangers of Don Ramon's attack had roused him on the night of the burning of the cottage.

From Balthazar little had been heard, except that, sorely wounded, he had been taken to the hospital of San Juan de Dios, whence he sent to Juanita many messages of love, much praise of the gracious bounty of his patron, Don Luis de Ramon, and an expression of his unalterable determination to hunt the traitor Don Olivarez and his heretical companion to the death.

"Threatened folk live long, trusty Sanchez; yet we were but foolish to await the wrath of so truculent a youth. Also, I am told that our guides are ready, and our boats lie even now beside the Magdalena. Will you start with us, Sanchez?—for we purpose to send forward José and the Señor Hay,

with Inez and her maid, while I follow on with the *mulada.*"

"Gladly would I go with you to the end of the world," said the old man, eagerly, "but I am old, and cannot leave my children now. But beside the great river I will see you safely embarked, and wave you a last farewell as your canoes disappear forever."

"To-morrow, then, come up here with your mules and packs, and take some one with you who can help you return with the drove. The first party can set out early in the day, and we later, for the moon will give us light."

"Where will you end your journey?" asked Sanchez, abruptly.

Olivarez' voice sounded strangely sad as he answered:

"I go to the north, where my brother, whom once you knew, awaits me. Yet, somehow, I feel as if I should live and die here, where so many roving adventures, strange fortunes and years of domestic happiness have made life precious, until death and disease left me an outcast among men. Perhaps the strange drama nears its close, and the avenger may even now be near, 'to end this strange, eventful history' in blood."

"God and the Holy Mother forbid!" said Sanchez piously. "But let us hasten; tomorrow, with the first light, we will set off, and, if so be we can reach the Devil's Gap, I promise you no man can overtake us."

They parted; and, as the mule Sanchez rode dis-

appeared down the now shallow rivulet, Hay and Inez drew near Olivarez, who marked with pride the dark beauty of the maiden and the gallant bearing of her cavalier.

"We leave this cave tomorrow, Señor Hay," said he pleasantly. "Have ready your weapons and be ready to start by noon."

"I shall be ready, Señor," said Stephen in good Spanish; "and you have no need of my assurances of true comraderie and faithful service. In whatever event of peril or suffering, I am yours to the death."

"Not so," said Olivarez, with a faint laugh. "You must live for my daughter's sake, until in a happier land she can claim an uncle's protection, and the name and rank which is hers by right. Leave us, Inez, I have much to say to the Señor Stephen, and to-night we are at leisure. We may be too busy hereafter."

"Our affairs tend toward a crisis," said Olivarez, when they were alone, "and God alone knows what dangers may follow our footsteps, or await us on our way to the Magdalena, a good two days' journey from here. It may be that I shall fall on the way. Wilt thou be a true friend and protector to Inez until she is with my brother in your own land?"

"I will swear it if need be," said Hay, firmly. "As true as I would be to my own sister by the Bay of Massachusetts."

"It is well. Now, Señor, know that the greater part of my wealth is carried in diamonds on my person, in a belt, although to-night I shall take from a

secret hoard, as much gold as we shall need for many a year. Therefore, if I fall, or perish through accident or disease, promise me to secure the belt and hold it safely for the Señorita Inez. Further promise me, that no friend of mine shall behold the face which I have kept masked for so many years."

"I promise," said Stephen, simply.

"It is sufficient," replied Olivarez. "I shall have no more fears, though vengeance tread close behind us, and the dangers of the great river, savage men and the whirlwinds of the *paramos* lie between us and the cities by the western sea. Now let us sleep well, for tomorrow we set out on a journey fatiguing and full of perils."

But they were not to rest as they had purposed, for as they turned away to retire to their several shelters they heard in the bed of the stream the splash of hoofs, and the hoarse, angry cries of Sanchez as he urged forward his obstinate, but sleek and powerful mules up the bed of the mountain torrent.

"Ah, Señor!" he cried, as his dripping animal emerged on the rocky ledge, "you must fly at once. *Demonios!* to think that I have so barely escaped from the hands of your pursuers! *Madre de Dios!* 'Twas a mere chance, but we shall escape them yet."

Taking breath, he told his story more calmly. He had prudently left all but his own riding mule to feed on the short, sweet grass of the foot-hills, and, hobbling his own a little away from the cottage, had by a devious path first sought the paddock where the other animals were confined. While preparing

packs and bridles for the morrow, he had heard bursts of music at the house, and had seen Don Ramon and Balthazar angrily silence the untimely merriment. Creeping near them, he had heard enough to learn that they only awaited his return, to lead their companions to the attack on the cavern and its inmates.

He had quietly taken his animals, by out-of-the-way paths, to the place where he had left those used during the day, and thought the enemy would not take the alarm before midnight.

"We shall have a good three hours the start, and as many leagues in distance; for they have no animals, and I fear only the speed of the *guerrilleros* of Balthazar. If we can reach the Gap before him, we may defy even his malice; but if he comes up before we can cut the bridge away, may the saints have his soul in their holy keeping; for were he ten Balthazars, and the lover of as many daughters of mine, this carabine"—and he dashed the rattling stock heavily on the ledge as he spoke—"should end his love and his treachery at once and forever."

Chapter XXXIV.

Avenged

In haste the animals were packed and saddled, and, by the time that the moon had risen, the little party were ready to start, and, fording the rivulet took the high road, or rather path, which led to the Magdalena. Silently they passed under the shadow of precipitous rocks, amid the graceful columns of slender palms, whose dewy fronds seemed of silver in the magical radiance; crossing narrow chasms on a single roughly levelled log; hastening across sandy levels, where the armored armadillo scuttled off to his burrow among the ancient Indian graves; and halting now and then to listen with beating hearts, as some wild cry of night bird or marauding animal, indistinctly heard amid the tramp of hoofs and the rattle of arms and equipments, suggested the signals of a spy or the angry shouts of a pursuing foe.

In the advance, lithe, silent, prepared, with his eyes, burning with cautious apprehension and savage readiness to repulse attack, José, with gun in hand, explored each narrow defile and dense cover full fifty paces before the little knot of servants, who, armed to the teeth, preceded Inez. She, too, was armed, and rode an ambling mule, girdled with a light rapier and carrying the tiny carbine with which, in happier days, she had joined poor Carlos in bringing down the gaudy parrots from the branches of the guava or the hanging tendrils of the

granadilla. At her bridle rein rode Stephen Hay in the dress of a Spanish gentleman; all his strong nature stirred to its lowest depth by the haste and danger of their flight, the wonderful beauty and magical changes from sombre shadow to softened radiance, the bravery of his comrades, the strong, calm courage of his fair companion, and all else which helped to deepen the passion and mystery of the hour.

Sanchez, despite his years still agile and vigorous, like a skilled *muletero* moved silently along the line of sure-footed mules, tightening a girth here, adjusting a load there, urging on the slow, quieting the restive, yet all the time ready with his weapons—the trenchant *machete* upon his thigh, and short carbine slung at his shoulder.

Last of all came Olivarez, clad in deep-hued garments which showed black in the imperfect light, his long rapier in hand, and the pistols of the dead Carlos at his waist. The fixed features of his mask seemed doubly ghastly in the moonlight, as, half a gunshot behind the rest, he came into view from behind the projecting cliffs, or strode silently out of the shadows of the sombre chapparal.

On the dying land breeze came to them at last a sound which was not the sighing of sweeping forest branches, but a hoarser murmur, mingled with a metallic tinkle like the fall of water drops; and quickly after, far back where the trail wound among the forest, followed the fierce call of a jaguar, which seemed to fill the whole night, as the thunder rolls across the heavens.

At that dread sound, all other noises of the night ceased. Even the howling monkeys, whose cries afar off had come to the ear rather as a subdued murmur than a hideous confusion of unearthly yellings, were silent as death, and the melancholy wail of the *aye-aye*, or sloth, was heard no longer. The night birds ceased to call to each other; the hares were no longer seen coursing across the glades; all animal life had done for a time with thoughtless pleasure and security, and was cowering in fear and trembling, in the apprehension and presence of sudden death.

"There is no fear, Señor," said Sanchez to his old leader, as he lingered behind the *carga* for Olivarez to come up. "He is far away, and will not attack so many. He may be prowling about some Indian bivouac, or perhaps he has been disturbed by a roving hunter whose path he has crossed."

"That is true, Sanchez, but the hunters are hunters of men and the *guerrilleros* of Balthazar."

"By all the saints you are right, Don Olivarez, and if so, half an hour will bring them upon us. Happily the bridge of the Devil's Gap is but a short quarter league away, and if once the bridge is down we are safe for a day at least."

So saying, Sanchez began to hurry up his mules, and fifteen minutes later, the foremost was tremblingly crossing the rude hanging bridge across the gap. A stream now narrow, broken and swift, ran two hundred feet below it in a dark abyss, cut into the solid rock by the attrition of ages, and even now at times filled from cliff to cliff by the rainfall of the

more stormy months. The bridge, some fifty feet in length, was formed wholly of lianos or *bejucos* of the largest size, which, like thick, strong cables stretched from cliff to cliff, supported a flooring of logs lashed to the natural cables. Two other cables stretched from strong posts a little higher than the others, formed a rude head rail on either side, and the bridge thus made vibrated and undulated frightfully, as one by one the mules were led across the horrid chasm. But the mules of Sanchez had crossed too often to give much trouble to the old muleteer, and, with their savage pursuers close at their heels, even the frailest of the party cared little for the dangerous transit over the abyss.

The last mule once crossed, the men of the party gathered at the bridge head, for there a stand must be made until the cables were cut, and the pursuers left helpless on the further side of the gap. Stephen with a Spanish axe, and Sanchez with his machete, cut and hacked at the *sipo* lashings of the superstructure, and laid bare the dozen huge strands, which, no longer soft and pliant, but hardened and rigid with age and tension, offered an obstinate resistance to the steel and strength of both.

"There they come!" cried Inez, who had dismounted and come to the brink of the chasm, pointing to a lithe, swift runner, who, issuing from the forest, came down the naked, sandy slope upon the opposite side, unslinging as he ran the long gun at his back, and followed by half a dozen men similarly armed and equipped.

Stephen caught up the fair speaker as if she were

a child, and placed her behind a projecting rock. "Cover yourselves!" he cried to the others. "Shelter yourself, Don Olivarez, for the bullets will be flying soon, and one life is enough to risk in cutting the bridge."

As he spoke, the foremost hunter levelled his gun and fired; but the bullet, aimed in haste, flew harmlessly over the heads of the party. Hay fired more deliberately; and Balthazar—for it was he—fell at the shot, but, a moment later, arose, and took shelter behind a low ridge of naked rock. From behind this cover the guerrillas opened fire at long range upon Hay, who, giving his piece to José to reload, was plying his axe with renewed vigor.

The men who thus sought his life were good marksmen, but the light was uncertain, and so quickly did the gigantic American change position, as the axe rose and fell on the tough cables, that, though several shots pierced his hat and clothing, and one even cut a fragment from the tough handle of his axe, he nevertheless saw the number of the strands rapidly diminish, until the bridge hung awry, and passable only for a man of the surest footing and coolest head; and it was evident that its own weight would carry it into the chasm if only two or, at the most, three more lianas should be severed.

At that moment, from the further woods another party issued, this time of mounted men, led by Don Luis de Ramon, whose vengeful shouts could plainly be recognized as he spurred his steed down the slope toward the concealed guerrillas.

"Quickly, Señor Hay! for heaven's sake, quickly!" cried Sanchez, and Hay putting superhuman strength into every blow struck so shrewdly that but two or three were needed to sever the bejucos, sorely strained with the weight of the ruined structure. One strand slipped, severed from its fastenings; a second snapped at the third downright blow, and as the third parted the remaining strands wrenched from their moorings allowed the bridge to crash down into the ravine. Stephen felt himself hurriedly pulled under cover of a rock as Don Ramon's party, drawing up on the brink of the canyon, opened fire.

By this fusilade, however, no damage was done, while José stepping forward, took deliberate aim at Don Ramon, who caused his horse to rear just at the moment the shot parted. The animal reared once more on the very verge of the cliff, fell back on its rider, and then in its death struggle rolled to the brink of the chasm. There was a glimmer and clatter of steel, a flash of gold and silver, as housings and saddle flap, holster and laced cloak shimmered in the moonlight; then a rattle of loose shards of rock, the rush of boughs swiftly parted, and a dull thud which told that life had been instantly crushed out by the rocky bed of the mountain stream. A night hawk screamed out of the darkness, a yell of horror broke from Don Ramon's followers, and with a sense of awe, which even satisfied revenge could not wholly efface, Olivarez motioned to his friends to mount their animals and resume their interrupted journey. But they had scarcely proceeded

three hundred paces when Sanchez stamped his foot impatiently, and cried "*Carrai!* How could we have forgotten! The side cables are not parted, and Balthazar will not be long in getting across with his hunters. Let us back once more, and do our work more thoroughly."

"Surely they would not dare," began Stephen in amaze.

"Dare!" said Sanchez, wildly. "Why, if his foster brother Antonio were there he would already be on this side of the gap. Many a bridge and *tarabita* has he made, and I have seen him myself work across one of the latter, hanging by his hands, with his gun slung to his shoulders and a brace of hares in his pouch. Let us back for heaven's sake e'er it be too late."

They hastened back, and none too soon; for, as Sanchez issued from the cleft of the rock, Antonio, a lithe youth of twenty or thereabouts, was just seating himself upon the ledge, as if wearied by the perilous feat; while no less than three other hunters, one of them Balthazar himself, were half-way across, holding on by the swaying cables. Sanchez raised his carbine to shoot Antonio, and the servants were about to pour in a deadly volley, when Olivarez stepped forward and shouted, "Hold!"

"Antonio," said he, quietly, "come hither and disarm. Hesitate, and you die! Balthazar," he continued, to the leader of the guerrillas, who hung as if paralyzed in mid-passage, "I seek not thy blood. Seat thyself astride the *bejucos*, and listen well; otherwise thou canst in no wise hope to carry thy life away."

Antonio unslung his piece and laid it carefully down upon the ledge, slipped the buckle of his broad belt, where hung his hunter's knife, and, coming forward, knelt at the feet of the masked leper, as if to implore his brother's life; but Olivarez with a wave of his hand restrained him.

"Balthazar," he continued, "why hast thou hunted me in the woods, trailed me like a hound through the desert, aye, and sought my daughter's life with sword and fire? Have I not been your friend in days past, when you were in need and friendless?"

Balthazar turned toward the speaker a face cicatrized by the fangs of Bravo, and answered, firmly:

"I attacked your house because you harbored a foe—one of the Americans whose bullets slew my brother and your friend; and I sought not to slay the Senorita Inez, but to restore her to her faithful lover, Don Ramon. I was torn, as you see, by your bloodhounds; yet I swore to follow you to the death, and give your daughter to her true cavalier."

Olivarez laughed scornfully:

"Her true cavalier! Don Ramon her lover! Surely, none but he could frame such dastardly fable. I could almost wish he were alive, instead of lying dead in the ravine below; were it only to brand him the lying murderer and would-be ravisher that he is."

"He is not dead," said Balthazar sternly, "though he lies yonder insensible, and with a broken thigh. We thought him gone when the steed leaped into the Gap, but by Our Lady's mercy he escaped with

life. He hath suffered much of late in mind, for he fears the leprosy, which indeed some say is already fixed upon him; and I fear he will never again be the gallant cavalier he was a short six months ago."

"Sanchez!" said Olivarez, "bring quickly the Doña Inez. Balthazar! Canst thou hold thy seat for ten short moments more?"

"Aye, truly most noble sir," he answered with a cynical sneer. "What grace wilt thou show us before we make our last leap into the abyss?"

"What do these men want of Inez de Olivarez?" asked the brave girl, so that all could hear, stepping upon the ledge into the full moonlight.

"Balthazar," said Olivarez, "here is the maiden. Ask her if she will stay behind me, for love of Don Luis de Ramon."

"Balthazar, thou art deceived," she said. "I never loved Don Ramon, and had I admired him I could not now have any thought of aught but vengeance on the wretch who assassinated my brother."

"It is enough," said Balthazar in a surprised tone; "and with your leave I will no longer seek to serve a liar, whom I would slay were he not already beneath my vengeance. What say you, Don Olivarez? Will you pardon us, or will you rather trust to steel or bullets to secure your safety?"

"God forbid!" said Olivarez sadly. "Go in peace. Return to thy men. Antonio shall follow thee, and may the saints bless or curse thee as thou deservest mercy."

With surprising agility, Balthazar and his men returned to their companions, who, at a word from

their leader, advanced to the brink unarmed. The soldiers of Don Ramon followed their example, and Olivarez continued:

"Antonio, take thy weapons, and return if thou wilt. We must cut the cable, that no one else may follow on our track."

"Not so, kind señor," cried the youth. "Let me go with you and help Sanchez with the *carga*, for he will need help on his return. I will be true and faithful. Keep my arms if you will, but let me serve you until the end."

"You shall go," said Olivarez kindly. "Balthazar," he continued, "is Don Ramon able to speak? If so, I would have speech with him before we part."

Two soldiers, issuing from the ranks, hastened to a boulder a little away, and bore the young Spaniard to the border of the cliff.

"Don Ramon," said Olivarez sternly, "canst thou hear and answer my last words to thee?"

Something of his old evil daring lit up the black eyes of the wounded man. He motioned to his attendants to place his back against a projection of the rock and retire to the ranks, and then his voice, feeble indeed, but firm and unfaltering, was heard across the abyss:

"Thou hast triumphed, and I have failed; thou carriest away the treasure I would have won, and leavest me to drag out an existence unblessed by love, and doomed to hope no more for martial glory or the *liesse* of a gay cavalier. End now thy triumphs! The weapon of death is in thy hand, there is light enow, and he who lies in yonder chasm, will need no

emblazoned monument and can sleep as soundly as in consecrated earth. Why dost thou hesitate? Trust me, if I could use musket or pistol, thou shouldst not long stand there in triumph."

The form of Olivarez seemed convulsed with passion, and once his carbine was slightly lifted, as if he would have fain avenged his son's death; but with an effort he laid the weapon by, and, drawing from his breast the fatal poinard, held it up until all could see the play of the moonlight on the silvern Medusa and the sullied blade.

"By this, the pledge of a fatal friendship, poor Carlos perished, and with this weapon, were we both hale and strong, thou shouldst die, though I were forced to seek thee through every clime and land. But I stand already in the shadow of a living death, and thou are shut out by the hand of God from all that thou hast prized and, as I well believe, hast from the blood of poor Martinez de Herrera taken the malady, which shall doom thee to the banishment from which thy rapier freed his gallant soul. Take then thy gift. I trust to God and his saints to punish. Look on this accursed steel, and repent while there is yet time."

With the old skill of the days when every weapon known to tropical lands had been his delight and pride, Olivarez threw the dagger across the cliff and drove its keen point into the turf, between the brink and Don Luis, where it quivered in the light of the waning moon.

With an effort which must have cost him terrible pain, the wounded man dragged himself to the spot

and seizing the stiletto, by means of one of the posts of the *tarabita* raised himself on one knee and brandished the weapon above his head.

"Repent?" said he, with terrible vehemence. "Fray Carreno, who heard but a tithe of my adventures, said that only a pilgrimage to Rome and the hand of the Holy Father could shrive me of my sins. That I could not now accomplish if I would, and I will not go back to drag out a loathsome existence within the gates of San Lazaro. I defy your vengeance and laugh at your false pity. In yonder chasm, no human eye shall ever behold the tomb of a leper of the lineage of De Ramon."

As he ceased speaking he sheathed the fatal stiletto in his own heart, and settling forward fell into the chasm, which is called "The Cavalier's Leap" unto this day.

Chapter XXXV.

Bereaved

The failure of the expedition, its terrible mortality, and above all the scarcity of reliable information as to who had fallen and who were left alive, had filled Boston with a gloom all the deeper, for the exultant outburst of triumph and loyal joy which had greeted the premature announcement of the capture of the Spanish stronghold and the complete success of the expedition.

Yet, though men feared the worst, the measure of private grief was not yet full, because, owing to the scant postal privileges of that day, the names of those who had fallen in battle or died of tropical plagues had, in many instances, been kept back from the knowledge of friends, who awaited in terrible suspense, for the joy or grief of sure knowledge of the truth.

It was late in autumn that the household at Ploughed Neck learned the worst, though for weeks little Tempie had wondered why no letter came from Stephen, and why her father prayed so earnestly for the absent; while her mother's low sobbing made her draw closer to her side, as they knelt at the roughly finished settle, by the window which opened toward the sailless sea.

It had been a day of perfect beauty. The trees were loaded with apples, and the rosy fruit and many hued leaves came down in showers as Lish, still hale,

but less joyous than of yore, lay out on the tough, sweeping boughs of the "winter greenings" and other old-time apple trees, and shook down their ample harvest upon the lush rank grass below.

The bay beyond the distant sand dunes was smooth as glass, and over its broad surface myriads of coots and other sea fowl dove and swam; "bedded" for weeks to come, and scarcely disturbed by the occasional shot, which told that some resident hunter had tired of ordinary fare, and secured half a dozen birds for a "sea pie" or "Cape stew." Over the resting wild fowl, in long, straggling flights, swept their numberless kindred, forming an almost unbroken line of undulating pinions, from the cliffs of Manomet to the last faint outline of the cape curving eastward.

"The women folks" were out in full force, in this gathering of autumn bounty, for they loved the sweet fragrance of the ripening fruits, and the light labor in the mild balmy golden air, gave such days a charm, but too uncommon, in the confined routine of household duties of that day and generation. Besides were there not the great orange pears to be gathered and divided, as were sundry trees of rare apples, for though Fourier and his principles had never been heard of in Ploughed Neck, there were so many things held and enjoyed in commonalty, that any less just and kindly people would have been incessantly at law about them.

Did not every cheese in the dairy represent the night and morning contributions of at least three families, who in turn received their share of the

lacteal fluid according to the yield of their kine? Did not the cranberry bogs near the "Blackbird Swamp" remain sacredly inviolate, until all interested had chosen a day to pick the rosy berries and divide the crop, so that even poor lonely Aunt Joanna, now near the end of her life of single blessedness, could have her provision of cranberry pies, without any feeling but that of independent ownership? Were not the boundaries of their allotments of the "Great Marsh," so neglected in the lapse of time, that when the hay wagons and the stout mowers appeared on their scene of labor, but little could be or was done but to cut and make together, and divide according to the force of men and animals joined in common effort?

So Mrs. Hay moved about in the orchard, assorting the growing heaps of apples which Tempie and her older sisters gathered up into gaudy Indian baskets, and Margaret, glad to find an excuse to get away from her labor on quince and wild grape in Aunt Dorcas' kitchen, was flitting from place to place, too airily and nicely clad to settle down to real work, yet chatting with "Aunt Tempie," racing with Stephen's pet sister, gossiping with the older girls, collecting now and then a basketful of the finest fruit, and listening to Lish, who, when she was by, seemed to forget tree and harvest, and if one might judge by the unwonted softness and sadness of his deep tones, the memory of his brother's trust and absence.

More than once the laughing girls complained of a lack of fruit, and sent him half angry, half laughing,

to branches not yet denuded of their precious loads. More than once Margaret turned to go, and then turning to say a parting word, or make a show of joining in the common labor, found herself again listening to words, all the sweeter that they were not without the feeling of concealment, the sense of unworthy deceit. The forenoon drew to its close, and when the sun stood overhead Mrs. Hay's gentle brow was strangely stern and silent, and even loving little Tempie somehow felt that Margaret was too happy for one, who a few weeks before had wept at the news of the great battle, and knew not yet whether her darling brother was alive or dead.

At last, however, the dinner horn was sounded from the various houses, and Margaret tripped lightly back to her lonely meal with aunt Dorcas, for uncle Zenas was again away in the Viana sloop. Mrs. Hay was last of those to leave the orchard, and Lish, who had filled the largest basket with apples, preceded her through the open bars. At them she stopped, and pointed to the great pear tree heavily laden with large, round, bronze russet pears, the pride of the Neck and wonder of the neighborhood roundabout.

"Can't you gather a basket of those pears while the others are away, Lish?" she said below her breath. "No one will know it, and our share will not be a large one, there are so many to divide them."

Lish was fairly spellbound with astonishment. What! his mother asking him to steal for her. Was she going mad? or was the mother-angel he had worshiped only of weak and sinful clay, as Parson

Giddings had so often taught was the common lot of poor humanity?

"Why, mother! You don't mean it," was all he could say, for, looking up, he saw that her eyes were full of a bitter sorrow.

"I know, Lish," she said, at length, "that you would not steal even to please your mother, even, alas! if she were so weak as to yield to the wiles of the tempter. But, Lish, you are tempted and are weak, aye yielding to a temptation which can only end in sin blacker than theft an' unworthy of a man. Don't think, dear Lish," she went on, brokenly, "that I don't pity you and—and—her; for I know how bright the heavens are, how fair and lovely the earth is, when we are young an' loving an' loved. But he is hers and she his until he comes to release her or is dead; and you, of all men, should be just and stainless— yes, even if the will swerves and the heart is broken."

Lish grew strangely pale. A terrible agony seemed almost to stop his breath; and though his eyes were dry and bright, his mother knew that the tears that relieved her sorrow, could not flow to soothe his pain. He bent quickly and kissed her tenderly, as she leaned, half-fainting, on his shoulder, and at last he found words to allay her fears:

"Don't be afraid, mother. I've done wrong, I know, and I won't deceive you. I love Margaret, and can't bear to give her up. That was why I wanted to go to the war; that was why I came back when the Cape Cod men were disbanded; that is why I can't help listening to her voice, though I feel

mean and guilty all the time. I must go away, mother. They want more men for Jamaica, and next week I'll go on in the sloop and enlist; for I shall go mad if I stay here."

"Don't be hasty, my son," she said, softly. "I fear that I never shall see Stephen again, and I can't bear to lose you too. 'Endure unto the end,' Lish; and don't think I speak lightly, for there are few even of us who seem old and passionless and without temptation, but still feel the scars of old trials that burn and torture even to this day. Don't run from the test. Don't throw life away because you are disappointed; if you do right, all will be well."

"I will, mother," said Lish simply, and they went on to the weather-beaten farmhouse and left their burdens on the short grass, where the sun's rays lay nearly all day long, before the southern window.

"There's a sail way off there," said Joshua, the eldest brother, as they neared the door which faced the well and its lofty sweep. "I reckon 'tis the Viana, but they'll not get in tonight unless there's more wind than there is now."

All crowded to the windows and the door, for the coming of the sloop was at all times an event; and now more than ever their interest and hopes and fears centered on their main means of communication with the great outer world, typified to them by the growing seaport of Boston.

Deacon Hay took down the long canvas-covered ship's glass from above the door, and wiping the glasses and his own failing eyes, looked long and steadfastly at the distant sail, which lay like a white speck far off on the horizon.

" 'Tis the sloop," he said at last, "for the new half of her mainsail is nearest the gaff, an' the upper part of yonder sail is whiter than the rest. But come in to meat. Let us bless God for his mercies, an' await such tidings as he pleases to send us."

As they returned to the orchard those interested in the division of the fruit joined them, until nearly twenty young and old were present, and one by one the apple trees were despoiled, their fruit assorted into good and refuse, and last of all with chairs and ladders the great pear tree was assailed. The yield was greater than was wont, and much of the fruit near to ripeness, had to be gathered carefully and placed one by one in the baskets to prevent bruising, so that supper was over and it was nearly nightfall before the fruit was all gathered; and Deacon Hay and the other men had finished their milking and came to join in the final process of division.

The smaller portions had been liberally set aside, and now it remained for those who owned in the land to divide the rest equally. With a solemnity unusual even in him, Deacon Hay carefully measured the heap into four portions, and then turning to the rest proposed that Margaret should be blindfolded, and set out by lot the part of each claimant.

Margaret laughingly consented, but as her eyes were about to be covered, said as she named those present: "There are only three men here, and why have you made four portions?"

"You forget," said Tempie, softly, "there were always four parts, ever since poor grandpa left his share to dear brother Stephie."

Out of the growing shadow of the trees which overhung the edge of the open plot, in the centre of the orchard, came two men, one old, weatherbeaten and grayhaired, convulsed with sobs; the other, dark browed, straight limbed, with one arm tightly looped to his breast, and strangely silent.

"There need be but three lots this ya'r" cried uncle Zenas, hoarsely, "for the boy'll never'll come back to claim his share of thet or any other earthly blessin'."

Black Bill, or as we have preferred to call him, Untequit, stepped into the growing moonlight, and with his old deference removed his hat and greeted his old protector.

"Master," said he, "I have come back alone. The Master of Life has taken the brave and the good unto himself."

There were no swoonings, no shrieks of unbounded grief, though Margaret burst into passionate sobs and no eyes were destitute of fitting tears. It was not the wont of the people of those stern and trying days, to mourn weakly and uselessly when the chastisement of the Father fell heavily upon them. But, as Deacon Hay turned as if to seek the solitude of his stricken house, his cousin Alvah, a man of unusually stern and unmoved countenance, made a characteristic proposition.

"Choose your two shar's," said he, "an' we will see them taken in, fer 'tis no time to draw lots, an' yet the fruit would spile, mayhap, ef we left it out tonight. An' ef," and he hesitated, "there's anythin' else we could do—"

The deacon rung his hand with a pressure which

told better than words, how he recognized the loyalty and sympathy so roughly expressed. Let the world say what it will of New England coldness, there is no truer, firmer support the world over for man or cause, than that of the men of the true old New England blood and breeding, be it on land or sea, in storm or battle, in political, religious, moral or social troubles.

The blow had fallen, and Untequit, following the sorrowing assemblage into the kitchen, seated himself, and saw the others silently weeping or busy with bitter and regretful thoughts. At last, however, Deacon Hay arose, lit a candle, and drew forth his spectacles, and little Tempie, scarcely seeing through her tears, brought him the Bible, as was her wont, and tremblingly imprinted a kiss on his roughened hands. He caught her to his breast a moment and let fall a kiss on her pale, upturned brow, then turned to Untequit.

"How did he die?" he asked, briefly.

"Leading the men to the attack; slain by a cannon shot just as he was about to burst in the gates."

"Are you sure he was dead?" continued the deacon.

"Would I have been here if he had lived, even though a prisoner?" said the Indian reproachfully.

"It is well," said Hay, after a moment's pause. "He died like a man, and I trust like a Christian soldier. Let us seek consolation in the word of God."

He read fittingly, from the grand and mournful passages with which the book of Job abounds, and then kneeled to wrestle in prayer for grace to sup-

port the blow so long feared, which had come at last. For the speaker there could be no solace, no hope in prayer for those passed beyond this mortal life, but there was a strangely triumphant ring in his concluding words:

"And now, O Lord, we thank thee, that even in our sorrow we have faith in an assured salvation for him who hath passed away, and that he having been a true and obedient son, a just man, a loyal soldier, and an humble believer in the saving merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may look forward to meet with him in heavenly mansions, to go no more out, but to dwell together in life everlasting. Amen!"

The next day Untequit returned to his old duties, first stipulating that he should be permitted to carry to old Molly Pognet the account of his meeting with the bandit and exiled chieftain, Caneotus; but ere he went, poor little Tempie met him as he stood sorrowfully by the bars, and asked many questions of her lost brother. He told her all that was fitting, and she heard the sad, yet stirring story, quietly, and after a pause uttered a strange saying, such as ordinarily is never heard from childish lips,—"He is gone and the leaves are going, but he will come to me again with the leaves." He revolved this strange saying in his heart, but went through the woods to the house where his aged ancestress awaited his coming.

"I knew of your return," she said, "and, had I not promised to await it, had been ere now in the blessed fields to the great west, where the loved of my youth waits for my coming. Tell me all now,

for the talking paper never came, and I am weary of waiting."

He told her of the death of Caneotus, of the siege, the fall of Stephen and his storming party, and, last of all, the strange saying of little Tempie. She was silent a moment, looking fixedly into the embers of the hearth.

"She is right," she said, at last. "He will come again in the time of leaves and flowers, for he is not yet of those who can come at my bidding."

She set before him her best fare, commended his fidelity and courage, and told him that all she had was to be his, and where certain small savings were concealed. Then late at night she sent him to his rest, saying that she would sit by the fire a while longer.

Untequit slept long but brokenly, but when he awoke the sun shone in at the wide window; and, noiselessly descending, he found old Molly Pognet; still in her great chair before the fireless hearth—for the embers and her life had gone out together.

Chapter XXXVI.

Popayan

Calamar, on the Magdalena, was the destination of the party, left on the inland side of the Devil's Bridge, safe from further pursuit for a time at least. Still it was scarcely safe to strike into the main road at any point nearer Cartagena than Arjona, which place a small village boasted of a plaza, a few houses, a small chapel and a *posada* or stopping place.

The building thus used was properly one of the *tiendas*, or small shops of the country, a house of two rooms, the outer with a counter drawn across it just before the entrance, and with a second door behind the counter, opening into the *sala*, a dining, dancing and sleeping room all in one.

Here, after a careful reconnoisance by Sanchez, who, driving forward two of the baggage mules, emerged first into the main highway, the party fed and rested their mules, and hanging their hammocks in the large, open shed allotted for that purpose, slept until midnight. Then, learning that an armed convoy was expected from Cartagena, it was determined that it would be only prudent to push forward by moonlight to Mahates, where, certain that the convoy would not follow them that night, they again rested until the next morning.

From that point, through an undulating, heavily wooded country, abounding in a variety of strange

palms and rare woods, they pushed on in haste to the great river Magdalena. There, for the last time, Sanchez lifted the well secured *tercios*, or "half ladings," from his tired mules, and surveyed the low flat prairie or rather plain, through which the great river pours its turbid water.

The *champans*, or river boats, hired for the voyage, were ready for instant departure, although several of the boatmen of each were, as the party came down to the bank, engaged in one of the wild dances peculiar to their class. Half clothed, bare headed, with naked breasts and limbs, they danced to the thumping of a kind of tambourine, of rude drums formed by drawing a tight skin across the opening of a calabash or earthen pot, and a vocal accompaniment which even to Sanchez was unintelligible.

Their partners were half-breed girls and women, dressed for the most part only in long white *camisas*, reaching to the knee, with their long purple-black hair floating loosely over their shoulders, and no ornaments save a bright scarlet trumpet flower, worn above the temple, or at the junction of the coarse laces at their throats.

Those who were not dancing bore torches, and solemnly kept time to the music with their flambeaux; and as the lading of the beasts was being transferred to the boats, whose patrons were anxious to get back to their homes up at the head-waters of the Magdalena, Hay, noticing that they paid no heed to the stowing of the cargo, turned to Sanchez and inquired the reason of their neglect.

The old muleteer turned to Antonio, and in a tongue which certainly was not Spanish, held a short conversation with the hunter. When it was finished Antonio turned to Hay, who stood by the brink of the river beside a large fire, built so near to the bank, that the stern of the champan on which Inez and her servants had embarked was close behind him. Just inside of the long, narrow cabin her splendid face shone in the glare of the flames, as she watched the dancers on the bank above.

"They sing of love," said Antonio softly. "Of an Indian chief who, many generations ago came down the river, leaving his love behind him. He was the guest of a great chief, whose daughter was tall and beautiful exceedingly, so that all men were ravished with her beauty, but she cared for none until he came to help her father against his enemies. But so great was her passion, that she seemed to care only for him, and became as fond as the weakest of womankind. But he, though he loved in turn, would not tell his love or be false to the maiden at the foot of the great mountains; so he sent her the wing of the quezal bird he had won in battle, but its feathers were touched with the flames, in token that he fled because he had felt the fire of love. But when he came to the cold springs, he found that his love had wedded another chief; and, turning, he met on his way back the answer to his message, a stuffed quezal bird, such as the greatest of those days could wear. And the bearers assured him that Athalpa held him to be all the dearer that he would not forget his plighted faith."

"He was right," said Stephen thoughtfully, "yet it must have been in sore struggle of mind, that he gained his victory of self-sacrifice."

The beautiful face drew back into the shadow, as Stephen instinctively turned to survey the light roof, beneath which, as he supposed, reposed the vision of beauty which had for so many days made the dusky cavern a palace, danger a forgotten dream, and the broken and difficult forest roads very paths of Eden. By the light of the lanterns her face seemed paler than was wont, and little Josefa, her maid, hastened toward her with an exclamation of fear.

"Hush, child!" said she, drawing herself up with superb grace. "Let us listen to Antonio's story."

"Ocana received the gift, and in company with the messengers hastened down the river, but was slain by a jaguar, while sleeping, only a day's journey from the arms of Athalpa, and the Indians sing his story as they dance by the river."

"A sad story," said Stephen; "and doubtless even these poor boatmen, praise his constancy and lament his fate."

"Why, yes," said Antonio, hesitatingly. "But they pity him more in that having the love of so beautiful and noble a princess, he encountered danger, grief and fatigue for a mistress so far away, and a thing so weak as the word of a woman. But the *bogas* have ended their song, and we shall soon start. The Señor Olivarez takes the small champan, and I go with him. Andreas, the *major-domo*, with José and yourself accompany the Donna Inez, and will

precede us several miles, for we are to watch at the bends to see if we are pursued."

As he finished speaking, Sanchez and Olivarez drew near; for the lading was completed, and nothing remained for the old men but the trying task of a final separation. It was evident that Sanchez was urgent in his importunities to accompany his leader, while Olivarez was not less firm in refusing to profit by an act of kindness, which the years and circumstances of his old follower would have made too great a sacrifice.

"Nay, Sanchez," he said, at length; "we are no longer as we were fifty years since, when, in the prime of our strength and the flush of victory, we became prisoners at Cartagena. The years that are gone have lost to us all that was dear beyond the great seas, and other loves have supplanted the dear ones we left behind in England, where doubtless our very names are forgotten. I go, if I may, to a colder land and a strange country, where in peace and quiet I may meet the sure death which consumes me; and the Señorita Inez will find a home with my brother Captain Oliver. You must stay behind. You know the secret of the cavern and its magazines; henceforth they and their contents are yours, well earned by years of faithful service. One thing you can do: Remain here as if to rest your mules, and, if any pursue, take the river trail with your fastest horse. Spare not for loss or rest until you reach the Cauca. If I pass into it before you, you will find a broken paddle stuck in the sand, and on its blade you will find any message I may wish to

leave you. Thence you will send me tidings of danger, or come yourself, to bring them; but if in three days' time you hear of no pursuit, return to your daughter; and may the blessing of God go and remain with you!"

The boats were ready; all were embarked; and the *bogas*, throwing off their scant clothing, rushed into the water, and shouldered the long, narrow, flat-bottomed champans into the channel, not without considerable noise, and a slight panic produced by arousing a small alligator from the depths of a muddy depression or ditch. But soon all were afloat and the *bogas*, taking their long setting-poles, placed their forked ends on the muddy bottom, and, with the others at their shoulders, walked along the convex roof of the *toldo* or cabin on either side, forcing the boat against the sluggish current.

The moon was rising, and Sanchez and the people of the hamlet stood almost in line with the huge orb; and as they reached the first bend of the river, the muleteer raised his carbine, and its echoing report carried to the ears of Olivarez the last farewell of the English country lad who, half a century before, had followed his adventurous fortunes to the Spanish seas.

Stephen now had time to look about him, and found the boat to be about forty feet long by seven in breadth, open at both sides but covered in for twenty feet with a roof of woven poles thatched with the leaves of the palm. Several large beams about four feet from the deck crossed the passage-way between the baggage piled up on either side,

and hammocks slung just above these formed the sleeping accommodations. Andreas had curtained off about one-third of the *toldo* for Inez and her maid, and in a box filled with sand the fire was made at which the water was heated for *chocolate*, and the coarse food of the crew was prepared.

This for the most part consisted of *tasajo*, or beef cut in strips, rubbed in salt and dried in the sun, a large pile of which lay in the forward part of the rude cabin, while half a score huge bunches of green plantains hung above from the arched roof, and of these two ingredients a kind of thick soup or stew was compounded, which seemed to be the staple food of the *bogas*. The turbid water of the river, held in large jars called *tinajas*, was purified by passing through a filter of porous stone shaped like a bowl and holding two gallons or more.

The passengers were better provided for. Andreas had purchased a coop of fowls, and quantities of eggs, maize, rice, beans, bananas and other fruits, while the extra mules had borne loads of flour, chocolate, sugar, oil and wine, to take the place of the coarse provisions and aromatic *anisado*, of which the *patrons* or captains of champans usually made their chief provision. From these supplies, with the help of the other servants, Andreas set before the travelers meals almost as varied as those enjoyed at the snow-white cottage, whose blackened ruins stood amid the blasted shrubbery outside the walls of San Lazaro.

The weather was for the most part mild and equable, and the boats were new, clean, and the

best of their class, while the patrons and their crews, kept in the best of spirits by good food and extra pay, pressed on up the river at a rate which passed many boats which had long preceded them from Calamar, much to the astonishment of the boatmen, who could not understand such unwonted haste. At the Cauca they stopped only to leave the promised message for Sanchez, but the lettered paddle rotted where it stood, for Sanchez, finding that no pursuit was made, went back to his quiet plantation and his daughter Juanita, who a year later married Balthazar.

To them in due time came back Antonio, who, having accompanied the party to the head of navigation on the Cauca, was sent back to his friends by Olivarez, who, after a short stay at Popayan, purposed to cross the mountains to Quito, and thence find his way to the West Indies by some French or Spanish armed vessel or privateer.

But the Señor Olivarez was not fated to reach Quito, for on the last day of their voyage up the Cauca, now become a deep and rapid stream, a sudden snow storm from the gorges of the Cuancas swept down the river, and nearly involved both champans in one common ruin in the swollen torrent. By great exertion a shelter was found for the boats, and after the storm a day, unusually bright and fair for the season, finished their long voyage on the Cauca.

But Olivarez found himself attacked by a mortal decline, which so reduced his strength that taking a house in Popayan, he began to prepare

for the final change, whose approach was so evident and rapid. It is almost needless to say that Hay did not leave him, or that the affection he had already begun to feel for the Señorita Inez increased with every week of the long sickness of Olivarez.

Still it was not until the next spring, or rather winter, that the ex-buccaneer breathed his last, having made his peace with God, and left as a sacred trust to Hay, the safe conveyance of Inez and her riches to John Hewson of Spring Hill.

The parting was sad indeed; all the more that the dying man could neither impart nor receive the last fond embraces, which tell so much better than words, the peaceful resignation and fond farewells of a departing friend.

"I have only one promise to ask of you, Señor Hay," he said, the night before his death; "and that is that, as heretofore, you will take the same care of my orphan daughter as if she were indeed your own sister. Should the time ever come that you feel disposed to seek her in marriage, say nothing of it to her, until you place her in the care of her only protector, my brother. Do you promise this?"

Stephen hesitated a moment, and turned red and white by turns. "I promise," he said faintly. "But I must tell you that I am already betrothed, and dare not love the Señorita Inez. It is hard work to refuse to adore her, she is so beautiful, pure and noble; and I am like one who, being entrusted with a jewel of price, can scarce listen to the demands of virtue, but almost deems that any sin would prove a cheap price, at which to attain to so great a prize.

Therefore, I beg of you, let your *major-domo* take this trust; he is older, and will, I think, be truer than I."

"I have led and tried many men, and I take your promise, albeit unwillingly given, as worth more than the oaths of many who have less decision of purpose. Take then the trust. You will give to him, whom you have known as John Hewson, but better known as John Oliver, the belt I spoke of, and receive a fitting reward."

The next morning his attendant found that his master had passed away; and for two years more Inez and her servants remained at Popayan, because of the ravages of Anson and other English adventurers on the Pacific coast; which had made the hope of getting safely away so fearfully small, that even Hay felt that nothing better could be done, than to patiently await the close of the war and the renewal of commerce.

So Inez and Stephen, known only as brother and sister, became a part of the society of Popayan, until, in the latter part of 1743, there came news of a French fleet about to set sail for the West Indies and the port of Brest, in France.

Stephen Hay did not spend these three years in idleness amid the delights and pleasures of Popayan, or in the company of Inez, for he felt but too fully that long stay in the eternal spring, which ever preserves the verdant forests beside the Molina, and constant companionship with the orphan daughter of Olivarez would banish the remembrance of the summer beauty of his northern home, and the

less resplendent charms and milder spirit of Margaret, to whom he still felt bound by all the ties of honor and promised love.

The care of Father Carreno had afforded Inez the countenance and protection of persons high in rank and station; and although by a kind of pious fraud Hay was permitted to assume the name and rank of the deceased Don Carlos; it was easily to be seen by him, that only the unseen influence of the leper priest, could have secured him from the hatred of officials, who seemed to know as if by instinct that he was of the same race as their English foes.

But despite the gaiety, beauty and wealth of the mountain city; for Popayan, standing 6000 feet above the level of the sea, with her tall spires, broad, paved streets, stone sidewalks and whitewashed houses, was at that time the centre of a mercantile and mining trade unexcelled in New Granada; Hay greeted with joy an accident which opened to him the prospect of advantageous and fitting employment, and the hope of obtaining a passage from some Pacific port to the world and home from which he was separated.

For in 1735 a joint commission had been sent out by the French and Spanish governments to measure and mark out a meridian in the vicinity of Quito, the then capital of New Granada, and when, in no very friendly spirit, it was intimated to him that the French and Spanish commissioners found it difficult to obtain assistants who could bear the cold and deadly tempests of the Paramos, he readily volunteered to lend himself to a work, which, whatever

the national or religious tendencies of its projectors, could not fail to advance the knowledge and interests of all humanity.

The party of scientific men spoken of consisted of Don George Juan and Don Antonio de Ulloa, both captains in the Spanish navy, and reckoned among the first astronomers and mathematicians of their age, who sailed in the warships Incendio and Conquistador from Cadiz in the spring of 1735, and were joined at Cartagena by the French commission, consisting of Messrs. Godin, Boguer and De la Condamine, and their staff of assistants, embracing Jussieu, botanist; Seniergues, surgeon; Verguin, Couplet and Dessordonnais, associate mathematicians; Morenville, draughtsman, and Hugo, horologist.

The scene of their chief labors was the plain of Yaruqui, situated a little lower than the city of Quito, but in a more exposed and dangerous situation, some twelve miles northeast of that place; a previous attempt at the plateau of Cayambe, some twenty-five miles farther distant from the city, having resulted in the sudden death of M. Couplet, one of the French assistants.

In 1741 the services of the Spanish captains were suddenly required by the Viceroy of New Granada; inasmuch as the breaking out of the war between Spain and England, and the expected appearance of a fleet under Commodore Anson in the Pacific, had spread alarm and dismay along the whole South American coast, and the assistance of officers of such acknowledged courage and ability could not be dispensed with. Unfortunately for the Spaniards,

a rumor got abroad that the English had turned back at the Straits of Magellan; but Anson actually took Paita, the nearest large seaport of Quito, just after these officers had reached that city, after a fruitless and hazardous journey to Lima and Guayaquil; and until the January of 1744, the labor was chiefly left to the French academicians, in whose service Stephen Hay gladly found refuge from the perils of exposure to the rage of an unfriendly people, and the dangers of a love which he felt he could no longer control.

Therefore, he faced with pleasure the constant dangers of life among the mountain peaks, the freezing storms of the Paramos or desert plateaus; the narrow trails, broken and treacherous, winding along the sides of giant cliffs and above yawning precipices; and the sand-storms of the lower deserts, where more than once horse and rider have been suffocated by the smothering sand pillars whirled along by the terrible gales from the mountain gorges above.

To rise early, and, after simple fare, to commence the monotonous task of measuring vast lines across the sterile plain, verifying each foot by the level and correcting the effect of every trifling inequality of the ground; to ride long distances over frightful roads, or climb lofty peaks and dangerous cliffs to rectify an alignment, set up a beacon or pursue a similarly monotonous task, and to return at night to the coarsest of camp fare and the most meagre of bivouacs summed up the main features of Hay's existence for over two years.

At an early period in his novitiation, an important service done to one of the French explorers secured him the friendship of both, to whom he imparted in confidence the reasons of his concealment, and his hopes of, through their means, returning some day to his own land and taking with him the child and servants of the deceased Olivarez.

Before returning to France in the spring of 1744, Messrs. Boguer and Condamine, having favorably impressed the Spanish captains with their account of the young New Englander, his trials and hopes, he was dismissed by them with instructions to return to Popayan and bring from thence to Quito the lady Inez and her attendants, it being probable that before the end of the year, a fleet would sail from some Pacific port for France or Spain, or at least the West Indies.

It was in the rainy season that he set out, and the trail, which led for the most part around the heads of the water courses and through the *paramos* along the mountain ranges, was disagreeable and perilous in the extreme; but, thanks to his long training, Hay bore his exposure easily, although more than one of his fellow travelers perished, despite his efforts to save them.

It was, therefore, with great joy that, at the end of the second week, he saw below him the white roofs and tall spires of Popayan, from which more than one pretty and useful gift and tiny note had reached him from "his little sister Inez." He had become hardened to exposure and peril; had, in the society of men of culture and learning, acquired a good

knowledge of both French and Spanish, and become a prized assistant in the highest work of the commission; and, though clad in the half-savage costume of the mountains, with long boots of leopard skin, a heavy woolen cloak and a fur cap, such as the mountain shepherds manufacture, Inez, as she welcomed him amid the foliage of the *patio*, thought that she had never seen a man so easy and elegant in manner, so noble in bearing, or so worthy of the utmost love of woman.

He did indeed present a striking contrast to the languid, dwarfed, indolent and vicious descendants of the Conquistadores, who for months past had fluttered around her as moths around a candle, without awakening a spark of sympathy or encouragement from the object of their adoration.

But he greeted her with brotherly affection, and expressed his joy at seeing her again, and his approval of her progress in the studies she had pursued under the care of the recluses of the convent of Santa Teresa. It was necessary, however, that the party should join their Spanish protectors at Quito, as they proposed at once to start for Callao, where several French men-of-war were about to sail for Europe.

Stephen had brought from Quito a heavy mantle and hood of soft and costly chinchilla furs, and busied himself with devising warm mittens of the same materials, an article of apparel so novel to her companions, that her girlish comrades seemed to think them a miracle of convenience and comfort.

Under his direction she took long excursions on a

wiry little riding mule, whose paces were the perfection of ease and whose docility, strange to say, was equal to her other good qualities; and he had provided for the whole party, male and female, long riding boots of Cordovan leather, oiled to the last degree of softness and impenetrability.

Strong tents of double canvas, thick wrappings and blankets, and ample supplies of provisions, medicines, etc., were packed upon the finest mules procurable; and when, about the first of March, Inez bade adieu to her affectionate companions and protectors, all agreed that a more complete and well-equipped party had never set out from Popayan to cross the dreaded *paramos.*

Traveling at the rate of about twenty miles a day, they ascended the gorges of the Cordillera de Omindio, and were soon enveloped in the dense, cold mists, which, with rare exceptions, ever envelop the mountains in the rainy season, and add to the usual inconveniences of mountain travel, exposure to half concealed obstacles and perils.

More than once, as the startled Inez turned her head from the beetling wall of rough granite or slate beside her, she saw almost at her very feet, an abyss into which a single misstep would precipitate beast and rider to certain destruction.

In places too the track was full of *camelones,* or deep muddy holes, in which the mules deliberately placed their feet, leaping in and out from one to the other, with the agility of cats, although in many places the toes of the rider touched the mud thrown either side; and though habituated to equestrian ex-

ercise and exposure, Andreas, José and Tomaso, the trained servants of Olivarez, complained loudly at times of the fatigues of such a journey.

Inez, however, and her little attendant bore their trials patiently and even cheerfully, and at every stopping place found that the foresight of their protector had, on his homeward journey, prepared a provision of fuel and often a substantial shelter more roomy and comfortable than the small tents they carried.

In passing from station to station it was often necessary to secure the services of Indians, who dug with heavy hoes small trenches across the roads of chalky clay, and by means of these only was it possible for even the sure footed mules to ascend the steep and slippery road, which perchance, scarcely wide enough for a single mule, winds above an abyss several hundred feet in depth.

In descending such places the mules slid rather than walked down, bracing their fore feet well forward, and guiding themselves by their hind feet placed as if about to lie down. Even those most accustomed to mountain journeys displayed their fear by snorting and trembling in every limb, and Stephen, despite his confidence in the beasts he had chosen, turned pale with apprehension as he reflected how a loose stone or projecting spur of rock, might send the fair young form and brave, cheerful spirit forever from earthly companionship.

But, although his companions rejoiced as they entered upon the level paramos, or elevated desert plains, which lie between the spurs and ridges of

the Cordilleras, Stephen knew that the real danger of their untimely journey had but just begun, and spared neither pains nor care to lessen the chances of a fatal catastrophe. From the first, he had insisted that his companions should frequently dismount, and excite a free circulation by walking or running beside their mules; and he looked carefully to the caparisons, trappings and shoeing of the cattle, and the supply of wood or charcoal carried to supply the small braziers used in the tents.

Notwithstanding all his precautions, however, the sufferings of the party were intense; for the temperature averaged some fifteen degrees below the freezing point, and the terrible velocity of the wind seemed at times to cut through the thickest clothing like a knife; and poor Andreas, quite worn out with age, and sadly frost-bitten, was left at last, with a liberal provision for his old age, at Pasto, near the head water of the Mocoa, while the party pressed steadily on to cross the intervening paramos which still lay between them and Quito.

At last, only two days' journeying remained to be encountered, and they set out to cross the plain of Cayambe, some twelve leagues north and east of Quito. The sun had risen unobscured, and in the lee of the cliff, where their tents had been pitched for the night, his rays lay warm and cheeringly, as if to promise a day of rare comfort for those cheerless regions.

The *carga* now consisted of but eight persons and as many mules, three of the latter being led by as many Indians, who had been hired as the best moun-

tain guides of that region, and natives of the village of San Pablo, on the lake of that name under the shadow of Mount Cayamburo, whose icy peak, some twenty miles away, was lost in a cloud of singular whiteness.

These guides, or assistants, were clothed in stout knee breeches of llama skin with the hair outside, and a black frock woven like a sack, with holes for the head and arms, the skirt of which came down to the knees, and gathered at the waist with a strong leathern belt. A hat and a kind of serge cloak called *capisayo* completed the costume of these men, who, even in the terrible cold of these elevated plains, cared not for shoes or stockings.

Guapi, the eldest, a short, broad-shouldered man of enormous strength, whose purple-black hair swept down over his shoulders to his girdle, sat before the door, eating his simple breakfast from the bag of *machca*, or roasted and ground maize, which hung by his side. With a few spoonfuls of water from the melting kettle upon the brazier, and as many of the coarse, sweet meal, he had mixed a kind of paste, of which the last morsel was disappearing down his capacious throat when Stephen called him to one side.

"I do not like those clouds around the mountain," said Hay in a low tone. "Will they descend, or shall we have a good day for the crossing?"

" 'Tis not likely," said Guapi, gravely. "The wind is cold and from the north, but we have no wood for tomorrow, and the storm if it descends will last more than two days."

"There is wood halfway across at the old ruins," said Stephen. "Think you we can reach there before the storm bursts?"

The Indian was preparing the inevitable ball of coca leaves and lime, but gave a searching glance around as he spoke. "It may be, but we must set out at once and travel fast, for we shall have snow and hail as well as wind if I know the signs that threaten us from Cayamburo."

"Remember, Guapi," said Stephen, as they separated. "Whatever happens, the women are first to be looked to. If we all perish save these, take them on to Quito and you shall have gold to your full satisfaction."

"It matters not," said Guapi, simply. "An Indian needs not gold, and Guapi would be at home, were it not for the food and medicine which saved the life of his son last year. Be content—if the Señor cares more for the life of a woman that his own, we will save her, though she be of the accursed blood of our oppressors."

In a few moments the tents were struck, the mules ready, and the party issued from the sheltered recess into the wind-swept paramo of Cayambe.

As they entered the desert the keen, cutting air seemed to pierce even the multitudinous wrappings with which Inez and her attendant had been provided, while Tomaso and José flinched like children as they felt the first terrible blasts from the snow-covered gorges of Cayamburo, and the latter, before their mules had made a single mile's progress, was carrying a flask of *aquadiente* to his lips, as if to renew

the vital warmth lost in so short a space of time and distance.

Guapi, who strode at the head of the *carga*, let go the bridle of his mule and seized his arm. "If you care to live," said he, impressively, "let not a single drop pass you lips on the *paramo*. Give your flask to the master, and let him say when you are to drink of the firewater. When we are inside the walls of yonder ruin," and he pointed to a black wall near the foot of Cayamburo, "you will need your flask. Give it to the master until then."

Stephen heard his saying, and at once left the side of Inez and came up to the unwilling half-breed. "He says truly, José. Give me your flask. Dismount and lead your mule for a few rods, and then you may remount, warmer and ready for another spell in the saddle."

José was about to refuse, angrily, but Tomaso slowly descended, Inez slid from her Spanish saddle to the ground, followed by her maid, and José, half angry, half ashamed, gave up his flask and followed their example. A few hundred yards further on they remounted, and pushed on at a fast amble, passing through a tract of a kind of stiff, dry rush, nearly fifteen inches high, over a trail mainly visible by the mere depression of the herbage, and the half-concealed bones of man and beast, which but too well confirmed the stories of suffering, loss, and death encountered by passengers over this dreary waste.

Five miles had been crossed at the end of three short half hours, when, as they halted to dismount

again, Guapi uttered an ejaculation of alarm, and pointed to the summit of the mountain, around which the vapors had gathered and grown black untill the top was no longer visible. "A snow storm is coming," he cried. "Push on, master, or we are lost."

Stephen laid his heavy whip of rawhide over the slow-paced mules, and drawing from his breast a pocket compass took the bearings of their only house of refuge, the ruined Aztec mounds, still nearly two leagues away. "It bears due south," he muttered to himself; "'twill go hard if I, who have faced a northwester in Boston bay, cannot keep my course on solid land in this latitude."

But as he spoke the black, gloomy vapors descended the sides of the mountain, shutting out first the lower ice fields, then the ragged spurs at its base and the plain before them, and at last, with a perfect burst of fury, the sharp hail and blinding snow struck them full in the face; the first gust bringing with it clouds of dust, a flurry of coarse stalks and seed vessels, and even whirling columns of mingled snow and sand, which, in the track of a dozen whirlwinds, swept by in dangerous proximity to the party.

As its first force struck them, the mules braced themselves against the blast, stretching their noses to the earth and trembling in every limb, as they had in the more dangerous descents of the Cordilleras; while the Indians, turning their backs to the storm, held fast with both hands to the strong *riatas*, and, digging their heels into the sand, leaned backwards to add their weight to that of the animals they led.

The others bowed their heads and held to the high pommels of their saddles; but, although none were unseated, it was several minutes before the first terrible blast, which attacked them from half a dozen separate points of the compass in quick succession, lost its first savage force and settled down into a furious gale, setting for the most part full in the teeth of the little party, and accompanied by a fall of soft, moist snow, which shut out from view everything a hundred paces distant.

Guapi turned, threw his arm up with a significant gesture, and started at a brisk pace, urging on his unwilling mules with merciless blows of his rawhide *quirt*, and his Indian companions, throwing off their usually stolid manner, stoutly struggled against the storm, guided by the broken herbage not yet concealed by the fast falling snow. Stephen, riding between Inez and her maid, linked the bridles of the three mules together and, bidding the poor girls cover their faces, pressed on behind them, while José and Tomaso brought up the rear.

For a while nothing was heard but the hard breathing of the mules, the sweeping rush of the frequent gusts, or an ejaculation of encouragement or rage from the servants, for the three Indians pressed on as if insensible to cold and fatigue, although the mules themselves showed more and more, as the lagging moments crept on, the effects of the constant strain of an advance foot by foot against the force of the gale.

Suddenly Guapi halted, and Stephen, dismounting, hastened to the front, where he found that a

new peril had presented itself and that they had entered upon a sterile tract of sand, everywhere covered with a level carpet of recently fallen snow, which concealed the slight traces left by preceding travelers, and which, though thin, had turned to ice as soon as fallen. The Indians had linked their mules together, and two, taking hatchets in their hands, were cutting out junks of sandy ice, which they examined carefully by sight and smell, and at last one uttered a cry which announced that the trail lay more to the left, a fact which Stephen verified by his pocket compass.

The air grew colder, the gloom thicker, the snow, no longer moist, eddied in their faces in blinding gusts, as Guapi spoke. "Will yonder point lead the master to the ruins of *La Casa?*"

"Yes, Guapi, I can lead you, though the snow were thicker than this."

"Then move on to the front, and when your mules stumble among the *huacas* of the ruins Guapi will find a shelter. Now we go to the rear, or Don José and Don Tomaso will be lost in the *tormenta.* Hear how it comes down the mountain. Press on, and may our Lady of Succor help us now."

As he ceased, the first fury of the storm revived, and as he bent himself against the blast Stephen could only think, as he strove to start his unwilling mules against its pitiless rage, of the first shuddering recoil of a stout ship, stripped to the bare yards, and meeting the full force of a hurricane. One mule, that of Tomaso, was actually carried off its legs, but with the aid of the faithful Indians was soon righted;

and laying his compass on the high pommel of his mountain saddle, and sweeping off the snow crystals with his mittened left hand, Hay led the way across the shrouded plain, and more than once saw his stumbling mules throw up from the occasional drifts the thigh bone of a mule, or fragments of a human skeleton.

The cold deepened, the fury of the storm seemed if anything to increase, and poor Rosita moaned and prayed even under her thick wrappings. The mules were evidently tiring; from the rear the cries of Tomaso and José sounded less frequently and more feebly than before; and even Hay felt that he needed all his superb vitality to successfully overcome the deadly cold. He halted until the straggling cavalcade came together; he dismounted and hastily drew from his saddle the blankets strapped thereto, and taking Rosita from her saddle wrapped her in them, and fastened her firmly on top of the load of the strong baggage mule led by Guapi. Inez refused to change her jennet for another, but dismounted to warm her limbs by exercise. Tomaso and José were urged to follow her example but refused, the former in a dreamy tone like one falling asleep. Hay looked at him closely and saw that his ears and part of his face were badly frozen, and seizing a handful of snow began to restore the circulation, at the same time unceremoniously taking him out of the saddle, and urging him forward on foot. Guapi at once came forward and linked the rearmost mules together, and José was also made to follow Tomaso's example.

"You die, Señor, if you fall asleep," said Guapi gravely, as José angrily cursed him for "an Indian dog"; "and you must walk were you ten times a Spaniard, instead of a vagabond half-breed."

José's eyes flashed fire, and, with a terrible oath, he drew his knife and raised it as if to stab the Indian; but Stephen, with a blow of his whip, struck the weapon to the feet of Guapi, who coolly placed it in his belt.

"And now, sirrah," said Stephen angrily, "go on behind with Tomaso, and, if you falter, I will have you whipped along the road by these honest men, to whom, if you survive, you will owe your worthless life. Guapi," said he, as he turned hastily, "you must keep up behind me. Get these men on if you can, though you whip them every step of the way; in the last resort, give them a few drops from this flask and lash them to the mules. God grant that *La Casa* be not far distant."

Hurriedly he remounted and rode in between the muffled Inez and the motionless Rosita, and lashing the animals to their greatest speed, at the best little more than a fast walk, he entered upon the last mile of their journey. From beneath the heavy veils which kept the icy sleet from the face of Inez he heard from time to time a low ejaculation, as if she sought in prayer a refuge from the fear of death; but from Rosita no sound was heard, though some movement was still perceptible beneath the heavy wrappings which sheltered the child's body.

From the rear came the sound of blows and occasional curses or weak entreaties, which told that

Guapi was following closely with the rest of the cavalcade, and that José and Tomaso were still living. But Stephen felt himself growing weak and fearful, and noted with a hopeless sense of despair, that his own mule seemed to stumble, as if about to fall under him. He was about to dismount, when his tired steed suddenly fell on its knees, throwing him over its head, and all became a blank.

He roused himself and looked about him in a dark, tomb-like place, lit only by a single candle, and crowded with occupants, five of whom seemed bending over himself and others whom at first he could not recognize. His own attendants seemed to be two young girls, and he felt his head pillowed in the lap of one, while another held to his lips a strong cordial, of which in after days he remembered only the taste, and refused to believe that enough had been taken by him to unsettle the brain of the staunchest toper of Quito.

"He will live: he will live!" he heard a sweet voice say, and then the grave face and voice of Guapi seemed to blend with the vision.

"The Holy Mother and all the saints be thanked therefor, but I fear the others are gone. A curse on yonder *huaca* that broke the leg of his mule. Were he himself, something might be done for poor José and Tomaso."

Stephen was again sinking into stupor, but the sense of responsibility and a feeling that he must break from the spell which endangered two lives, seemed, as in certain dreams, to revive the strong spirit from bonds which would have securely held

less vigorous souls. With a supreme effort of the will, which to him seemed almost to break the bonds of approaching death, he moved his lips, and as in a trance the low passionless tones of the *clairvoyant* seem scarcely human, so Inez and Rosita almost shrank from the unnatural whispers of their protector.

"Wrap them in snow! Chafe their limbs with your hands! Heat some water and give them *maté* instead of brandy. Remember that human life is in your hands! Human life! human life!"—and then all again faded from his failing wision.

When he awoke again the day was mild and warm, and the sun shone in through the low door, through which he had been carried into the Aztec chamber of crumbling stone and broken *adobe*. As he moved Inez uttered a cry of joy and fell at his side, and as a flood of tears fell from her lovely eyes, she fervently kissed the brow of the reviving adventurer. "You have been asleep so long, Stefano," she said, "that we have thought you would never awaken again, and then your little sister would have been alone in the great world. Guapi has gone for mules to Cayambe, and Rosita is looking for fuel outside. She will feel so glad to find you better when she comes back."

As she bent above him in the splendor of her perfect beauty, he saw in her eyes all the promise of a love whose depth and fervor he felt could alone satisfy the yearnings of a soul, to which the narrow measure of affection vouchsafed him in the future seemed inadequate and pitiable. He longed to throw

his aching head upon her loving breast; to take in his fevered hands those firm, slender, responsive fingers; to be able to meet fittingly the glances of those deep, dark eyes; and utter those few sweet syllables of the Spanish tongue, which come among the first to the lips of all who learn that language, rich in the imagery of war and love, *"yo te amo."*

He had no doubt of her answer. There is none in the hearts of men who, like him, dare to claim, instead of meekly suing; whose confidence springs from the sense of desert, and not from the petty strategy of meaningless gallantry. Life behind him seemed to present a waste, without flowers or refreshing streams; in her arms and companionship an Eden presented itself, and without her the future seemed as the fire scathed groves and sterile deserts of the cities of the plain.

But there came back to his sinking heart all the strength of purpose and sense of honor of the day when, with the proud consciousness of a good deed performed, he walked homeward beneath the apple boughs toward the homestead at Ploughed Neck.

"Inez," said he kindly, "we are alone in the desert with God. Hast thou full trust in me, who must henceforth be thy only protector?"

"I would trust thee, Stefano, without question or doubt. I have no hope or trust in any else, save our Lady of Succour."

"Dost thou remember the first night of our voyage up the river, how the *bogas* danced to the strange song of the women at Calamar."

"Yes, brother. I heard poor José tell thee the

tale; a sad one at the best, but one worthy of remembrance."

Her voice faltered as she spoke, but her clear, pure glance met his steadily, though both noted an expression of unutterable pity and regret in each others' eyes.

"Inez," said he brokenly, "you have heard the tale and will understand me. Suppose that we, too, stood beneath the palms of the Magdalena; you a princess of the forest, I a warrior of the upper river. Suppose that I, bound by my pledge if not by love, preferring honor and an empty heart to bliss purchased by faithlessness, stood by your side to bid you farewell, to tell you that 'I go back to the upper springs.' What answer would you, could you make me?"

For a moment Inez grew ashen white, her ripe lips were compressed and without color, her eyes shut tightly as if to restrain her tears; but her answer came no less clearly than kindly:

"Am I not your sister? If it so be that honor binds you to another beside the upper springs, I will go with you. If she whom you love be true, I will be true friend and sister to you both, as you have been honest and true to me. Now rest, Stefano, and for me, I will go and pray."

Chapter XXXVII.

Homeward Bound

A few days later the survivors of the party, under the guidance of Guapi, reached Quito in safety, in time to join the Spanish commissioners in their long homeward journey. José and Tomaso slept their last sleep beside the ruins of the Aztec city, slain by the icy blasts of the Paramo of Cayambe.

From Quito by a less dangerous route, yet amid many perils, the party reached Lima and thence went to Callao, where two French frigates, the Notre Dame de la Delivrance and the Lys, lay ready to sail, and embarking in the former vessel they set out from Callao, October 23, 1744, arriving at Concepcion Bay November 21st of the same year.

Thence on the 6th of January, 1745, they sailed with the Lys, a third frigate called the Louis Erasme and a French ship, La Marquis D' Antin, laden with cocao for Europe. The voyage was long and stormy, both the frigates being old and leaky, and Don Arriago, whose goods formed the greater part of their lading, on the 25th of March proposed to run into Montevideo and refit, as also to take the protection of the Spanish man-of-war Asia, then about to sail; all the more that news had reached Conception of the declaration of war between France and England.

The captain, however, preferred to continue their voyage, stopping for wood and water at the Portuguese island of Fernando de Noronha, which they reached on the 21st of May.

Partially repairing the Delivrance and Lys, on the 10 of June they again sailed for Europe, and found themselves at dawn of the 21st of July about 96 degrees N. W., 5 degrees West from the Isle of Flores — one of the Azores — and, at six o'clock, discovered two strange sail bearing down upon the convoy then steering N. E., while the strange ships stood S. W. until almost within cannon shot; when the largest fired a shotted gun, both hoisted English colors, and it became evident that a battle must ensue.

La Delivrance, which, though the smallest and lightest armed of the frigates, led the line, carried fourteen four-pounders and had on board but fifty-one persons all told, including her passengers. Next in line came the Louis Erasme, which had eight eight-pounders on the quarter and twelve six-pounders on the lower deck, with between seventy and eighty seamen, passengers and boys; while the Marquis D'Antin, with a crew of from fifty to sixty persons, was armed with ten sixes and as many four-pound cannon. All three of the ships were in poor repair, ill supplied with small arms and ammunition, and fearfully shorthanded for a contest against such formidable adversaries as the strangers proved to be.

The English vessels were the privateers Prince Frederick, Captain James Talbot, carrying twenty-four twelve-pounders and six six-pounders, with a crew of from two hundred to two hundred and fifty men; and the Duke, Captain Morecock, of twenty twelve-pounders, with from one hundred and fifty to

two hundred men; both being provided with swivels and musketry in abundance. As will be seen, the larger privateer outnumbered with her single crew the entire force of the three vessels, and with a single broadside outweighed the whole available metal of her puny antagonists.

But the French have never lacked the quality of desperate courage, and the three small ships carried millions of dollars in coin, plate and bullion, besides the costliest productions of Spanish America; and, though unprovided with boarding nettings to repel boarders, and evidently pitted against overpowering odds, the French and Spanish officers made their few preparations hastily and prepared for a stout resistance.

On board La Delivrance, Inez and Rosita, with one or two others incapable of bearing a part in the fight, were sent below; but Stephen remained upon deck, perplexed in mind as to what his duty was in this juncture of affairs, for he could not bear the thought of fighting against his own countrymen; and yet these were seeking to injure men who, though alien in blood, had been generous to him in his long exile. To add to his perplexities, the captain of the frigate had supposed him throughout the voyage to be a Spaniard, and now addressed him as an auxiliary on whose services he could depend.

"And as for you, Señor Olivarez, I doubt not you will do us good service in this sore peril, for these accursed English privateers will strip us to the skin if we fall into their hands. I would ask if you can command two of the quarter guns, for we are short

handed and I must send our only quartermaster to the helm."

In an instant his resolution was taken. He would have no English blood upon his hand, or conscience, but he would risk his life freely for his companions.

"I thank you, Monsieur le Capitaine," said he; "but let Gaspard go to his division, and I will keep La Delivrance on her course. He is young, and you know that no man on board can con the old hussy more closely than I."

"But," said the master, gravely, "you know not what you ask. We have but poor defences at the best, and a hundred muskets will sweep yonder quarter-deck like a tempest of death. Poor Gaspard is even now at confession, and you surely would not leave the lady Inez alone in the world."

Ulloa, the Spanish captain, stood beside them, gazing with keenly searching eyes into the New Englander's face. To him Stephen turned and addressed himself:

"Don Antonio de Ulloa, you can judge between us. I am unused to the language of his crew, and have never practised at these guns; neither do I know the orders usually given in action. I might, indeed, sight a gun at short range, though I should prefer to use a musket if I must withdraw my offer. But I am not afraid of death, and the Señorita Inez will remain in the protection of God, whether I fall at the helm of La Delivrance or steer her safely clear of her assailants; for I know you hope not to conquer against such odds.

"You had better give the Señor Olivarez his own

way," said de Ulloa, with a grim smile. "There is no man here who will do that duty better, though he looks so little like a weatherbeaten son of the sea. Thou hast chosen well, my friend," he continued, as the captain moved out of hearing, "but these *canaille* are not sailors of His English Majesty, but mere licensed freebooters, who will rob you of your last pistole, whether English, French or Spaniard."

"I have not yet made up my mind not to fight, but I have held yonder post in as great a strait, and hope at least to carry La Delivrance clear of her enemies."

The crews were already at quarters, and Stephen, walking aft, took his place at the tiller, with two stout seamen at the ropes by which that clumsy contrivance was guided. Gaspard, with a blush on his fair, boyish face, thanked Hay gratefully, and went to his brace of four-pounders with a zeal which, had it been backed by heavier metal, would have augured ill for the privateersmen.

At about seven o'clock, the French ships still keeping their course on the wind, the Duke bore down upon the line with the wind upon her quarter, yawing and firing her bow chasers from time to time, until at last the *fleur de lis* was hoisted; and, running alongside at scarce pistol-shot distance, the Duke engaged the La Delivrance and Louis Erasme, pouring in her heavy twelve-pound shot, and sweeping off with volleys of bullets from pateraros and muskets every one who showed himself above the bulwarks or on the forecastle, where, in most of the French vessels, several guns were mounted *en barbette*, and were therefore useless during the fight.

The Prince Frederick at the same time engaged the Marquis D'Antin, and, trusting to her thicker bulwarks and heavier guns, chose not to lose men by boarding, but, laying close alongside, threw in such heavy broadsides that in less than three hours, having lost her captain, received many shot between wind and water, and lost so many of her crew that her scuppers ran blood, the French ship struck, amid the hoarse cheers of the crew of the Prince Frederick, and Stephen knew that for the French all hope of beating off their foes was over.

Still he kept his post, although the rain of bullets showered upon the quarter-deck of La Delivrance was at times perfectly appalling; for the tops of the Duke were crowded with sharpshooters, who could find no better mark than the gigantic form and noble head, with its long yellow curls, which never flinched, though the gay Spanish hat was pierced through, and the laced coat he wore was cut in many pieces. His assistants had been replaced twice, shot down almost as soon as seen, and, as the fifth was sent to take their place, the man's face paled to ashy whiteness, and Gaspard drew his pistol to enforce the order.

Stephen greeted the steersman with a quiet smile, and beckoned to him to assist him in laying a little nearer the Duke, which for the time was nearly in a position to be raked, being chiefly engaged with the Louis Erasme, which vessel the Prince Frederick was also preparing to attack.

Even as he caught up the slack of the purchase, red with the blood of preceding victims, a volley is-

sued from the tops, and his arm hung at his side scored from wrist to elbow with a ragged wound.

"Gracias a Dios," he muttered fervently as he leapt under cover of the bulwarks and made his way below. " 'Tis a mercy that it was not through the heart that that bullet came, as with poor Pepe and Ricardo," and Stephen, even under such surroundings, could not but laugh, as he saw how a misfortune, bad enough in itself, had been deemed a light calamity in the near presence of death.

The fire of the English seemed to increase in fury, the roar of guns and the sharper reports of swivel and musket blended in an infernal symphony, whose lighter accompaniments were the whistle of bullets, the buzz of chain and crossbar shot, the crash of spars, the rattle of grape, and the failing cheers of the overpowered French mariners. Yet still La Delivrance poured in her light broadsides, striving to save her consort, guided by the calm courage and skill of Stephen, whose fair face was becoming terrible with gouts of blood, and grimy with the thick smoke of the burnt priming.

"Head her on the larboard tack," suddenly shouted the French captain. "All hands make ready to tack ship. Ready. About," and two minutes later La Delivrance was clear of the smoke to windward of the Erasme and her antagonists, to whom her unfortunate consort was soon compelled to strike, after her captain, who had also tried to escape by flight, had been mortally wounded, and a large part of her crew placed *hors de combat.*

When once well to windward of the enemy, Ste-

phen was relieved, and none too soon; for he was found to be wounded in several places, and, although none were dangerous, the loss of blood left him unable to appear upon deck again for several days.

But the condition of La Delivrance was far from encouraging. Nine of her people had fallen in the conflict, and so many shot had passed through her sides, that it was midnight ere she was cleared of water and placed in seaworthy condition. Moreover, although but a few days' sail from her destination, she dared not risk another conflict, being poorly prepared for fighting at the best, and now nearly out of ammunition. It was accordingly determined to change their course back across the Atlantic to the fortress city of Louisbourg, whence, according to one of the crew who had been there, two or more French men-of-war, of heavy armament, would return with convoys to France.

The prizes just taken by the English had been valued at nearly $3,000,000, and the cargo of La Delivrance, though smaller, was worth little less than a moiety of that huge sum. All agreed that delays and danger were not to be considered, with such interests at stake; so that night the course was changed to the north and west, and on the 12th of August, at noon, they made the Isle Royale, lying like a dim cloud on the eastern horizon.

At six o'clock the next morning they sighted a brigantine bound for Louisbourg, and La Delivrance hoisted the French ensign; seeing this the stranger fired several guns, and crowded sail for the harbor, while certain fishermen lying off the coast

followed her example. The city and forts, and the harbor crowded with shipping, were now plainly visible, and the French ensigns, floating from every staff and masthead, promised to the weary voyagers an end to their adventurous and perilous cruise, and rest from fear and disquietude; while two men-of-war, issuing from the port, came out to meet the new arrival, seeing which, the captain of La Delivrance ordered the shot to be withdrawn from the guns, that any salute given might be courteously returned.

The smallest, a ship of about fifty guns, came close alongside, and as if by magic the whole scene was changed. The English ensign replaced the French *fleur de lis;* the portholes flew open, revealing a tremendous battery, manned by trained gunners with lighted matches; and a single cannon from the upper deck opened upon the helpless frigate, bringing her fore yard down upon the shrouds, while a richly dressed officer cried from the quarter deck, "Surrender to His Majesty's ship Chester!"

In the presence of such a force and under such circumstances, it was madness to resist; but the captain and his distinguished passengers managed to throw overboard their important dispatches, and Inez and Stephen secured their personal valuables, before the small boat lowered for the purpose boarded the ill-fated frigate.

To do them justice, all were treated with great courtesy and even lenity by their captors, and Stephen found many personal friends among the New Englanders who, under Pepperell and Warren, had

dared to attempt the reduction of the Gibraltar of America. His story gained for himself and his fair companions a favorable reception, and after a short delay the party found passage by a returning transport to Boston, where they arrived safely about the first of September, in the year 1745.

Here, after due inquiry at the Swan Tavern, he found that John Hewson was still living, though he had tired of the sandy cape and was domiciled at or near Cohasset, where the cliffs, with velvet turf and varied foliage, overhang the long reach of huge ledges stretching far to seaward. An express sent to him brought back a messenger, who said that the old man being unable to come himself, had sent him for the young lady and her companion; but Stephen made over to Inez the precious belt worn through so many strange vicissitudes and, after satisfying himself that he left his *proteges* in good hands, took passage by a wood sloop for Plymouth.

They parted late at night, for the tide was running in and the breeze light, and for nearly an hour they sat side by side at the end of the long pier, talking of the past and wishing, yet dreading to speak of the future just before them. At last the skipper was seen approaching, and Inez rose to return to the inn.

"I go back to the upper springs," said Stephen sadly. "What if I should find myself forgotten, like Ocana, at the sources of the Magdalena?"

The brave, true daughter of Olivarez, took his fevered hand in hers, and her splendid eyes, bright and strong despite the tears that gathered under their

long lashes, met his in one long, loving glance, which needed not the words she spoke to tell their meaning. "Thou hast been true to thy nation, thy faith and thy friends; more than true to mine and me. Be true to thyself even to the end, and living or dying, together or apart, no one shall be dearer than thou art to me. Farewell, my brother, we shall meet—in heaven's good time."

She was gone; the rough but kindly raillery of the skipper recalled him to the needs of his homeward journey; and the next day at noon he set out from Plymouth with a stout horse, capable of making under saddle some two leagues an hour, with the easy amble taught in those days to the steeds of the Narragansett plantations.

That night he rode into Sandwich town and put up at the tavern, where he was welcomed as one from the dead by the old hostler; for Timothy Ruggles and his wife were absent, and, it was rumored, about to give up the business of entertaining the public.

Here for the first time Stephen learned of the condition of affairs at the homestead—a story over which the old serving-man sat late at night, detailing how Stephen having been reported dead, his friends had mourned him for a season; how the church had been crowded with weeping listeners to the quaint memorial sermon; how his will had been proved, his estate divided; how his brother had married his betrothed within the year just past.

And when Stephen had been shown to his room, the old man wondered that his unexpected guest

had shown little of disquietude and less of anger; and more than once took from his pocket the Spanish dollar he had given him at parting, to assure himself that he had indeed given shelter to a man of flesh and blood.

But although he arose early to his routine of daily duty, his strange visitor was gone, and only the untouched bed and the reckoning duly laid on the antique table told of the coming and departure of the long-lost Stephen Hay.

It was still dark when Stephen, unable to sleep and wearied with contending emotions, left his chamber, and leaving his reckoning behind him, issued from the inn and took the old familiar road to Ploughed Neck. The air was cool but not chill, the weather clear and calm, the darkness not of increasing night, but of the dawning day, and though the stars still glimmered overhead the eastern seaboard was of the soft, warm, pearly gray, which tells of coming daylight.

He passed the square, unpainted church, where his funeral sermon had been preached months ago, and thought of similar scenes witnessed by himself in years long past, when the pastor and people had met to honor the memories of unburied friends and neighbors lost at sea, or slain in the wilderness by the Indian enemy; and a strange sense of loneliness came upon him as he thought that he walked alone in the darkness, as one of the dead, his mourning over, his bethrothed joyful in a brother's love, his estate divided; his possessions scattered, his memorial service said, his monument erected amid the

graves of his fathers. No, not this last, he remembered with a thrill of anger, for the garrulous hostler had told him how his brother had scorned to place a simple slab of slate amid the family monuments, but had ever spoken of a more stately offering to the memory of a brother, who had left him an estate deemed in those simple days a small fortune. "'Tis like enough he purposeth to have it out from home by the fall ships," had said his half-wondering, half-fearful attendant, "but, now your honor hath come back, there will be no need therefor."

As he proceeded he issued from the village into the narrow country road, of which only the central track, worn hard by the wheels of the daily stage coach and its four strong horses, was left bare of herbage, excepting the narrow footpath of smooth, hard trodden sand along which Stephen walked slowly, busy with strange and varied imaginings.

Past rural burying places, which seemed to him strangely peaceful and alluring, as if more fitting his reception than the dwellings of the living, who had ceased to mourn him; past swamps where robin, cat-bird and grakle were beginning to utter their first, low love notes from their nests amid the thickets; along the border of the inland forest, where already the bell-like bark of a slowhound on the track of fox or deer, told that others beside himself were astir in the dawning; across the rippling trout streams, beside moss-gown walls of loose piled stone, overhung with ripening apples; and through fields of maize, threaded by a narrow, long trodden footpath, Stephen Hay came before sunrise to the dew-laden lawn before the home of his birth.

No sign of change was visible in the uncertain light, and it seemed to Stephen as if it might have been only the night before, that he bade farewell to his betrothed, under the apple trees beyond the mossy well-curb. No one had yet arisen, and in feverish restlessness the wanderer walked from one well-remembered spot to another, seeming to see in each familiar object a fresh welcome to the dear old homestead, and yet he could not but fancy that even to his disembodied spirit such a greeting might have been vouchsafed as fittingly.

The dawn was coming fast, and white mists began to obscure the surrounding landscape, when, with a low growl, a large dog issued from his lair in the centre of the huge woodpile, and surlily approached him.

"Buff! Come Buff! Good fellow!—good fellow! Come, Buff!—come!" cried Stephen, with a sad yearning for sympathy; and the dog, old, lame and nearly blind, uttered a low whine, and shambling to his master's side essayed to leap upon him, as in the years long past, and covered the trembling hand outstretched to welcome him with kisses.

Stephen sank down on the flagged walk beneath the window, and caught the great shaggy animal in his arms, pressing the huge head against his breast; for this was the first heart-greeting, the first tribute of living affection which had as yet welcomed him back among the living.

Then he arose, as if ashamed of the passing weakness:

"I will take a stroll around the place until the

horn blows for breakfast. They will all be up then, and I may feel calmer and stronger than now. No, Buff, old fellow! You must go back to bed. No, sir! Go back, sir!" and the chidden dog, with a mournful, appealing whine, turned to go to his kennel.

"It's too bad," thought Stephen, as he went toward the barn. "He does n't want to leave me, and he shall go if he wants to. Come, Buff!—come!" he cried, raising his voice; and the old retriever, with a lumbering rush, dashed across the yard, and accompanied him on his errand of inspection.

As they passed the barnyard, Stephen saw the staid, matronly cows, which were graceful and mischievous calves at their first pasturage five years ago, and on the horns of one, tiny bits of blue ribbon made his heart give a leap of joy; for he knew that that must be "Tempie's cow," grown up from the weakly yearling he had given her for her own.

"Tempie, at least, and mother and father will be glad that I am not dead, and Untequit—for yonder garrulous old man said he still lived with the old folks—will give me a hearty welcome. Come, Buff! I would I had a gun with me, for there should be fine sport on the marshes now. Let us go down by the Brush and the cartway to the beach, and see the sun rise from the ocean."

With a brisk and lighter step Hay went swiftly across the meadows to an orchard, scarcely divided from a thick copse of oaks, hickories and smaller growth, through which a footpath led to a narrow creek, where, moored to either bank by long painters, a whaleboat offered easy ferriage to the sandhills beyond.

Ten minutes later Stephen stood on the sloping beach, and saw in the east the crimson glory reaching across the horizon, as the first glimpse of the lurid sun rose above the low line of sand dunes trending northeast. He seated himself on a sea-whitened spar half buried in the drifting sands, the old dog crouched whining at his feet, and the east wind came sweet and clear to his hot eyes and fevered cheeks, as he gave himself once more to a review of the new trials to be met and conquered.

"Why should I care for my lost land?" he said to himself, "or for the few valuables my poor sisters have taken to their homes, as my last bequest? My earnings and researches in the mountains brought me far more than thrice their value. As for Margaret, she has but done wisely and well in marrying my brother. Had I been wise, I had long since taken Inez to my arms, and found love, content and eternal springtime amid the vineyards of Popayan. Come, old doggy, the sun is up; let us go back to the house and greet all kindly and cheerily."

Meanwhile at the homestead, the family had arisen, the kine had been milked and sent to their pasturage, and the tools made ready for the day's labor on the distant marshes. All were gathered at the morning meal, the deacon, scarcely older or graver than five years before; Joshua, already old with overthought, labor and care; Lish, still light-hearted, beside Margaret, pale yet beautiful, with her babe close at hand in the old cradle; and Black Bill, maimed in one wrist, but able, nevertheless, to do "more than a man's work," as all the neighbor-

hood allowed. Only two were wanted to complete the family circle, Mrs. Hay and little Tempie.

The latter, alas, had long been an invalid, and there were few who knew her who did not sadly shake their heads when they marked her clear, pallid complexion, over-bright eyes and sad, abstracted manner; for the scourge of old New England villages had claimed too many victims in S—— to leave any ignorant of the symptoms of his fatal presence.

Many wondered, indeed, that she had so long resisted the distressing cough and weakening night sweats, which had reduced her slight body to a mere skeleton; and her stern but affectionate father and gentle mother awaited in trembling faith that new trial in which they must only say "Thy will be done."

This morning, however, she had insisted on being dressed and taking a seat at the table, for a strange dream or experience had given her a semblance of added strength, and she had pleaded so for permission that the sick chair had been drawn up, and Tempie, "Little Tempie" alas no longer, came leaning on her mother's arm, and sat listening to the prayer uttered, while others stood with bowed heads around the table. But when all were seated, Deacon Hay noticed a strange eager, nervous look of expectation in his daughter's face, and traces of tears in his wife's eyes.

"What is the matter, Tempie?" he asked kindly. "I heard no complaint from you last night. Did you not sleep well?"

"Yes, father," she replied tremblingly, "I slept very well until morning, but then— Oh, mother, tell him, for I can't, I can't."

"Tempie is somewhat frightened, Elisha, for this morning early she thought, or dreamed, or fancied, that she heard—"

"I did not dream or fancy, mother," said the child with a strange persistency. "I did hear Stephen's voice. He called Buff to him, and his voice was choked and sad."

Margaret started up with a faint cry; Lish dropped his fork and knife and stared in utter bewilderment at the speaker, and Joshua, with a quiet, incredulous smile, calmly proceeded with his breakfast, having promptly settled in his mind the status of a tale founded on the fancy of a sick girl; Black Bill went outside quietly, while Deacon Hay turned to the girl and questioned her not unkindly as follows:

"I can, of course, have no doubt that you were mistaken, Tempie, but tell me all about it. At what time did you hear what you describe?"

"It was just before daylight, and not half an hour before you arose, that I awoke from a deep sleep, and heard, as I thought, two persons talking in low tones under my window. The words were sad but indistinct, and I did not think just then, how unlikely it was that people would be out there at that time of the morning. But about a quarter of an hour later I heard Stephen call Buff—call him just as plainly as ever I heard him before he left us for the war. Then I lay and listened, for I hoped although I almost feared to hear my brother's voice again; and at last I had to call mother and tell her."

As she finished speaking, Black Bill returned from outside with a grave look in his eyes.

"What said the voice, Miss Tempie?"

"Nothing but 'Come, Buff!—come!' just as I've heard him hundreds of times before he went away; only his voice was very mournful, just as when he talked with me in the orchard about going to fight the Spaniards."

" 'Twas only fancy, my child. We can never hear his voice again except in a better country, where sin and death will no longer separate us from those we love. Come, Bill and Lish, we must hurry through with breakfast, for we must mow the island meadow before the tide rises."

Black Bill whispered a word or two in his ear, and, with an expression which those who witnessed it never forgot, Deacon Hay arose and went outside, where the other members of the family could not overhear their words.

"What mean you, William?" began Deacon Hay, agitated beyond his wont. "Think you that it is possible that the dead should come back to the living? You, yourself, say you saw him dead in the castle ditch at San Lazaro, covered with brains and blood. How, then, can you encourage the fancies of a poor sick child, who has always held in her heart to seeing her brother once more?"

"I don't know, master, whether the dead come back or not, though my people have ever believed that, to some, all men, living or dead, were visible; but this thing I do know—that the dog is gone."

"Old Buff gone? Impossible! He's asleep or sick inside the wood-pile yonder, but he never leaves the place except with some of us."

"I've taken down a part of the wood-pile, and know he's not there. Stay! don't move for a moment;" and, stooping down where he stood, he bent over a footmark in a little patch of sand disclosed by the removal of a few square feet of the thin sod.

"That footprint was made this morning, and by a Spanish boot, and here is Buff's foot right beside it. There was some one here this morning; and were it not that I know that he is dead, I could swear that yonder footprint could have been made by no other than your son."

"If here, why has he kept apart from us?" asked the agitated and half-convinced father. "Why should he pass by his father's house, and hide himself from those who love him? There is no one that I can see anywhere in the fields. Stay! I have it. You can call the dog away from us all. Call him to you now."

Untequit, with a grave smile, nodded his head, and putting his hands to his lips gave three shrill whistles, which were echoed from the walls of the foliage of the great swamp half a mile away. The dog issued almost instantly from the orchard, and man and master hastening thither, saw a powerful, sunbronzed and bearded man hastily crossing the meadow below, towards the house, and a moment later Stephen was clasped in their arms.

With his stern face wet with grateful tears, and softened into unwonted kindness by this "crowning mercy," Deacon Hay hastened a few minutes later to the house, where the others, for the most part too perturbed to eat, were sitting in uneasy silence.

Tempie alone seemed somewhat calmer, but as her father entered she arose from her seat, and unaided walked to meet him with outstretched arms, crying "He is come! My dear brother is come! O, where is he, father? Let me see him before I die."

There entered a tall, stately gentleman, rich of garb and elegant in manner, with little left to tell of the *soi disant* volunteer who had been mourned as dead, yet none the less the same noble, simple hearted and generous brother and son who had left them five years before. With an ease but too painfully noticeable to all he caught Tempie in his arms and raised her to his breast, covering her face with kisses, and the child bowing her frail head, by turns bent to return his caresses, and then in sisterly pride and wonder, drew back to gaze at the rich garb and splendid beauty of her recovered brother.

"I knew you would come, brother," she sighed at last. "I knew you would come, but I could not have waited much longer. I thought you would come when the leaves budded, and now they will soon be gone."

Mrs. Hay, thoughtful even in her joy, motioned to Stephen to place his frail burden in her easy chair, and through her tears greeted the wanderer with a warmth, that speedily dispelled all Stephen's misgivings as to his welcome home. Joshua, indeed, made no striking demonstration, but his "Welcome home, brother!" and warm, hearty grasp spoke volumes in themselves.

But the young couple stood aloof for a few moments as if afraid to join in the greeting, and poor

Lish's face was unutterably sad and disquieted, while Margaret glanced from her husband to her babe in alternate apprehension and vexation.

Stephen saw, and strode across the room to where, by their side, the little child slept unconscious of human passion in its rude cradle, and stooping, kissed its rosy lips. "God bless you, little one," he said, raising his chapeau as he spoke; and, rising, he extended his hand to Lish, who, grasping it in both his own, burst into a passion of tears.

"All has been ordered well and wisely," said Stephen kindly; "strangely, it may be, but not through fault of yours. I blame you not, Margaret; indeed, I could not, for why should you have loved the living less than the dead?"

"Let us thank God for this," said the elder Hay solemnly. "Our son, who was dead, is alive again. He was lost, and is found." And kneeling, the reunited household gave thanks to God in prayer.

Chapter XXXVIII.

Under the Locusts

For several weeks the life led by Stephen Hay seemed, despite his past adventures and the generally confused state of his temporal affairs, one of almost perfect joy and rest, with little to alloy the tranquil repose and the quiet renewal of old friendships and associations.

Lish had spoken often of returning to him his divided estate, but Stephen had kindly but firmly refused to resume possession. "I have done with life here, and henceforth our lives must lie apart, so far as our avocations are concerned. Mother and the girls are welcome to their portion as well, and I have more than enough to console me for the little my will distributed."

. A visit to the capital enabled him to learn the fate of his comrades of the Colonial brigade, few of whom had been more fortunate than himself, even of those who survived to return to their kindred.

From the ending of the siege of Cartagena their superior skill and general knowledge had marked them for extra duty, and even on the return voyage to Jamaica Lord Vernon had hardly saved some of his ships, had he not pressed the formerly despised Americans into use as sailors, carpenters and riggers.

Arrived at Jamaica the troops were again landed, and again were exposed to the ravages of tropical

disease, which carried off many of the northern troops, yet nevertheless a large part of the brigade, reinforced by English marines and another body of Jamaican negroes, were sent to lay siege to Santiago de Cuba, landing and encamping at Guantanamo harbor.

As it was late in the fall, for a time all went well; and roseate stories of the beauty, healthfulness and resources of the country, helped the enlistments resorted to to fill up the depleted companies, and added to the number of prospective conquerors and settlers of the island of Cuba, for it was seriously proposed both to conquer and occupy the country.

But delay, jealousy and the miserably conducted commissariat and medical service of that era, repeated in Cuba the sad experiences of the Cartagena *fiasco*, and in the winter of 1743-44 a few individuals returned at intervals to the colonies, to tell of the almost utter destruction of the American brigade.

Not less than five thousand men had enlisted, and had been forwarded to Jamaica during the war by the American colonies, and less than five hundred ever returned to tell of their disappointed hopes and terrible sufferings.

Of the failure of the several expeditions under the direction of Lord Vernon, history has heretofore been remarkably silent; and for some reason, with the exception of the attempt on Cartagena, the operations of the English fleet and army in the West Indies from 1740-44, inclusive, seem to have been kept from the English public with astonishing success.

Despite the disgraceful failures and loss of men and material, experienced, as it seems to us, largely through his own selfishness, obstinacy or avarice, Lord Vernon escaped with little loss of influence or prestige; and it was many years after, that his own insolence and pride brought about his retirement from the navy.

After much inquiry and no little search, Stephen found the survivors of his boat's crew; for Woodside had died of fever at Guantanamo, and only Jones and Gibbs had lived to return with the remnant of Stewart's company.

Jones had escaped disease and battle, and returned to Cape Ann and the more congenial avocation of the shore fishery. Gibbs, less fortunate, was an inmate of the poorhouse of his native town, though helped by yearly grants of pension money from the Massachusetts legislature.

Finding his old comrade no mean mechanic, Hay assisted him to tools and stock enough to insure him a fair start in business, and his after life, if humble, was at least independent, honest and happy; for he became a general favorite with young and old, to whom in his later days he narrated interminable stories of his adventures "down on the Spanish Main."

After his case had been duly investigated and his discharge made out in due form, Stephen returned home and gave himself up to the society of Tempie, whose health seemed to improve in the great joy of the unexpected return of her lost favorite. The affection between them had always been noted as un-

usually strong, but now in her weakness Tempie could scarcely have found greater or more constant tenderness in the most devoted lover.

He carried her in his strong arms whenever her strength seemed unequal to the task; he bought her delicacies almost unknown before to the simple tastes of the Cape people; his skill tempted her appetite with spotted brook trout, tender quail and plump partridge, and the venison of the inland forest was scarcely ever wanting in the family larder, while, at his suggestion, remedies which had come to his knowledge during his wanderings were adopted, with the best results.

At last, about the middle of September, they sat together in the orchard, she in her easy chair and he reclining at her feet, while just outside the line of shadow before them the ground was strewn with the sweet fruit of the early summer pears, great golden spice apples and high-bough sweetings. Tempie had a pile of letters in her lap, daintily folded and written in a minute Italian hand. Some of these Stephen had evidently been reading to her, others she was perusing for herself.

"She is a noble lady," she said at last, "and worthy of you, my own dear brother; but you can't tell how I dread to have you ever leave me again. I've never cared so much for anyone as I have for you, for, while the others are all kind, they seem in some way so different, so cold, so anxious to be neither angry or loving, ignorant or learned, elegant or awkward. Sometimes life has seemed so dull, monotonous and wearisome, that I really think it worried me into

the fever which has left me so weak and nigh to death; and now if you go away again, I shall have no one to talk to, or encourage me, and I shall pine away and die, I know, for they have never cheered or encouraged me as you do."

Stephen drew a packet from his breast and handed it to her, as he fondly rested his head on the arm of her chair:

"Here is my last letter, with her picture on ivory. I met her in Boston while the artist was painting it, and we had two pleasant evenings together. Is she not beautiful, my dear little sister?"

Tempie gazed at the noble features, rich garb and tropical beauty of Inez, and turned with a half-sigh to her brother:

"She is beautiful; so lovely that I am afraid she will take all your love, and leave none for your poor little Tempie. I was never afraid of Margaret, but —do you know?—this one is—is different."

Stephen pressed her thin hand to his lips:

"Fear not, little one; though my Inez is fit to be a queen, she will never wish for so selfish a love as thou fearest. Read this last letter; it is almost as much yours as mine."

Tempie resigned the locket to her brother and turned to the dainty missive. Let us once more take the liberty of reading a love-letter of the olden

AUGUST 25, 1745.

DEAREST STEFANO:—

It seems unfitting that I should be compelled to confer with you on such matters, but my uncle is

sorely afflicted, and at times can scarcely feed himself for pain; yet I fear not for his life, and think he has been much better of late.

But he is anxious to set out for England, there to claim, under his true name of John Hewson Oliver, a large estate, by the death of my dear father now left solely to him. Your request—I need not say for what—he hath left to my discretion; but I fear I should lead but an unhappy life with him did I refuse it, as he swears with many strange oaths that you shall be his heir in any event.

I, however, have too often proved your worth and generosity to wish to thwart his wishes, and shall expect you soon at our poor cottage, to consult with my uncle about our voyage to England.

I would have you ask the "Tempie" of whom you have written so much, to go with us to England, where a change of climate and surroundings may do much to restore her to health; and I need not say that she seems already to me as a near and dear sister, although, were she even a cousin, such love as hers would not fail to arouse something like jealousy in the heart of your own and affianced,

INEZ OLIVER.

As she finished reading, Tempie turned to her brother; her large eyes were full of tears; happy tears though, for smiles broke through their seeming sorrow. "I shall never be jealous of her again, and am almost as anxious to see her, as you dear brother. But shall I really visit England; shall I cross the great ocean and see so many wonders, the

great cities, and many people, and, perhaps, the king in his palace?"

"Yes, dear, God willing. Father has promised, and I go next week to arrange for our wedding, and passage across the ocean. I shall bring back a dress for you to wear at my marriage, and mother has already arranged for your outfit."

"It is too sweet, too beautiful, to be true," said the child, and the smile faded from her cheek as she spoke. "O, Stephen! it has been so hard for me before you came, for from the first they have let me see that I was doomed to die. The minister came to talk and to pray with me, and though he is a good man, it was cruel in him to crush out hope of life in one so young as I. Months have gone by since then, and it seems to me that had I not been sad in mind, and discouraged by everyone to hope for life, I should have been better now. And now it almost seems to me that I hear the minister saying, as he said before, 'that I must look for healing only to the tree that stands by the river of life."

"Tempie, dear," said Stephen, gravely, "all human happiness hath an end, even as human life is at best brief and uncertain, but I tell no one to prepare for death, save those just departing this mortal life. Better is it, it seems to me, to prepare for life, a life noble, unselfish, and loving, which shall spread happiness in its progress, and improve the talents which God has given to its possessor; and if death be near or far, such life must fittingly merge in the eternal life beyond, since no good thing of God is ever lost to him. I, myself, feel so

strangely, completely happy, that I almost fear lest the vision leave me, and I awake to find it a dream; but let us bless God and take courage, using reverently and gladly his perfect bounty, and ready to receive as readily the reverses, which in their turn will come to us in His good time."

"I don't think, dear," said Tempie, "that I feared death so much as that I dreaded to leave life so incomplete, so empty of good works and noble deeds. I sometimes even long for rest, and peace and freedom from pain; but I would rather do something for those around me, before I rest with the holy ones who went up from great tribulation."

"So have I ever felt," said Stephen, rising, "and never more than now. Yet I can well see that God may see our work well completed, when to us it appears that we have scarce entered upon life's labors. Poor little Frank, of whom I told you, was younger than you, yet his mild courage and kindness left scarcely a dry eye in the ship when they sent him ashore for burial beside Captain Stewart, and the chaplain they say said to the captain at dinner: "I would that my service here had softened as many hearts as the death of the poor child we buried to-day."

"But come," said he more cheerily, "let us go in to supper, for mother has just rung the bell, and we have much to do before we bid adieu for a time to America and Ploughed Neck. 'Tis a dear old place, Tempie," he continued, as he supported her steps along the shaded, narrow path, "but a brighter, nobler and happier life I trust awaits us both beyond yonder glassy sea."

That night it became known for the first time that Stephen was about to marry, and that Tempie would accompany the happy pair to Great Britain, and four days after the Viana sailed for Boston, manned only by Untequit and Stephen Hay, who had previously by letter informed Inez of his intended coming to her uncle's hermit cottage at Cohasset.

Chapter XXXIX.

In Gurgite Vasto

It was just daylight when the Viana got under way, and, running down the narrow harbor with the young ebb, threaded the crooked channel and the labyrinthine sand bars, and, with the wind blowing but scantily from the southwest, slowly left astern the sentinel sand dunes on either side of the quiet haven of Scorton.

The breeze was flawy and capricious, now coming off from the shore in tiny squalls, and now leaving the broad mainsail swaying idly with every heave of the restless sea. The day was a lovely one, and on every hand the display of animal life was abundant and alluring. Overhead the first flight of coots on their southward way flecked the cloudless heavens with rapidly flying and countless flocks, while beneath their tired and hungry companions dotted the ocean, some asleep, rocked idly on the long regular swells, and others diving in search of food, or racing through the water in capricious play.

Out to seaward several schooners lay at anchor, fishing for cod and mackerel, and along the shore crept here and there large seine boats, watching for great schools of silvery bass, now, alas, a rare fish in the waters where then they were taken by thousands; and on either hand, as the light sloop forged slowly northward, the reunited comrades noted the spouting whales at work amid the schools of small

fry, the blue ripple of thousands of herring and mackerel, the dashing rush of porpoise and puffing-pig, and the silently gliding dorsal fin of the stealthy shark and voracious tunny, or horse mackerel.

Hundreds of tern hovered over the shallows or dropped like flakes of snow upon the smooth water outside the breakers, over which the osprey hovered, to fall like a javelin upon the unconscious fish below; and flocks of plover and sandpipers with weirdly flute-like calling to each other swept past close to the surface of the sea, or covered with moving dots of white the shelving shore line.

On the broad marshes, the white shirtsleeves of the haymakers stood out in bold relief against the green back ground of the short thick salt grass, which they were cutting with keen scythes, or piling into huge stacks upon the upland in the shelter of thickly wooded swamps. Beyond these, the fields, graceful with tasseled maize, golden with ripening grain, or dark green with the heavy leaves of various vegetable crops, dotted the already seared and withered pastures, or peered out from between untouched belts of scrub oak and long-leaved pine.

Flocks of sheep in tumultuous flight broke here and there into view on the edge of coppiced banks, stopping suddenly as if aghast at the miniature abyss before them, to survey in breathless silence the sea before them, and then, with simultaneous rush, taking shelter in the impenetrable cover, and all along the coast the homesteads of the Plymouth farmers, each with its orchard, garden, barn and well sweep, sent into the heavens its tiny pillar of white smoke,

ascending heavenward through the dreamy air of the warm autumnal harvest season.

Even the sea, vexed for a week before by heavy easterly winds, lost by degrees its restlessness, and by noontide the swells as they neared the strand ceased to break into foam, and scarcely murmured as their refluent strength exhausted itself on the long levels of bare sand left by the retreating tide. It was a day of perfect peace. One of those rare seasons when, for a time, all things seem at rest, and life, calm, sensuous, delicious, seems without care or pain, and beyond the fear of calamity or death.

For some hours neither of the men had aught to say to the other, the Indian smoking a curious red stone pipe and Stephen busy with his own golden hopes and the scene before them. At noon, however, they ate their simple meal of home-baked food, and, as they ate, talked of their past adventures and future expectations.

"When you leave us to go across the sea, I, too, shall bid farewell to Manomet," said Untequit, at last.

"Will you not go with us to England, comrade?" said Stephen kindly. "I will see that it costs you nothing, and I shall never find a more faithful assistant or truer friend."

A flush of gratified pride lit up the dusky face and keen black eyes, but it soon faded, and he rejoined, in a tone which grew in sadness as he proceeded:

"Were you in danger or poverty, I would never leave you, Stephen Hay; but you go to love and be

loved, to find rank and honor and wealth, to move among great men, fair women, and the wondrous cities beyond the seas. I rejoice in your fortunes, but they can offer no hopes of a bright life for me. Even in S——, while you have won the praise of the whole county, the brand of race shuts me out from even the empty reward of fleeting praise."

"Why, Untequit," said Stephen, pleasantly, "thou hast had the good word of everyone, and, if fame be thy ambition, hast been more fortunate than I; for thy brave deeds as a ranger and slayer of Spaniards have been set forth in every newspaper in the colony."

"Yes!" said Untequit, scornfully, "but not as the exploits of Untequit, the grandchild of Caneotus, the friend of King Philip, but as the deed of a "Cape Cod Indian," to whom slaughter and subtlety are easy by instinct and training, as to a bloodhound or a wolf. No, no, brother! I go back to Jamaica as soon as the white topsails of the ship which carries you are lost from my watching eyes. In no land where the white race rule, can one with a skin less pale rise to the full measure of his manhood. I go where, as ally or outlaw, the planters of Jamaica shall at least respect the leader of the maroons of the mountains."

"I shall be sorry to part with you," said Stephen, heartily; "and though your words are but too just as to most of my race, believe me, that in my sight your blood is no less pure, no less noble than my own. Indeed, the time has been when I have wondered how a people so brave, enduring and saga-

cious as yours could ever have been reduced to their present estate."

"It is the will of God," said Untequit, solemnly. "He only could have ordered the fatal plagues which ravaged these coasts, and left the great tribes of the Massachusetts seaboard a scattered remnant, who preferred peace and friendship to a doubtful strife with your feeble ancestors. It was his book that divided the tribes into heathens and Christians, who withstood each other in council, fought each other in battle, and set at naught the subtlety and silent warfare of the forest, which otherwise would have laughed at the clumsy, steel-capped musketeers of the first Englishmen. We must fade away before you here, and I go nearer to the sun that I may leave to my children a birthright which no white man can hope to take away."

"You are right, Untequit," said Hay. "But how if Inez and I some day sail for Jamaica, and seek you amid the mountains. Will the partisan or outlaw care to see an old comrade?"

"You have no need to ask," replied the Indian, reproachfully, "and were you going again to battle, aye or even to certain death, neither hope nor fear, love or gold, desire of life or fear of death should keep me from your side."

"I know it," said Stephen, heartily, "and I trust our final parting is not yet near at hand. But there is wind in those clouds in the west, and we shall soon be making better headway, I judge, than the score of miles we have made this long day. Keep an eye on the clouds, and steer while I take a nap

in the shade of the trunk. Wake me if you need me, or I sleep over long."

About five o'clock the threatened shower came, and at its close the wind had hauled to the northwest and the Viana, by a succession of short tacks, was beating against wind and tide toward Boston, with Minot's Ledge some ten miles to windward. The sky was soon cleared overhead, and again the wind diminished to a scanty zephyr.

"If we keep our course we can make Boston light in one long and a short tack," said Untequit, "that is if this breeze does not die away altogether, and leave us to the ebb tide."

"That is just what I fear," said Stephen, "and I think we will work close in shore, both to avoid the tide, and the wind which must soon veer to the south, according to my way of thinking."

"Ah, Stephen Hay, yonder speck of white on the Cohasset shore has I fear more attraction than it should have on a Boston bound coaster, and thou thinkest the wind even will veer, where thy heart is burning to be."

Stephen blushed like a girl, but knew his companion too well to resort to the subterfuges with which men ordinarily strive to blind others in matters of the heart.

"She will light the candles soon," he said softly. "She knows the canvas of the Viana, and I doubt not has been watching us through her uncle's telescope. 'Tis a glass of wonderful power, for he boasts that he has noted the time on a church clock at nearly two leagues distance; but go below to your

rest, and I will work in under the shore to meet the change of wind. The night will be clear and still, and the old hussy scarcely needs a helmsman, when the breeze is steady and the tiller properly becketed."

The Indian went below, and Stephen sat at the helm, watching the calm sea, and the distant cove whence as the shadows deepened a bright light, as of a signal lantern, sent a tremulous line of reflected radiance across the intervening space. In answer he lit the sloops' signal light, and hoisted it to the masthead, and returning to the helm, almost cursed the partial calm which had again set in.

At nine o'clock the tide had turned and was setting in toward the ledges; while the wind was so light that Stephen no longer dared to stand on for fear of being drifted upon the rocks, and with much difficulty, and the assistance of a slight flaw, the Viana was put about upon the starboard tack, and for a few moments the ripple under her bows told that she was making three or four knots an hour. But shortly the wind lessened, and though from time to time, aroused by an increased pull of the tiller, or the flutter of the canvas, Stephen soon fell into a deep reverie, which passed into somnolence and deep sleep.

How long he slept he never knew, but in his dreams he saw the fair face of Inez and the loving eyes of Tempie watching him from the strand, while a ship seemed bearing him away from them forever. In desperation he rushed aft and looked down into the yeasty wake below, and then, springing upon the rail, prepared for a leap into the waves.

A heavy blow that seemed to stun him; a flight through space, whose termination, through dreaded, seemed never to be reached, and strangely harmless when attained; a sudden chill and a sense of suffocation awakened him to the consciousness that he was overboard, and a hundred fathoms or more astern of the Viana, which, with a fitful flaw filling her canvas, although yawing widely, was still hopelessly out of reach of the swiftest and strongest swimmer. Instinctively, Stephen hailed three times his sleeping companion, treading water vigorously, and exerting the full power of his capacious lungs:

"Ahoy! Ahoy! Ahoy!"

But no man answered; and as he saw the little craft grow indistinct in the darkness, even his approved courage faltered, for he felt himself face to face with death.

Yet he addressed himself calmly to his last hope of safety—a swim to the shore, nearly six miles away. The tide, he knew, was setting in, and the sea was smooth—the only circumstances which gave him hope of succeeding in a feat which he had never seen accomplished by any swimmer. Even as he revolved these things in his brain, still somewhat dazed, and aching with the blow of the shifting boom, he had kicked off his shoes and thrown off the light jacket which he had put on at nightfall.

With greater caution he succeeded in loosening his knee buckles, so that the long, thick woolen hose, growing heavy with water, could be removed; and lastly, with his strong teeth he tore off the buttons at either wrist, and wrenching the body to ribbons,

gave his loose shirt to the waves. As he did so, he felt the lanyard of his knife, and, opening it with his teeth, cut his small-clothes on either side, until, free of every encumbrance, he lay naked on the surface of the sea, swimming with long, regular strokes toward the dim light where love and life awaited him should he escape the death that so unexpectedly had menaced him.

Six miles away the light shone, as he rose on the throbbing pulses of the sea; a two-knot tide swept toward the ledge, but a mile beyond, and in an hour and a half at farthest he might hope to reach at least a rock on whose top he might rest for a time, until again driven off by the rising tide. The water was warm and the sky above strangely calm and beautiful, and, as he gave himself to his task, the athlete felt that even in such sore strait he might still hope for life. A single muttered prayer for help and strength; a wonderful retrospection of life's pathway; a bitter, yearning cry for help, unheard save of heaven, and then Stephen Hay was swimming for his life. Aye, more than that, for, as he swam, he thought of his frail sister, whose feeble hold on existence and hopes of strength and happiness regained beyond the seas would be withered by his loss, like the fervent, tropical love of Inez, whose affection had been stronger than all trial and even jealousy, and, as he thought, despite himself he gave way to exertions which, a moment later, with a smile at his weakness, he forebore.

Ten, twenty, thirty moments passed, and, growing weary, he turned upon his back, trusting to his

buoyancy to get breath, and just keeping his mouth and nostrils above the surface until, somewhat refreshed, he again turned toward the light, still miles away from his wearied but not yet despairing eyes.

At the end of an hour he was again resting, this time with the slight aid of a piece of drift wood, which he placed beneath his neck and found nearly capable of keeping his head above water without exertion. With renewed hope he looked for the light of the Viana; it seemed still afar off on the Atlantic seaboard, and he turned shoreward again toward the friendly beacon.

He had taken his support to place it beneath his breast, but, as he did so, it snapped in two and with a strange sinking at his heart he swam slowly on toward the beacon, which seemed to move mockingly away, as he struggled on with lagging feet and arms which seemed weighed down by an ever increasing load. Yet even then he gave little thought to death, striking out with a firmer, longer sweep, and summoning, with all the force of his undaunted will, the failing life forces, driven back from the extremities to their citadel, the heart.

Only half a mile away the light glittered and gleamed at last, but the strong swimmer was failing fast, the brave spirit faint and weary, the dauntless brain dizzy with the terrible blow of the spar, and its herculean struggle for life.

Like a dream came back to him the passage of the Parimo, the sea-fight of the Azores, the tropical forests of Boca Chica, and the strange, wild life of the past five years, and then he seemed to be again in

the close and stifling atmosphere of the old church in S——, in the old family pew, and in his ears the voice of Parson Giddings, deep and grave and sad, uttered the mournful words of the Apocryphal text:

"And our name shall be forgotten among men, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud."

A ripple of rushing water passed over his head, he clutched at some obstacle to his further progress and clung desperately to its support.

* * * *

Awaking he lay in an ample bed, and the ci-devant buccaneer and Untequit with bowed heads stood at his feet. Holding his listless hand between her slender fingers, knelt Inez, whose face pallid with suspense, grew brighter as she saw the light of life and love come back into his weary eyes.

She smoothed back the matted curls from his forehead and covered the captive hand with warm kisses, waiting patiently until he found strength to speak. He seemed to hear again the wild song and barbarous music of the boat-men of Calamar, and the legend of Athalpa and Ocana, the faithful and hapless.

"Athalpa!" he murmured. "Athalpa! glorious and noble. Ocana comes—through deep waters—" but he could say no more.

"Yes, love," she answered in the soft Castilian tongue. "You have come back to me again, I know. May the merciful Mother of God be praised therefor. Now sleep, love, and dream of a happy awakening, for we part never more."

When Stephen found himself restored to full consciousness, John Hewson, or rather John Oliver, would not listen to his proposed departure for Boston in the Viana.

"The Indian just saved you by a boat's length," said he, "and I'm not willing to take any more chances. Inez would have died if the Viana had missed ye, and I'm in command now. I'll send two men with the Indian to bring up your folks and baggage, and you can ride into Boston in a day or two, and get ready for the wedding. Next week the London packet sails, and we go in her together."

"But perhaps Inez—" said Stephen uneasily, for he noted the flushed cheeks and bowed head of his betrothed, unused to such rough, although well-meant dictation. His voice trembled, for he was still weak, and at the sound Inez forgot all else in her love and solicitude.

"We will obey him, Stefano," she whispered softly. "He means all for the best, and I— Oh, I cannot let you leave me again."

So John Oliver had his way, and a week later the seaside cottage was crowded with the witnesses of Stephen Hay's bridal, after which Oliver, Stephen and Inez sailed for England, accompanied by Tempie, Rosita and Untequit who, at the last moment, yielded to Stephen's entreaties.

John Oliver came to his own, and in great content lived for some years to enjoy his good fortune, and at his death left his estates to Inez and her heirs, and a large sum of money to Stephen, who long before this had become a successful gentleman farmer.

Tempie regained her health, and married an English officer, who before the American war had sold out, and taken an estate close by the Oliver manor. Both he and Stephen Hay were found among the many who opposed the measures, which sundered the ties between England and her American colonies.

Untequit for a few years acted as Stephen's assistant on the Oliver estates; but he chafed under the restraints of English social life, and his health suffered to such an extent that the family physician declared that he must seek a milder climate. He took passage for Jamaica and joining the Maroons became a chief among them, and was one of the last who submitted to the English authorities, at or near the close of the last century.

Chapter XL.

Conclusion

In the year of our Lord 1854, a boy of ten was rummaging the garret of the old Hay homestead at S——. At an age when boys are generally robust and mischievous he appeared to be weak of body and thoughtful beyond his years, though his attention seemed to be about equally divided between a lot of old colonial papers, proclamations, and antiquated books, and some battered arms and equipments dating back to the wars of the colonies and of the revolution. Two rapiers without scabbards and covered with rust, at last attracted his attention, and taking them below, he asked an amiable looking old gentleman if he could be permitted to keep them.

"Keep them? Yes, yes! but take care to hurt no one, and don't get the rust on your nice suit."

"I will clean them in the sand," said the boy. "Whose were they, grandpa?"

"I can tell you but little, my boy," he said slowly, removing his pipe, and evidently striving to remember some story learned in youth, "but his name was Stephen Hay, who went in the old wars as a soldier or sailor, or both, to the Spanish Main, and the siege of Louisbourg. Some say that he was drowned between here and Boston from a sloop, and that for some reason the man who was with him failed to pick him up, though he swam well and valiantly for his life."

"And what else?—what else, grandpa?" asked the boy, eagerly, his large eyes dilating with interest as he poised first one light rapier and then the other.

"There is nothing else, except his will and some few small papers among the deeds up stairs. No one knows where he was buried; and though they say that he was strong and beautiful beyond most men, he died long, very long ago, and is forgotten."

From the researches of later years, from the lists of officers and soldiers, and fragmentary bits of the scant newspaper intelligence and correspondence of that day, something was added in after years, and of its value those must judge who have followed the story to its close. But its hero, despite his manly beauty and stainless loyalty, his strange adventures, and brave exploits, so far as the traditions of his own people are concerned, lies in an unknown grave, over which, if it could be found, might well be written the words of the wisdom of Solomon:

"And our name shall be forgotten among men, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as the mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof.

"For our time is a very shadow, that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning; for it is fast sealed, so that there is no returning."

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