
The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean

by R.M.Ballantyne

CHAPTER XXIII.

Bloody Bill - Dark surmises - A strange sail, and a strange crew,
and a still stranger cargo - New reasons for favouring missionaries
- A murderous massacre, and thoughts thereon.

THREE weeks after the conversation narrated in the last chapter, I was standing on the quarter-deck of the schooner watching the gambols of a shoal of porpoises that swam round us. It was a dead calm. One of those still, hot, sweltering days, so common in the Pacific, when Nature seems to have gone to sleep, and the only thing in water or in air that proves her still alive, is her long, deep breathing, in the swell of the mighty sea. No cloud floated in the deep blue above; no ripple broke the reflected blue below. The sun shone fiercely in the sky, and a ball of fire blazed, with almost equal power, from out the bosom of the water. So intensely still was it, and so perfectly transparent was the surface of the deep, that had it not been for the long swell already alluded to, we might have believed the surrounding universe to be a huge blue

liquid ball, and our little ship the one solitary material speck in all creation, floating in the midst of it.

No sound broke on our ears save the soft puff now and then of a porpoise, the slow creak of the masts, as we swayed gently on the swell, the patter of the reef-points, and the occasional flap of the hanging sails. An awning covered the fore and after parts of the schooner, under which the men composing the watch on deck lolled in sleepy indolence, overcome with excessive heat. Bloody Bill, as the men invariably called him, was standing at the tiller, but his post for the present was a sinecure, and he whiled away the time by alternately gazing in dreamy abstraction at the compass in the binnacle, and by walking to the taffrail in order to spit into the sea. In one of these turns he came near to where I was standing, and, leaning over the side, looked long and earnestly down into the blue wave.

This man, although he was always taciturn and often surly, was the only human being on board with whom I had the slightest desire to become better acquainted. The other men, seeing that I did not relish their company, and knowing that I was a protege of the captain, treated me with total indifference. Bloody Bill, it is

true, did the same; but as this was his conduct towards every one else, it was not peculiar in reference to me. Once or twice I tried to draw him into conversation, but he always turned away after a few cold monosyllables. As he now leaned over the taffrail close beside me, I said to him, -

"Bill, why is it that you are so gloomy? Why do you never speak to any one?"

Bill smiled slightly as he replied, "Why, I s'pose it's because I haint got nothin' to say!"

"That's strange," said I, musingly; "you look like a man that could think, and such men can usually speak."

"So they can, youngster," rejoined Bill, somewhat sternly; "and I could speak too if I had a mind to, but what's the use o' speakin' here! The men only open their mouths to curse and swear, an' they seem to find it entertaining; but I don't, so I hold my tongue."

"Well, Bill, that's true, and I would rather not hear you speak at all than hear you speak like the other men; but I don't swear,

Bill, so you might talk to me sometimes, I think. Besides, I'm weary of spending day after day in this way, without a single soul to say a pleasant word to. I've been used to friendly conversation, Bill, and I really would take it kind if you would talk with me a little now and then."

Bill looked at me in surprise, and I thought I observed a sad expression pass across his sun-burnt face.

"An' where have you been used to friendly conversation," said Bill, looking down again into the sea; "not on that Coral Island, I take it?"

"Yes, indeed," said I energetically; "I have spent many of the happiest months in my life on that Coral Island;" and without waiting to be further questioned, I launched out into a glowing account of the happy life that Jack and Peterkin and I had spent together, and related minutely every circumstance that befell us while on the island.

"Boy, boy," said Bill, in a voice so deep that it startled me, "this is no place for you."

"That's true," said I; "I'm of little use on board, and I don't like my comrades; but I can't help it, and at anyrate I hope to be free again soon."

"Free?" said Bill, looking at me in surprise.

"Yes, free," returned I; "the captain said he would put me ashore after this trip was over."

"THIS TRIP! Hark'ee, boy," said Bill, lowering his voice, "what said the captain to you the day you came aboard?"

"He said that he was a trader in sandal-wood and no pirate, and told me that if I would join him for this trip he would give me a good share of the profits or put me on shore in some civilized island if I chose."

Bill's brows lowered savagely as he muttered, "Ay, he said truth when he told you he was a sandal-wood trader, but he lied when - "

"Sail ho!" shouted the look-out at the masthead.

"Where, away?" cried Bill, springing to the tiller; while the men, startled by the sudden cry jumped up and gazed round the horizon.

"On the starboard quarter, hull down, sir," answered the look-out.

At this moment the captain came on deck, and mounting into the rigging, surveyed the sail through the glass. Then sweeping his eye round the horizon he gazed steadily at a particular point.

"Take in top-sails," shouted the captain, swinging himself down on the deck by the main-back stay.

"Take in top-sails," roared the first mate.

"Ay, ay, sir-r-r," answered the men as they sprang into the rigging and went aloft like cats.

Instantly all was bustle on board the hitherto quiet schooner. The top-sails were taken in and stowed, the men stood by the sheets and halyards, and the captain gazed anxiously at the breeze which was now rushing towards us like a sheet of dark blue. In a few seconds

it struck us. The schooner trembled as if in surprise at the sudden onset, while she fell away, then bending gracefully to the wind, as though in acknowledgment of her subjection, she cut through the waves with her sharp prow like a dolphin, while Bill directed her course towards the strange sail.

In half an hour we neared her sufficiently to make out that she was a schooner, and, from the clumsy appearance of her masts and sails we judged her to be a trader. She evidently did not like our appearance, for, the instant the breeze reached her, she crowded all sail and showed us her stern. As the breeze had moderated a little our top-sails were again shaken out, and it soon became evident, - despite the proverb, "A stern chase is a long one," that we doubled her speed and would overhaul her speedily. When within a mile we hoisted British colours, but receiving no acknowledgment, the captain ordered a shot to be fired across her bows. In a moment, to my surprise, a large portion of the bottom of the boat amidships was removed, and in the hole thus exposed appeared an immense brass gun. It worked on a swivel and was elevated by means of machinery. It was quickly loaded and fired. The heavy ball struck the water a few yards ahead of the chase, and, ricochetting into the air, plunged into the sea a mile beyond it.

This produced the desired effect. The strange vessel backed her top-sails and hove-to, while we ranged up and lay-to, about a hundred yards off.

"Lower the boat," cried the captain.

In a second the boat was lowered and manned by a part of the crew, who were all armed with cutlasses and pistols. As the captain passed me to get into it, he said, "jump into the stern sheets, Ralph, I may want you." I obeyed, and in ten minutes more we were standing on the stranger's deck. We were all much surprised at the sight that met our eyes. Instead of a crew of such sailors as we were accustomed to see, there were only fifteen blacks standing on the quarter-deck and regarding us with looks of undisguised alarm. They were totally unarmed and most of them unclothed; one or two, however, wore portions of European attire. One had on a pair of duck trousers which were much too large for him and stuck out in a most ungainly manner. Another wore nothing but the common scanty native garment round the loins, and a black beaver hat. But the most ludicrous personage of all, and one who seemed to be chief, was a tall middle-aged man, of a mild, simple expression of

countenance, who wore a white cotton shirt, a swallow-tailed coat, and a straw hat, while his black brawny legs were totally uncovered below the knees.

"Where's the commander of this ship?" inquired our captain, stepping up to this individual.

"I is capin," he answered, taking off his straw hat and making a low bow.

"You!" said our captain, in surprise. "Where do you come from, and where are you bound? What cargo have you aboard?"

"We is come," answered the man with the swallow-tail, "from Aitutaki; we was go for Rarotonga. We is native miss'nary ship; our name is de OLIVE BRANCH; an' our cargo is two tons cocoa-nuts, seventy pigs, twenty cats, and de Gosp'l."

This announcement was received by the crew of our vessel with a shout of laughter, which, however, was peremptorily checked by the captain, whose expression instantly changed from one of severity to that of frank urbanity as he advanced towards the missionary and

shook him warmly by the hand.

"I am very glad to have fallen in with you," said he, "and I wish you much success in your missionary labours. Pray take me to your cabin, as I wish to converse with you privately."

The missionary immediately took him by the hand, and as he led him away I heard him saying, "Me most glad to find you trader; we t'ought you be pirate. You very like one 'bout the masts."

What conversation the captain had with this man I never heard, but he came on deck again in a quarter of an hour, and, shaking hands cordially with the missionary, ordered us into our boat and returned to the schooner, which was immediately put before the wind. In a few minutes the OLIVE BRANCH was left far behind us.

That afternoon, as I was down below at dinner, I heard the men talking about this curious ship.

"I wonder," said one, "why our captain looked so sweet on yon swallow-tailed super-cargo o' pigs and Gospels. If it had been an ordinary trader, now, he would have taken as many o' the pigs as he

required and sent the ship with all on board to the bottom."

"Why, Dick, you must be new to these seas if you don't know that," cried another. "The captain cares as much for the gospel as you do (an' that's precious little), but he knows, and everybody knows, that the only place among the southern islands where a ship can put in and get what she wants in comfort, is where the gospel has been sent to. There are hundreds o' islands, at this blessed moment, where you might as well jump straight into a shark's maw as land without a band o' thirty comrades armed to the teeth to back you."

"Ay," said a man with a deep scar over his right eye, "Dick's new to the work. But if the captain takes us for a cargo o' sandalwood to the Feejees he'll get a taste o' these black gentry in their native condition. For my part I don't know, an' I don't care, what the gospel does to them; but I know that when any o' the islands chance to get it, trade goes all smooth an' easy; but where they ha'nt got it, Beelzebub himself could hardly desire better company."

"Well, you ought to be a good judge," cried another, laughing, "for you've never kept any company but the worst all your life!"

"Ralph Rover!" shouted a voice down the hatchway. "Captain wants you, aft."

Springing up the ladder I hastened to the cabin, pondering as I went the strange testimony borne by these men to the effect of the gospel on savage natures; - testimony which, as it was perfectly disinterested, I had no doubt whatever was strictly true.

On coming again on deck I found Bloody Bill at the helm, and as we were alone together I tried to draw him into conversation. After repeating to him the conversation in the forecastle about the missionaries, I said, -

"Tell me, Bill, is this schooner really a trader in sandal-wood?"

"Yes, Ralph, she is; but she's just as really a pirate. The black flag you saw flying at the peak was no deception."

"Then how can you say she's a trader?" asked I.

"Why, as to that, she trades when she can't take by force, but she

takes by force, when she can, in preference. Ralph," he added, lowering his voice, "if you had seen the bloody deeds that I have witnessed done on these decks you would not need to ask if we were pirates. But you'll find it out soon enough. As for the missionaries, the captain favours them because they are useful to him. The South-Sea islanders are such incarnate fiends that they are the better of being tamed, and the missionaries are the only men who can do it."

Our track after this lay through several clusters of small islets, among which we were becalmed more than once. During this part of our voyage the watch on deck and the look-out at the mast-head were more than usually vigilant, as we were not only in danger of being attacked by the natives, who, I learned from the captain's remarks, were a bloody and deceitful tribe at this group, but we were also exposed to much risk from the multitudes of coral reefs that rose up in the channels between the islands, some of them just above the surface, others a few feet below it. Our precautions against the savages I found were indeed necessary.

One day we were becalmed among a group of small islands, most of which appeared to be uninhabited. As we were in want of fresh

water the captain sent the boat ashore to bring off a cask or two. But we were mistaken in thinking there were no natives; for scarcely had we drawn near to the shore when a band of naked blacks rushed out of the bush and assembled on the beach, brandishing their clubs and spears in a threatening manner. Our men were well armed, but refrained from showing any signs of hostility, and rowed nearer in order to converse with the natives; and I now found that more than one of the crew could imperfectly speak dialects of the language peculiar to the South Sea islanders. When within forty yards of the shore, we ceased rowing, and the first mate stood up to address the multitude; but, instead of answering us, they replied with a shower of stones, some of which cut the men severely. Instantly our muskets were levelled, and a volley was about to be fired, when the captain hailed us in a loud voice from the schooner, which lay not more than five or six hundred yards off the shore.

"Don't fire," he shouted, angrily. "Pull off to the point ahead of you."

The men looked surprised at this order, and uttered deep curses as they prepared to obey, for their wrath was roused and they burned

for revenge. Three or four of them hesitated, and seemed disposed to mutiny.

"Don't distress yourselves, lads," said the mate, while a bitter smile curled his lip. "Obey orders. The captain's not the man to take an insult tamely. If Long Tom does not speak presently I'll give myself to the sharks."

The men smiled significantly as they pulled from the shore, which was now crowded with a dense mass of savages, amounting, probably, to five or six hundred. We had not rowed off above a couple of hundred yards when a loud roar thundered over the sea, and the big brass gun sent a withering shower of grape point blank into the midst of the living mass, through which a wide lane was cut, while a yell, the like of which I could not have imagined, burst from the miserable survivors as they fled to the woods. Amongst the heaps of dead that lay on the sand, just where they had fallen, I could distinguish mutilated forms writhing in agony, while ever and anon one and another rose convulsively from out the mass, endeavoured to stagger towards the wood, and ere they had taken a few steps, fell and wallowed on the bloody sand. My blood curdled within me as I witnessed this frightful and wanton slaughter; but I had little

time to think, for the captain's deep voice came again over the water towards us: "Pull ashore, lads, and fill your water casks." The men obeyed in silence, and it seemed to me as if even their hard hearts were shocked by the ruthless deed. On gaining the mouth of the rivulet at which we intended to take in water, we found it flowing with blood, for the greater part of those who were slain had been standing on the banks of the stream, a short way above its mouth. Many of the wretched creatures had fallen into it, and we found one body, which had been carried down, jammed between two rocks, with the staring eyeballs turned towards us and his black hair waving in the ripples of the blood-red stream. No one dared to oppose our landing now, so we carried our casks to a pool above the murdered group, and having filled them, returned on board. Fortunately a breeze sprang up soon afterwards and carried us away from the dreadful spot; but it could not waft me away from the memory of what I had seen.

"And this," thought I, gazing in horror at the captain, who, with a quiet look of indifference, leaned upon the taffrail smoking a cigar and contemplating the fertile green islets as they passed like a lovely picture before our eyes - "this is the man who favours the missionaries because they are useful to him and can

tame the savages better than any one else can do it!" Then I wondered in my mind whether it were possible for any missionary to tame HIM!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Bloody Bill is communicative and sagacious - Unpleasant prospects - Retrospective meditations interrupted by volcanic agency - The pirates negotiate with a Feejee chief - Various etceteras that are calculated to surprise and horrify.

IT was many days after the events just narrated ere I recovered a little of my wonted spirits. I could not shake off the feeling for a long time that I was in a frightful dream, and the sight of our captain filled me with so much horror that I kept out of his way as much as my duties about the cabin would permit. Fortunately he

took so little notice of me that he did not observe my changed feelings towards him, otherwise it might have been worse for me.

But I was now resolved that I would run away the very first island we should land at, and commit myself to the hospitality of the natives rather than remain an hour longer than I could help in the pirate schooner. I pondered this subject a good deal, and at last made up my mind to communicate my intention to Bloody Bill; for, during several talks I had had with him of late, I felt assured that he too would willingly escape if possible. When I told him of my design he shook his head. "No, no, Ralph," said he, "you must not think of running away here. Among some of the groups of islands you might do so with safety, but if you tried it here you would find that you had jumped out of the fryin' pan into the fire."

"How so, Bill?" said I, "would the natives not receive me?"

"That they would, lad; but they would eat you too."

"Eat me!" said I in surprise, "I thought the South Sea islanders never ate anybody except their enemies."

"Humph!" ejaculated Bill. "I s'pose 'twas yer tender-hearted friends in England that put that notion into your head. There's a set o' soft-hearted folk at home that I knows on, who don't like to have their feelin's ruffled, and when you tell them anything they don't like - that shocks them, as they call it - no matter how true it be, they stop their ears and cry out, 'Oh, that is TOO horrible! We can't believe that!' An' they say truth. They can't believe it 'cause they won't believe it. Now, I believe there's thousands o' the people in England who are sich born drivellin' WONT-BELIEVERS that they think the black fellows hereaway, at the worst, eat an enemy only now an' then, out o' spite; whereas, I know for certain, and many captains of the British and American navies know as well as me, that the Feejee islanders eat not only their enemies but one another; and they do it not for spite, but for pleasure. It's a FACT that they prefer human flesh to any other. But they don't like white men's flesh so well as black. They say it makes them sick."

"Why, Bill," said I, "you told me just now that they would eat ME if they caught me."

"So I did; and so I think they would. I've only heard some o' them say they don't like white men SO WELL as black; but if they was hungry they wouldn't be particular. Anyhow, I'm sure they would kill you. You see, Ralph, I've been a good while in them parts, and I've visited the different groups of islands oftentimes as a trader. And thorough goin' blackguards some o' them traders are. No better than pirates, I can tell you. One captain that I sailed with was not a chip better than the one we're with now. He was tradin' with a friendly chief one day, aboard his vessel. The chief had swam off to us with the things for trade tied a-top of his head, for them chaps are like otters in the water. Well, the chief was hard on the captain, and would not part with some o' his things. When their bargainin' was over they shook hands, and the chief jumped over board to swim ashore; but before he got forty yards from the ship the captain seized a musket and shot him dead. He then hove up anchor and put to sea, and as we sailed along shore, he dropped six black-fellows with his rifle, remarkin' that 'that would spoil the trade for the next comers.' But, as I was sayin', I'm up to the ways o' these fellows. One o' the laws o' the country is, that every shipwrecked person who happens to be cast ashore, be he dead or alive, is doomed to be roasted and eaten. There was a small tradin' schooner wrecked off one of these

islands when we were lyin' there in harbour during a storm. The crew was lost, all but three men, who swam ashore. The moment they landed they were seized by the natives and carried up into the woods. We knew pretty well what their fate would be, but we could not help them, for our crew was small, and if we had gone ashore they would likely have killed us all. We never saw the three men again; but we heard frightful yelling, and dancing, and merry-making that night; and one of the natives, who came aboard to trade with us next day, told us that the LONG PIGS, as he called the men, had been roasted and eaten, and their bones were to be converted into sail needles. He also said that white men were bad to eat, and that most o' the people on shore were sick."

I was very much shocked and cast down in my mind at this terrible account of the natives, and asked Bill what he would advise me to do. Looking round the deck to make sure that we were not overheard, he lowered his voice and said, "There are two or three ways that we might escape, Ralph, but none o' them's easy. If the captain would only sail for some o' the islands near Tahiti, we might run away there well enough, because the natives are all Christians; an' we find that wherever the savages take up with Christianity they always give over their bloody ways, and are safe

to be trusted. I never cared for Christianity myself," he continued, in a soliloquising voice, "and I don't well know what it means; but a man with half an eye can see what it does for these black critters. However, the captain always keeps a sharp look out after us when we get to these islands, for he half suspects that one or two o' us are tired of his company. Then, we might manage to cut the boat adrift some fine night when it's our watch on deck, and clear off before they discovered that we were gone. But we would run the risk o' bein' caught by the blacks. I wouldn't like to try that plan. But you and I will think over it, Ralph, and see what's to be done. In the meantime it's our watch below, so I'll go and turn in."

Bill then bade me good night, and went below, while a comrade took his place at the helm; but, feeling no desire to enter into conversation with him, I walked aft, and, leaning over the stern, looked down into the phosphorescent waves that gargled around the ladder, and streamed out like a flame of blue light in the vessel's wake. My thoughts were very sad, and I could scarce refrain from tears as I contrasted my present wretched position with the happy, peaceful time, I had spent on the Coral Island with my dear companions. As I thought upon Jack and Peterkin anxious

forebodings crossed my mind, and I pictured to myself the grief and dismay with which they would search every nook and corner of the island, in a vain attempt to discover my dead body; for I felt assured that if they did not see any sign of the pirate schooner or boat, when they came out of the cave to look for me, they would never imagine that I had been carried away. I wondered, too, how Jack would succeed in getting Peterkin out of the cave without my assistance; and I trembled when I thought that he might lose presence of mind, and begin to kick when he was in the tunnel! These thoughts were suddenly interrupted and put to flight by a bright red blaze which lighted up the horizon to the southward, and cut a crimson glow far over the sea. This appearance was accompanied by a low growling sound, as of distant thunder, and, at the same time, the sky above us became black, while a hot stifling wind blew around us in fitful gusts.

The crew assembled hastily on deck, and most of them were under the belief that a frightful hurricane was pending; but the captain coming on deck, soon explained the phenomena.

"It's only a volcano," said he. "I knew there was one hereabouts, but thought it was extinct. Up there and furl top-gallant-sails;

we'll likely have a breeze, and it's well to be ready."

As he spoke, a shower began to fall, which we quickly observed was not rain, but fine ashes. As we were many miles distant from the volcano, these must have been carried to us from it by the wind.

As the captain had predicted, a stiff breeze soon afterwards sprang up, under the influence of which we speedily left the volcano far behind us; but during the greater part of the night we could see its lurid glare and hear its distant thunder. The shower did not cease to fall for several hours, and we must have sailed under it for nearly forty miles, perhaps farther. When we emerged from the cloud, our decks and every part of the rigging were completely covered with a thick coat of ashes. I was much interested in this, and recollected that Jack had often spoken of many of the islands of the Pacific as being volcanoes, either active or extinct, and had said that the whole region was more or less volcanic, and that some scientific men were of opinion that the islands of the Pacific were nothing more or less than the mountain tops of a huge continent which had sunk under the influence of volcanic agency.

Three days after passing the volcano, we found ourselves a few miles to windward of an island of considerable size and luxuriant

aspect. It consisted of two mountains, which seemed to be nearly four thousand feet high. They were separated from each other by a broad valley, whose thick-growing trees ascended a considerable distance up the mountain sides; and rich level plains, or meadow-land, spread round the base of the mountains, except at the point immediately opposite the large valley, where a river seemed to carry the trees, as it were, along with it down to the white sandy shore. The mountain tops, unlike those of our Coral Island, were sharp, needle-shaped, and bare, while their sides were more rugged and grand in outline than anything I had yet seen in those seas. Bloody Bill was beside me when the island first hove in sight.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "I know that island well. They call it Emo."

"Have you been here before, then?" I inquired.

"Ay, that I have, often, and so has this schooner. 'Tis a famous island for sandal-wood. We have taken many cargoes off it already, and have paid for them too; for the savages are so numerous that we dared not try to take it by force. But our captain has tried to cheat them so often, that they're beginnin' not to like us overmuch now. Besides, the men behaved ill the last time we were here; and

I wonder the captain is not afraid to venture. But he's afraid o' nothing earthly, I believe."

We soon ran inside the barrier coral-reef, and let go our anchor in six fathoms water, just opposite the mouth of a small creek, whose shores were densely covered with mangroves and tall umbrageous trees. The principal village of the natives lay about half a mile from this point. Ordering the boat out, the captain jumped into it, and ordered me to follow him. The men, fifteen in number, were well armed; and the mate was directed to have Long Tom ready for emergencies.

"Give way, lads," cried the captain.

The oars fell into the water at the word, the boat shot from the schooner's side, and in a few minutes reached the shore. Here, contrary to our expectation, we were met with the utmost cordiality by Romata, the principal chief of the island, who conducted us to his house, and gave us mats to sit upon. I observed in passing that the natives, of whom there were two or three thousand, were totally unarmed.

After a short preliminary palaver, a feast of baked pigs and various roots was spread before us; of which we partook sparingly, and then proceeded to business. The captain stated his object in visiting the island, regretted that there had been a slight misunderstanding during the last visit, and hoped that no ill-will was borne by either party, and that a satisfactory trade would be accomplished.

Romata answered that he had forgotten there had been any differences between them, protested that he was delighted to see his friends again, and assured them they should have every assistance in cutting and embarking the wood. The terms were afterwards agreed on, and we rose to depart. All this conversation was afterwards explained to me by Bill, who understood the language pretty well.

Romata accompanied us on board, and explained that a great chief from another island was then on a visit to him, and that he was to be ceremoniously entertained on the following day. After begging to be allowed to introduce him to us, and receiving permission, he sent his canoe ashore to bring him off. At the same time he gave orders to bring on board his two favourites, a cock and a paroquet.

While the canoe was gone on this errand, I had time to regard the savage chief attentively. He was a man of immense size, with massive but beautifully moulded limbs and figure, only parts of which, the broad chest and muscular arms, were uncovered; for, although the lower orders generally wore no other clothing than a strip of cloth called MARO round their loins, the chief, on particular occasions, wrapped his person in voluminous folds of a species of native cloth made from the bark of the Chinese paper-mulberry. Romata wore a magnificent black beard and moustache, and his hair was frizzed out to such an extent that it resembled a large turban, in which was stuck a long wooden pin! I afterwards found that this pin served for scratching the head, for which purpose the fingers were too short without disarranging the hair. But Romata put himself to much greater inconvenience on account of his hair, for we found that he slept with his head resting on a wooden pillow, in which was cut a hollow for the neck, so that the hair of the sleeper might not be disarranged.

In ten minutes the canoe returned, bringing the other chief, who certainly presented a most extraordinary appearance, having painted one half of his face red and the other half yellow, besides ornamenting it with various designs in black! Otherwise he was

much the same in appearance as Romata, though not so powerfully built. As this chief had never seen a ship before, except, perchance, some of the petty traders that at long intervals visit these remote islands, he was much taken up with the neatness and beauty of all the fittings of the schooner. He was particularly struck with a musket which was shown to him, and asked where the white men got hatchets hard enough to cut the tree of which the barrel was made! While he was thus engaged, his brother chief stood aloof, talking with the captain, and fondling a superb cock and a little blue-headed paroquet, the favourites of which I have before spoken. I observed that all the other natives walked in a crouching posture while in the presence of Romata. Before our guests left us, the captain ordered the brass gun to be uncovered and fired for their gratification; and I have every reason to believe he did so for the purpose of showing our superior power, in case the natives should harbour any evil designs against us.

Romata had never seen this gun before, as it had not been uncovered on previous visits, and the astonishment with which he viewed it was very amusing. Being desirous of knowing its power, he begged that the captain would fire it. So a shot was put into it. The chiefs were then directed to look at a rock about two miles out at sea, and the gun was fired. In a second the top of the rock was

seen to burst asunder, and to fall in fragments into the sea.

Romata was so delighted with the success of this shot, that he pointed to a man who was walking on the shore, and begged the captain to fire at him, evidently supposing that his permission was quite sufficient to justify the captain in such an act. He was therefore surprised, and not a little annoyed, when the captain refused to fire at the native, and ordered the gun to be housed.

Of all the things, however, that afforded matter of amusement to these savages, that which pleased Romata's visitor most was the ship's pump. He never tired of examining it, and pumping up the water. Indeed, so much was he taken up with this pump, that he could not be prevailed on to return on shore, but sent a canoe to fetch his favourite stool, on which he seated himself, and spent the remainder of the day in pumping the bilge-water out of the ship!

Next day the crew went ashore to cut sandal-wood, while the captain, with one or two men, remained on board, in order to be ready, if need be, with the brass gun, which was unhoused and conspicuously elevated, with its capacious muzzle directed point

blank at the chief's house. The men were fully armed as usual; and the captain ordered me to go with them, to assist in the work. I was much pleased with this order, for it freed me from the captain's company, which I could not now endure, and it gave me an opportunity of seeing the natives.

As we wound along in single file through the rich fragrant groves of banana, cocoa-nut, bread-fruit, and other trees, I observed that there were many of the plum and banian trees, with which I had become familiar on the Coral Island. I noticed also large quantities of taro-roots, yams, and sweet potatoes, growing in enclosures. On turning into an open glade of the woods, we came abruptly upon a cluster of native houses. They were built chiefly of bamboos, and were thatched with the large thick leaves of the pandanus; but many of them had little more than a sloping roof and three sides with an open front, being the most simple shelter from the weather that could well be imagined. Within these, and around them, were groups of natives - men, women, and children - who all stood up to gaze at us as we marched along, followed by the party of men whom the chief had sent to escort us. About half a mile inland we arrived at the spot where the sandal-wood grew, and, while the men set to work, I clambered up an adjoining hill to

observe the country.

About mid-day, the chief arrived with several followers, one of whom carried a baked pig on a wooden platter, with yams and potatoes on several plantain leaves, which he presented to the men, who sat down under the shade of a tree to dine. The chief sat down to dine also; but, to my surprise, instead of feeding himself, one of his wives performed that office for him! I was seated beside Bill, and asked him the reason of this.

"It is beneath his dignity, I believe, to feed himself," answered Bill; "but I daresay he's not particular, except on great occasions. They've a strange custom among them, Ralph, which is called TABU, and they carry it to great lengths. If a man chooses a particular tree for his god, the fruit o' that tree is tabued to him; and if he eats it, he is sure to be killed by his people, and eaten, of course, for killing means eating hereaway. Then, you see that great mop o' hair on the chief's head? Well, he has a lot o' barbers to keep it in order; and it's a law that whoever touches the head of a living chief or the body of a dead one, his hands are tabued; so, in that way, the barbers' hands are always tabued, and they daren't use them for their lives, but have to be fed like big

babies, as they are, sure enough!"

"That's odd, Bill. But look there," said I, pointing to a man whose skin was of a much lighter colour than the generality of the natives. "I've seen a few of these light-skinned fellows among the Fejeeans. They seem to me to be of quite a different race."

"So they are," answered Bill. "These fellows come from the Tongan Islands, which lie a long way to the eastward. They come here to build their big war-canoes; and as these take two, and sometimes four years, to build, there's always some o' the brown-skins among the black serpents o' these islands."

"By the way, Bill," said I, "your mentioning serpents, reminds me that I have not seen a reptile of any kind since I came to this part of the world."

"No more there are any," said Bill, "if ye except the niggers themselves, there's none on the islands, but a lizard or two and some sich harmless things. But I never seed any myself. If there's none on the land, however, there's more than enough in the water, and that minds me of a wonderful brute they have here. But,

come, I'll show it to you." So saying, Bill arose, and, leaving the men still busy with the baked pig, led me into the forest. After proceeding a short distance we came upon a small pond of stagnant water. A native lad had followed us, to whom we called and beckoned him to come to us. On Bill saying a few words to him, which I did not understand, the boy advanced to the edge of the pond, and gave a low peculiar whistle. Immediately the water became agitated and an enormous eel thrust its head above the surface and allowed the youth to touch it. It was about twelve feet long, and as thick round the body as a man's thigh.

"There," said Bill, his lip curling with contempt, "what do you think of that for a god, Ralph? This is one o' their gods, and it has been fed with dozens o' livin' babies already. How many more it'll get afore it dies is hard to say."

"Babies?" said I, with an incredulous look

"Ay, babies," returned Bill. "Your soft-hearted folk at home would say, 'Oh, horrible! impossible!' to that, and then go away as comfortable and unconcerned as if their sayin' 'horrible! impossible!' had made it a lie. But I tell you, Ralph, it's a

FACT. I've seed it with my own eyes the last time I was here, an' mayhap if you stop a while at this accursed place, and keep a sharp look out, you'll see it too. They don't feed it regularly with livin' babies, but they give it one now and then as a treat. Bah! you brute!" cried Bill, in disgust, giving the reptile a kick on the snout with his heavy boot, that sent it sweltering back in agony into its loathsome pool. I thought it lucky for Bill, indeed for all of us, that the native youth's back happened to be turned at the time, for I am certain that if the poor savages had come to know that we had so rudely handled their god, we should have had to fight our way back to the ship. As we retraced our steps I questioned my companion further on this subject.

"How comes it, Bill, that the mothers allow such a dreadful thing to be done?"

"Allow it? the mothers DO it! It seems to me that there's nothing too fiendish or diabolical for these people to do. Why, in some of the islands they have an institution called the AREOI, and the persons connected with that body are ready for any wickedness that mortal man can devise. In fact they stick at nothing; and one o' their customs is to murder their infants the moment they are born.

The mothers agree to it, and the fathers do it. And the mildest ways they have of murdering them is by sticking them through the body with sharp splinters of bamboo, strangling them with their thumbs, or burying them alive and stamping them to death while under the sod."

I felt sick at heart while my companion recited these horrors.

"But it's a curious fact," he continued, after a pause, during which we walked in silence towards the spot where we had left our comrades, - "it's a curious fact, that wherever the missionaries get a footin' all these things come to an end at once, an' the savages take to doin' each other good, and singin' psalms, just like Methodists."

"God bless the missionaries!" said I, while a feeling of enthusiasm filled my heart, so that I could speak with difficulty. "God bless and prosper the missionaries till they get a footing in every island of the sea!"

"I would say Amen to that prayer, Ralph, if I could," said Bill, in a deep, sad voice; "but it would be a mere mockery for a man to ask

a blessing for others who dare not ask one for himself. But, Ralph," he continued, "I've not told you half o' the abominations I have seen durin' my life in these seas. If we pull long together, lad, I'll tell you more; and if times have not changed very much since I was here last, it's like that you'll have a chance o' seeing a little for yourself before long."

CHAPTER XXV.

The Sandal-wood party - Native children's games, somewhat surprising - Desperate amusements suddenly and fatally brought to a close - An old friend recognised - News - Romata's mad conduct

NEXT day the wood-cutting party went ashore again, and I accompanied them as before. During the dinner hour I wandered into the woods alone, being disinclined for food that day. I had not

rambled far when I found myself unexpectedly on the sea-shore, having crossed a narrow neck of land which separated the native village from a large bay. Here I found a party of the islanders busy with one of their war-canoes, which was almost ready for launching. I stood for a long time watching this party with great interest, and observed that they fastened the timbers and planks to each other very much in the same way in which I had seen Jack fasten those of our little boat. But what surprised me most was its immense length, which I measured very carefully, and found to be a hundred feet long; and it was so capacious that it could have held three hundred men. It had the unwieldy out-rigger and enormously high stern-posts which I had remarked on the canoe that came to us while I was on the Coral Island. Observing some boys playing at games a short way along the beach, I resolved to go and watch them; but as I turned from the natives who were engaged so busily and cheerfully at their work, I little thought of the terrible event that hung on the completion of that war-canoë.

Advancing towards the children, who were so numerous that I began to think this must be the general play-ground of the village, I sat down on a grassy bank under the shade of a plantain-tree, to watch them. And a happier or more noisy crew I have never seen. There

were at least two hundred of them, both boys and girls, all of whom were clad in no other garments than their own glossy little black skins, except the maro, or strip of cloth round the loins of the boys, and a very short petticoat or kilt on the girls. They did not all play at the same game, but amused themselves in different groups.

One band was busily engaged in a game exactly similar to our blind-man's-buff. Another set were walking on stilts, which raised the children three feet from the ground. They were very expert at this amusement and seldom tumbled. In another place I observed a group of girls standing together, and apparently enjoying themselves very much; so I went up to see what they were doing, and found that they were opening their eye-lids with their fingers till their eyes appeared of an enormous size, and then thrusting pieces of straw between the upper and lower lids, across the eye-ball, to keep them in that position! This seemed to me, I must confess, a very foolish as well as dangerous amusement. Nevertheless the children seemed to be greatly delighted with the hideous faces they made. I pondered this subject a good deal, and thought that if little children knew how silly they seem to grown-up people when they make faces, they would not be so fond of doing it. In another place

were a number of boys engaged in flying kites, and I could not help wondering that some of the games of those little savages should be so like to our own, although they had never seen us at play. But the kites were different from ours in many respects, being of every variety of shape. They were made of very thin cloth, and the boys raised them to a wonderful height in the air by means of twine made from the cocoa-nut husk. Other games there were, some of which showed the natural depravity of the hearts of these poor savages, and made me wish fervently that missionaries might be sent out to them. But the amusement which the greatest number of the children of both sexes seemed to take chief delight in, was swimming and diving in the sea; and the expertness which they exhibited was truly amazing. They seemed to have two principal games in the water, one of which was to dive off a sort of stage which had been erected near a deep part of the sea, and chase each other in the water. Some of them went down to an extraordinary depth; others skimmed along the surface, or rolled over and over like porpoises, or diving under each other, came up unexpectedly and pulled each other down by a leg or an arm. They never seemed to tire of this sport, and, from the great heat of the water in the South Seas, they could remain in it nearly all day without feeling chilled. Many of these children were almost infants, scarce able to walk;

yet they staggered down the beach, flung their round fat little black bodies fearlessly into deep water, and struck out to sea with as much confidence as ducklings.

The other game to which I have referred was swimming in the surf. But as this is an amusement in which all engage, from children of ten to gray-headed men of sixty, and as I had an opportunity of witnessing it in perfection the day following, I shall describe it more minutely.

I suppose it was in honour of their guest that this grand swimming-match was got up, for Romata came and told the captain that they were going to engage in it, and begged him to "come and see."

"What sort of amusement is this surf swimming?" I inquired of Bill, as we walked together to a part of the shore on which several thousands of the natives were assembled.

"It's a very favourite lark with these 'xtr'or'nary critters," replied Bill, giving a turn to the quid of tobacco that invariably bulged out his left cheek. "Ye see, Ralph, them fellows take to the water as soon a'most as they can walk, an' long before they can

do that anything respectably, so that they are as much at home in the sea as on the land. Well, ye see, I 'spose they found swimmin' for miles out to sea, and divin' fathoms deep, wasn't exciting enough, so they invented this game o' the surf. Each man and boy, as you see, has got a short board or plank, with which he swims out for a mile or more to sea, and then, gettin' on the top o' yon thundering breaker, they come to shore on the top of it, yellin' and screechin' like fiends. It's a marvel to me that they're not dashed to shivers on the coral reef, for sure an' sartin am I that if any o' us tried it, we wouldn't be worth the fluke of a broken anchor after the wave fell. But there they go!"

As he spoke, several hundreds of the natives, amongst whom we were now standing, uttered a loud yell, rushed down the beach, plunged into the surf, and were carried off by the seething foam of the retreating wave.

At the point where we stood, the encircling coral reef joined the shore, so that the magnificent breakers, which a recent stiff breeze had rendered larger than usual, fell in thunder at the feet of the multitudes who lined the beach. For some time the swimmers continued to strike out to sea, breasting over the swell like

hundreds of black seals. Then they all turned, and, watching an approaching billow, mounted its white crest, and, each laying his breast on the short flat board, came rolling towards the shore, careering on the summit of the mighty wave, while they and the onlookers shouted and yelled with excitement. Just as the monster wave curled in solemn majesty to fling its bulky length upon the beach, most of the swimmers slid back into the trough behind; others, slipping off their boards, seized them in their hands, and, plunging through the watery waste, swam out to repeat the amusement; but a few, who seemed to me the most reckless, continued their career until they were launched upon the beach, and enveloped in the churning foam and spray. One of these last came in on the crest of the wave most manfully, and landed with a violent bound almost on the spot where Bill and I stood. I saw by his peculiar head-dress that he was the chief whom the tribe entertained as their guest. The sea-water had removed nearly all the paint with which his face had been covered; and, as he rose panting to his feet, I recognised, to my surprise, the features of Tararo, my old friend of the Coral Island!

Tararo at the same moment recognised me, and, advancing quickly, took me round the neck and rubbed noses; which had the effect of

transferring a good deal of the moist paint from his nose to mine.

Then, recollecting that this was not the white man's mode of salutation, he grasped me by the hand and shook it violently.

"Hallo, Ralph!" cried Bill, in surprise, "that chap seems to have taken a sudden fancy to you, or he must be an old acquaintance."

"Right, Bill," I replied, "he is indeed an old acquaintance;" and I explained in a few words that he was the chief whose party Jack and Peterkin and I had helped to save.

Tararo having thrown away his surf-board, entered into an animated conversation with Bill, pointing frequently during the course of it to me; whereby I concluded he must be telling him about the memorable battle, and the part we had taken in it. When he paused, I begged of Bill to ask him about the woman Avatea, for I had some hope that she might have come with Tararo on this visit. "And ask him," said I, "who she is, for I am persuaded she is of a different race from the Feejeeans." On the mention of her name the chief frowned darkly, and seemed to speak with much anger.

"You're right, Ralph," said Bill, when the chief had ceased to

talk; "she's not a Feejee girl, but a Samoan. How she ever came to this place the chief does not very clearly explain, but he says she was taken in war, and that he got her three years ago, an' kept her as his daughter ever since. Lucky for her, poor girl, else she'd have been roasted and eaten like the rest."

"But why does Tararo frown and look so angry?" said I.

"Because the girl's somewhat obstinate, like most o' the sex, an' won't marry the man he wants her to. It seems that a chief of some other island came on a visit to Tararo and took a fancy to her, but she wouldn't have him on no account, bein' already in love, and engaged to a young chief whom Tararo hates, and she kicked up a desperate shindy; so, as he was going on a war expedition in his canoe, he left her to think about it, sayin' he'd be back in six months or so, when he hoped she wouldn't be so obstropolous. This happened just a week ago; an' Tararo says that if she's not ready to go, when the chief returns, as his bride, she'll be sent to him as a LONG PIG."

"As a long pig!" I exclaimed in surprise; "why what does he mean by that?"

"He means somethin' very unpleasant," answered Bill with a frown.

"You see these blackguards eat men an' women just as readily as they eat pigs; and, as baked pigs and baked men are very like each other in appearance, they call men LONG pigs. If Avatea goes to this fellow as a long pig, it's all up with her, poor thing."

"Is she on the island now?" I asked eagerly.

"No, she's at Tararo's island."

"And where does it lie?"

"About fifty or sixty miles to the south'ard o' this," returned Bill; " but I - "

At this moment we were startled by the cry of "Mao! mao! - a shark! a shark!" which was immediately followed by a shriek that rang clear and fearfully loud above the tumult of cries that arose from the savages in the water and on the land. We turned hastily towards the direction whence the cry came, and had just time to observe the glaring eye-balls of one of the swimmers as he tossed

his arms in the air. Next instant he was pulled under the waves.

A canoe was instantly launched, and the hand of the drowning man was caught, but only half of his body was dragged from the maw of the monster, which followed the canoe until the water became so shallow that it could scarcely swim. The crest of the next billow was tinged with red as it rolled towards the shore.

In most countries of the world this would have made a deep impression on the spectators, but the only effect it had upon these islanders was to make them hurry with all speed out of the sea, lest a similar fate should befall some of the others; but, so utterly reckless were they of human life, that it did not for a moment suspend the progress of their amusements. It is true the surf-swimming ended for that time somewhat abruptly, but they immediately proceeded with other games. Bill told me that sharks do not often attack the surf-swimmers, being frightened away by the immense numbers of men and boys in the water, and by the shouting and splashing that they make. "But," said he, "such a thing as you have seen just now don't frighten them much. They'll be at it again to-morrow or next day, just as if there wasn't a single shark between Feejee and Nova Zembla."

After this the natives had a series of wrestling and boxing matches; and being men of immense size and muscle, they did a good deal of injury to each other, especially in boxing, in which not only the lower orders, but several of the chiefs and priests engaged. Each bout was very quickly terminated, for they did not pretend to a scientific knowledge of the art, and wasted no time in sparring, but hit straight out at each other's heads, and their blows were delivered with great force. Frequently one of the combatants was knocked down with a single blow; and one gigantic fellow hit his adversary so severely that he drove the skin entirely off his forehead. This feat was hailed with immense applause by the spectators.

During these exhibitions, which were very painful to me, though I confess I could not refrain from beholding them, I was struck with the beauty of many of the figures and designs that were tattooed on the persons of the chiefs and principal men. One figure, that seemed to me very elegant, was that of a palm-tree tattooed on the back of a man's leg, the roots rising, as it were, from under his heel, the stem ascending the tendon of the ankle, and the graceful head branching out upon the calf. I afterwards learned that this process of tattooing is very painful, and takes long to do,

commencing at the age of ten, and being continued at intervals up to the age of thirty. It is done by means of an instrument made of bone, with a number of sharp teeth with which the skin is punctured. Into these punctures a preparation made from the kernel of the candle-nut, mixed with cocoa-nut oil, is rubbed, and the mark thus made is indelible. The operation is performed by a class of men whose profession it is, and they tattoo as much at a time, as the person on whom they are operating can bear; which is not much, the pain and inflammation caused by tattooing being very great, sometimes causing death. Some of the chiefs were tattooed with an ornamental stripe down the legs, which gave them the appearance of being clad in tights. Others had marks round the ankles and insteps, which looked like tight-fitting and elegant boots. Their faces were also tattooed, and their breasts were very profusely marked with every imaginable species of device, - muskets, dogs, birds, pigs, clubs, and canoes, intermingled with lozenges, squares, circles, and other arbitrary figures.

The women were not tattooed so much as the men, having only a few marks on their feet and arms. But I must say, however objectionable this strange practice may be, it nevertheless had this good effect, that it took away very much from their appearance

of nakedness.

Next day, while we were returning from the woods to our schooner, we observed Romata rushing about in the neighbourhood of his house, apparently mad with passion.

"Ah!" said Bill to me, "there he's at his old tricks again. That's his way when he gets drink. The natives make a sort of drink o' their own, and it makes him bad enough; but when he gets brandy he's like a wild tiger. The captain, I suppose, has given him a bottle, as usual, to keep him in good humour. After drinkin' he usually goes to sleep, and the people know it well and keep out of his way, for fear they should waken him. Even the babies are taken out of ear-shot; for, when he's waked up, he rushes out just as you see him now, and spears or clubs the first person he meets."

It seemed at the present time, however, that no deadly weapon had been in his way, for the infuriated chief was raging about without one. Suddenly he caught sight of an unfortunate man who was trying to conceal himself behind a tree. Rushing towards him, Romata struck him a terrible blow on the head, which knocked out the poor man's eye and also dislocated the chief's finger. The wretched

creature offered no resistance; he did not even attempt to parry the blow. Indeed, from what Bill said, I found that he might consider himself lucky in having escaped with his life, which would certainly have been forfeited had the chief been possessed of a club at the time.

"Have these wretched creatures no law among themselves," said I, "which can restrain such wickedness?"

"None," replied Bill. "The chief's word is law. He might kill and eat a dozen of his own subjects any day for nothing more than his own pleasure, and nobody would take the least notice of it."

This ferocious deed took place within sight of our party as we wended our way to the beach, but I could not observe any other expression on the faces of the men than that of total indifference or contempt. It seemed to me a very awful thing that it should be possible for men to come to such hardness of heart and callousness to the sight of bloodshed and violence; but, indeed, I began to find that such constant exposure to scenes of blood was having a slight effect upon myself, and I shuddered when I came to think that I, too, was becoming callous.

I thought upon this subject much that night while I walked up and down the deck during my hours of watch; and I came to the conclusion that if I, who hated, abhorred, and detested such bloody deeds as I had witnessed within the last few weeks, could so soon come to be less sensitive about them, how little wonder that these poor ignorant savages, who were born and bred in familiarity therewith, should think nothing of them at all, and should hold human life in so very slight esteem.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Mischief brewing - My blood is made to run cold - Evil consultations and wicked resolves - Bloody Bill attempts to do good and fails - The attack - Wholesale murder - The flight - The escape.

NEXT morning I awoke with a feverish brow and a feeling of deep depression at my heart; and the more I thought on my unhappy fate, the more wretched and miserable did I feel.

I was surrounded on all sides by human beings of the most dreadful character, to whom the shedding of blood was mere pastime. On shore were the natives, whose practices were so horrible that I could not think of them without shuddering. On board were none but pirates of the blackest dye, who, although not cannibals, were foul murderers, and more blameworthy even than the savages, inasmuch as they knew better. Even Bill, with whom I had, under the strange circumstances of my lot, formed a kind of intimacy, was so fierce in his nature as to have acquired the title of "Bloody" from his vile companions. I felt very much cast down the more I considered the subject and the impossibility of delivery, as it seemed to me, at least for a long time to come. At last, in my feeling of utter helplessness, I prayed fervently to the Almighty that he would deliver me out of my miserable condition; and when I had done so I felt some degree of comfort.

When the captain came on deck, before the hour at which the men usually started for the woods, I begged of him to permit me to remain aboard that day, as I did not feel well; but he looked at me angrily, and ordered me, in a surly tone, to get ready to go on shore as usual. The fact was that the captain had been out of humour for some time past. Romata and he had had some differences, and high words had passed between them, during which the chief had threatened to send a fleet of his war-canoes, with a thousand men, to break up and burn the schooner; whereupon the captain smiled sarcastically, and going up to the chief gazed sternly in his face, while he said, "I have only to raise my little finger just now, and my big gun will blow your whole village to atoms in five minutes!" Although the chief was a bold man, he quailed before the pirate's glance and threat, and made no reply; but a bad feeling had been raised and old sores had been opened.

I had, therefore, to go with the wood-cutters that day. Before starting, however, the captain called me into the cabin, and said,

-

"Here, Ralph, I've got a mission for you, lad. That blackguard Romata is in the dumps, and nothing will mollify him but a gift; so

do you go up to his house and give him these whales' teeth, with my compliments. Take with you one of the men who can speak the language."

I looked at the gift in some surprise, for it consisted of six white whales' teeth, and two of the same dyed bright red, which seemed to me very paltry things. However, I did not dare to hesitate or ask any questions; so, gathering them up, I left the cabin and was soon on my way to the chief's house, accompanied by Bill. On expressing my surprise at the gift, he said, -

"They're paltry enough to you or me, Ralph, but they're considered of great value by them chaps. They're a sort o' cash among them. The red ones are the most prized, one of them bein' equal to twenty o' the white ones. I suppose the only reason for their bein' valuable is that there ain't many of them, and they're hard to be got."

On arriving at the house we found Romata sitting on a mat, in the midst of a number of large bales of native cloth and other articles, which had been brought to him as presents from time to time by inferior chiefs. He received us rather haughtily, but on

Bill explaining the nature of our errand he became very condescending, and his eyes glistened with satisfaction when he received the whales' teeth, although he laid them aside with an assumption of kingly indifference.

"Go," said he, with a wave of the hand, - "go, tell your captain that he may cut wood to-day, but not to-morrow. He must come ashore, - I want to have a palaver with him."

As we left the house to return to the woods, Bill shook his head:

"There's mischief brewin' in that black rascal's head. I know him of old. But what comes here?"

As he spoke, we heard the sound of laughter and shouting in the wood, and presently there issued from it a band of savages, in the midst of whom were a number of men bearing burdens on their shoulders. At first I thought that these burdens were poles with something rolled round them, the end of each pole resting on a man's shoulder. But on a nearer approach I saw that they were human beings, tied hand and foot, and so lashed to the poles that they could not move. I counted twenty of them as they passed.

"More murder!" said Bill, in a voice that sounded between a hoarse laugh and a groan.

"Surely they are not going to murder them?" said I, looking anxiously into Bill's face.

"I don't know, Ralph," replied Bill, "what they're goin' to do with them; but I fear they mean no good when they tie fellows up in that way."

As we continued our way towards the wood-cutters, I observed that Bill looked anxiously over his shoulder, in the direction where the procession had disappeared. At last he stopped, and turning abruptly on his heel, said, -

"I tell ye what it is, Ralph, I must be at the bottom o' that affair. Let us follow these black scoundrels and see what they're goin' to do."

I must say I had no wish to pry further into their bloody practices; but Bill seemed bent on it, so I turned and went. We

passed rapidly through the bush, being guided in the right direction by the shouts of the savages. Suddenly there was a dead silence, which continued for some time, while Bill and I involuntarily quickened our pace until we were running at the top of our speed across the narrow neck of land previously mentioned. As we reached the verge of the wood, we discovered the savages surrounding the large war-canoe, which they were apparently on the point of launching. Suddenly the multitude put their united strength to the canoe; but scarcely had the huge machine begun to move, when a yell, the most appalling that ever fell upon my ear, rose high above the shouting of the savages. It had not died away when another and another smote upon my throbbing ear; and then I saw that these inhuman monsters were actually launching their canoe over the living bodies of their victims. But there was no pity in the breasts of these men. Forward they went in ruthless indifference, shouting as they went, while high above their voices rang the dying shrieks of those wretched creatures, as, one after another, the ponderous canoe passed over them, burst the eyeballs from their sockets, and sent the life's blood gushing from their mouths. Oh, reader, this is no fiction. I would not, for the sake of thrilling you with horror, invent so terrible a scene. It was witnessed. It is true; true as that accursed sin which has

rendered the human heart capable of such diabolical enormities!

When it was over I turned round and fell upon the grass with a deep groan; but Bill seized me by the arm, and lifting me up as if I had been a child, cried, -

"Come along, lad; let's away!" - and so, staggering and stumbling over the tangled underwood, we fled from the fatal spot.

During the remainder of that day I felt as if I were in a horrible dream. I scarce knew what was said to me, and was more than once blamed by the men for idling my time. At last the hour to return aboard came. We marched down to the beach, and I felt relief for the first time when my feet rested on the schooner's deck.

In the course of the evening I overheard part of a conversation between the captain and the first mate, which startled me not a little. They were down in the cabin, and conversed in an undertone, but the sky-light being off, I overheard every word that was said.

"I don't half like it," said the mate. "It seems to me that we'll

only have hard fightin' and no pay."

"No pay!" repeated the captain, in a voice of suppressed anger.

"Do you call a good cargo all for nothing no pay?"

"Very true," returned the mate; "but we've got the cargo aboard.

Why not cut your cable and take French leave o' them? What's the use o' tryin' to lick the blackguards when it'll do us no manner o' good?"

"Mate," said the captain, in a low voice, "you talk like a fresh-water sailor. I can only attribute this shyness to some strange delusion; for surely" (his voice assumed a slightly sneering tone as he said this) "surely I am not to suppose that YOU have become soft-hearted! Besides, you are wrong in regard to the cargo being aboard; there's a good quarter of it lying in the woods, and that blackguard chief knows it and won't let me take it off. He defied us to do our worst, yesterday."

"Defied us! did he?" cried the mate, with a bitter laugh. "Poor contemptible thing!"

"And yet he seems not so contemptible but that you are afraid to attack him."

"Who said I was afraid?" growled the mate, sulkily. "I'm as ready as any man in the ship. But, captain, what is it that you intend to do?"

"I intend to muffle the sweeps and row the schooner up to the head of the creek there, from which point we can command the pile of sandal-wood with our gun. Then I shall land with all the men except two, who shall take care of the schooner and be ready with the boat to take us off. We can creep through the woods to the head of the village, where these cannibals are always dancing round their suppers of human flesh, and if the carbines of the men are loaded with a heavy charge of buck-shot, we can drop forty or fifty at the first volley. After that the thing will be easy enough. The savages will take to the mountains in a body, and we shall take what we require, up anchor, and away."

To this plan the mate at length agreed. As he left the cabin I heard the captain say, -

"Give the men an extra glass of grog, and don't forget the buck-shot."

The reader may conceive the horror with which I heard this murderous conversation. I immediately repeated it to Bill, who seemed much perplexed about it. At length he said, -

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Ralph: I'll swim ashore after dark and fix a musket to a tree not far from the place where we'll have to land, and I'll tie a long string to the trigger, so that when our fellows cross it they'll let it off, and so alarm the village in time to prevent an attack, but not in time to prevent us gettin' back to the boat; so, master captain," added Bill with a smile that for the first time seemed to me to be mingled with good-natured cheerfulness, "you'll be baulked at least for once in your life by Bloody Bill."

After it grew dark, Bill put this resolve in practice. He slipped over the side with a musket in his left hand, while with his right he swam ashore and entered the woods. He soon returned, having accomplished his purpose, and got on board without being seen, - I being the only one on deck.

When the hour of midnight approached the men were mustered on deck, the cable was cut and the muffled sweeps got out. These sweeps were immensely large oars, each requiring a couple of men to work it. In a few minutes we entered the mouth of the creek, which was indeed the mouth of a small river, and took about half an hour to ascend it, although the spot where we intended to land was not more than six hundred yards from the mouth, because there was a slight current against us, and the mangroves which narrowed the creek, impeded the rowers in some places. Having reached the spot, which was so darkened by overhanging trees that we could see with difficulty, a small kedge anchor attached to a thin line was let softly down over the stern.

"Now, lads," whispered the captain, as he walked along the line of men, who were all armed to the teeth, "don't be in a hurry, aim low, and don't waste your first shots."

He then pointed to the boat, into which the men crowded in silence. There was no room to row, but oars were not needed, as a slight push against the side of the schooner sent the boat gliding to the shore.

"There's no need of leaving two in the boat," whispered the mate, as the men stepped out; "we shall want all our hands. Let Ralph stay."

The captain assented, and ordered me to stand in readiness with the boat-hook, to shove ashore at a moment's notice if they should return, or to shove off if any of the savages should happen to approach. He then threw his carbine into the hollow of his arm and glided through the bushes followed by his men. With a throbbing head I awaited the result of our plan. I knew the exact locality where the musket was placed, for Bill had described it to me, and I kept my straining eyes fixed upon the spot. But no sound came, and I began to fear that either they had gone in another direction or that Bill had not fixed the string properly. Suddenly I heard a faint click, and observed one or two bright sparks among the bushes. My heart immediately sank within me, for I knew at once that the trigger had indeed been pulled but that the priming had not caught. The plan, therefore, had utterly failed. A feeling of dread now began to creep over me as I stood in the boat, in that dark, silent spot, awaiting the issue of this murderous expedition. I shuddered as I glanced at the water that glided past like a dark

reptile. I looked back at the schooner, but her hull was just barely visible, while her tapering masts were lost among the trees which overshadowed her. Her lower sails were set, but so thick was the gloom that they were quite invisible.

Suddenly I heard a shot. In a moment a thousand voices raised a yell in the village; again the cry rose on the night air, and was followed by broken shouts as of scattered parties of men bounding into the woods. Then I heard another shout loud and close at hand. It was the voice of the captain cursing the man who had fired the premature shot. Then came the order, "Forward," followed by the wild hurrah of our men, as they charged the savages. Shots now rang in quick succession, and at last a loud volley startled the echoes of the woods. It was followed by a multitude of wild shrieks, which were immediately drowned in another "hurrah" from the men; the distance of the sound proving that they were driving their enemies before them towards the sea.

While I was listening intently to these sounds, which were now mingled in confusion, I was startled by the rustling of the leaves not far from me. At first I thought it was a party of savages who had observed the schooner, but I was speedily undeceived by

observing a body of natives - apparently several hundreds, as far as I could guess in the uncertain light - bounding through the woods towards the scene of battle. I saw at once that this was a party who had out-flanked our men, and would speedily attack them in the rear. And so it turned out, for, in a short time, the shouts increased ten-fold, and among them I thought I heard a death-cry uttered by voices familiar to my ear.

At length the tumult of battle ceased, and, from the cries of exultation that now arose from the savages, I felt assured that our men had been conquered. I was immediately thrown into dreadful consternation. What was I now to do? To be taken by the savages was too horrible to be thought of; to flee to the mountains was hopeless, as I should soon be discovered; and to take the schooner out of the creek without assistance was impossible. I resolved, however, to make the attempt, as being my only hope, and was on the point of pushing off when my hand was stayed and my blood chilled by an appalling shriek in which I recognised the voice of one of the crew. It was succeeded by a shout from the savages. Then came another, and another shriek of agony, making my ears to tingle, as I felt convinced they were murdering the pirate crew in cold blood. With a bursting heart and my brain whirling as if on fire, I seized

the boat-hook to push from shore when a man sprang from the bushes.

"Stop! Ralph, stop! - there now, push off," he cried, and bounded into the boat so violently as nearly to upset her. It was Bill's voice! In another moment we were on board, - the boat made fast, the line of the anchor cut, and the sweeps run out. At the first stroke of Bill's giant arm the schooner was nearly pulled ashore, for in his haste he forgot that I could scarcely move the unwieldy oar. Springing to the stern he lashed the rudder in such a position as that, while it aided me, it acted against him, and so rendered the force of our strokes nearly equal. The schooner now began to glide quickly down the creek, but before we reached its mouth, a yell from a thousand voices on the bank told that we were discovered. Instantly a number of the savages plunged into the water and swam towards us; but we were making so much way that they could not overtake us. One, however, an immensely powerful man, succeeded in laying hold of the cut rope that hung from the stern, and clambered quickly upon deck. Bill caught sight of him the instant his head appeared above the taffrail. But he did not cease to row, and did not appear even to notice the savage until he was within a yard of him; then, dropping the sweep, he struck him a blow on the forehead with his clenched fist that felled him to the

deck. Lifting him up he hurled him overboard and resumed the oar. But now a greater danger awaited us, for the savages had outrun us on the bank and were about to plunge into the water ahead of the schooner. If they succeeded in doing so our fate was sealed. For one moment Bill stood irresolute. Then, drawing a pistol from his belt, he sprang to the brass gun, held the pan of his pistol over the touch-hole and fired. The shot was succeeded by the hiss of the cannon's priming, then the blaze and the crashing thunder of the monstrous gun burst upon the savages with such deafening roar that it seemed as if their very mountains had been rent asunder.

This was enough. The moment of surprise and hesitation caused by the unwonted sound, gave us time to pass the point; a gentle breeze, which the dense foliage had hitherto prevented us from feeling, bulged out our sails; the schooner bent before it, and the shouts of the disappointed savages grew fainter and fainter in the distance as we were slowly wafted out to sea.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Reflections - The wounded man - The squall - True consolation -
Death.

THERE is a power of endurance in human beings, both in their bodies and in their minds, which, I have often thought, seems to be wonderfully adapted and exactly proportioned to the circumstances in which individuals may happen to be placed, - a power which, in most cases, is sufficient to carry a man through and over every obstacle that may happen to be thrown in his path through life, no matter how high or how steep the mountain may be, but which often forsakes him the moment the summit is gained, the point of difficulty passed; and leaves him prostrated, with energies gone, nerves unstrung, and a feeling of incapacity pervading the entire frame that renders the most trifling effort almost impossible.

During the greater part of that day I had been subjected to severe mental and much physical excitement, which had almost crushed me down by the time I was relieved from duty in the course of the evening. But when the expedition, whose failure has just been

narrated, was planned, my anxieties and energies had been so powerfully aroused that I went through the protracted scenes of that terrible night without a feeling of the slightest fatigue. My mind and body were alike active and full of energy. No sooner was the last thrilling fear of danger past, however, than my faculties were utterly relaxed; and, when I felt the cool breezes of the Pacific playing around my fevered brow, and heard the free waves rippling at the schooner's prow, as we left the hated island behind us, my senses forsook me and I fell in a swoon upon the deck.

From this state I was quickly aroused by Bill, who shook me by the arm, saying, -

"Hallo! Ralph, boy, rouse up, lad, we're safe now. Poor thing, I believe he's fainted." And raising me in his arms he laid me on the folds of the gaff-top-sail, which lay upon the deck near the tiller. "Here, take a drop o' this, it'll do you good, my boy," he added, in a voice of tenderness which I had never heard him use before, while he held a brandy-flask to my lips.

I raised my eyes gratefully, as I swallowed a mouthful; next moment my head sank heavily upon my arm and I fell fast asleep. I slept

long, for when I awoke the sun was a good way above the horizon. I did not move on first opening my eyes, as I felt a delightful sensation of rest pervading me, and my eyes were riveted on and charmed with the gorgeous splendour of the mighty ocean, that burst upon my sight. It was a dead calm; the sea seemed a sheet of undulating crystal, tipped and streaked with the saffron hues of sunrise, which had not yet merged into the glowing heat of noon; and there was a deep calm in the blue dome above, that was not broken even by the usual flutter of the sea-fowl. How long I would have lain in contemplation of this peaceful scene I know not, but my mind was recalled suddenly and painfully to the past and the present by the sight of Bill, who was seated on the deck at my feet with his head reclining, as if in sleep, on his right arm, which rested on the tiller. As he seemed to rest peacefully I did not mean to disturb him, but the slight noise I made in raising myself on my elbow caused him to start and look round.

"Well, Ralph, awake at last, my boy; you have slept long and soundly," he said, turning towards me.

On beholding his countenance I sprang up in anxiety. He was deadly pale, and his hair, which hung in dishevelled locks over his face,

was clotted with blood. Blood also stained his hollow cheeks and covered the front of his shirt, which, with the greater part of dress, was torn and soiled with mud.

"Oh, Bill!" said I, with deep anxiety, "what is the matter with you? You are ill. You must have been wounded."

"Even so, lad," said Bill in a deep soft voice, while he extended his huge frame on the couch from which I had just risen. "I've got an ugly wound, I fear, and I've been waiting for you to waken, to ask you to get me a drop o' brandy and a mouthful o' bread from the cabin lockers. You seemed to sleep so sweetly, Ralph, that I didn't like to disturb you. But I don't feel up to much just now."

I did not wait till he had done talking, but ran below immediately, and returned in a few seconds with a bottle of brandy and some broken biscuit. He seemed much refreshed after eating a few morsels and drinking a long draught of water mingled with a little of the spirits. Immediately afterwards he fell asleep, and I watched him anxiously until he awoke, being desirous of knowing the nature and extent of his wound.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, on awaking suddenly, after a slumber of an hour, "I'm the better of that nap, Ralph; I feel twice the man I was;" and he attempted to rise, but sank back again immediately with a deep groan.

"Nay, Bill you must not move, but lie still while I look at your wound. I'll make a comfortable bed for you here on deck, and get you some breakfast. After that you shall tell me how you got it. Cheer up, Bill," I added, seeing that he turned his head away; "you'll be all right in a little, and I'll be a capital nurse to you though I'm no doctor."

I then left him, and lighted a fire in the caboose. While it was kindling, I went to the steward's pantry and procured the materials for a good breakfast, with which, in little more than half an hour, I returned to my companion. He seemed much better, and smiled kindly on me as I set before him a cup of coffee and a tray with several eggs and some bread on it.

"Now then, Bill," said I, cheerfully, sitting down beside him on the deck, "let's fall to. I'm very hungry myself, I can tell you; but - I forgot - your wound," I added, rising; "let me look at it."

I found that the wound was caused by a pistol shot in the chest.

It did not bleed much, and, as it was on the right side, I was in hopes that it might not be very serious. But Bill shook his head.

"However," said he, "sit down, Ralph, and I'll tell you all about it."

"You see, after we left the boat an' began to push through the bushes, we went straight for the line of my musket, as I had expected; but by some unlucky chance it didn't explode, for I saw the line torn away by the men's legs, and heard the click o' the lock; so I fancy the priming had got damp and didn't catch. I was in a great quandary now what to do, for I couldn't concoct in my mind, in the hurry, any good reason for firin' off my piece. But they say necessity's the mother of invention; so, just as I was givin' it up and clinchin' my teeth to bide the worst o't, and take what should come, a sudden thought came into my head. I stepped out before the rest, seemin' to be awful anxious to be at the savages, tripped my foot on a fallen tree, plunged head foremost into a bush, an', ov coorse, my carbine exploded! Then came such a screechin' from the camp as I never heard in all my life. I rose at once, and was rushin' on with the rest when the captain called a

halt.

"'You did that a-purpose, you villain!' he said, with a tremendous oath, and, drawin' a pistol from his belt, let fly right into my breast. I fell at once, and remembered no more till I was startled and brought round by the most awful yell I ever heard in my life, except, maybe, the shrieks o' them poor critters that were crushed to death under yon big canoe. Jumpin' up, I looked round, and, through the trees, saw a fire gleamin' not far off, the light o' which showed me the captain and men tied hand and foot, each to a post, and the savages dancin' round them like demons. I had scarce looked for a second, when I saw one o' them go up to the captain flourishing a knife, and, before I could wink, he plunged it into his breast, while another yell, like the one that roused me, rang upon my ear. I didn't wait for more, but, bounding up, went crashing through the bushes into the woods. The black fellows caught sight of me, however, but not in time to prevent me jumpin' into the boat, as you know."

Bill seemed to be much exhausted after this recital, and shuddered frequently during the narrative, so I refrained from continuing the subject at that time, and endeavoured to draw his mind to other

things.

"But now, Bill," said I, "it behoves us to think about the future, and what course of action we shall pursue. Here we are, on the wide Pacific, in a well-appointed schooner, which is our own, - at least no one has a better claim to it than we have, - and the world lies before us. Moreover, here comes a breeze, so we must make up our minds which way to steer."

"Ralph, boy," said my companion, "it matters not to me which way we go. I fear that my time is short now. Go where you will. I'm content."

"Well then, Bill, I think we had better steer to the Coral Island, and see what has become of my dear old comrades, Jack and Peterkin. I believe the island has no name, but the captain once pointed it out to me on the chart, and I marked it afterwards; so, as we know pretty well our position just now, I think I can steer to it. Then, as to working the vessel, it is true I cannot hoist the sails single-handed, but luckily we have enough of sail set already, and if it should come on to blow a squall, I could at least drop the peaks of the main and fore sails, and clew them up partially

without help, and throw her head close into the wind, so as to keep her all shaking till the violence of the squall is past. And if we have continued light breezes, I'll rig up a complication of blocks and fix them to the top-sail halyards, so that I shall be able to hoist the sails without help. 'Tis true I'll require half a day to hoist them, but we don't need to mind that. Then I'll make a sort of erection on deck to screen you from the sun, Bill; and if you can only manage to sit beside the tiller and steer for two hours every day, so as to let me get a nap, I'll engage to let you off duty all the rest of the twenty-four hours. And if you don't feel able for steering, I'll lash the helm and heave to, while I get you your breakfasts and dinners; and so we'll manage famously, and soon reach the Coral Island."

Bill smiled faintly as I ran on in this strain.

"And what will you do," said he, "if it comes on to blow a storm?"

This question silenced me, while I considered what I should do in such a case. At length I laid my hand on his arm, and said, "Bill, when a man has done all that he CAN do, he ought to leave the rest to God."

"Oh, Ralph," said my companion, in a faint voice, looking anxiously into my face, "I wish that I had the feelin's about God that you seem to have, at this hour. I'm dyin', Ralph; yet I, who have braved death a hundred times, am afraid to die. I'm afraid to enter the next world. Something within tells me there will be a reckoning when I go there. But it's all over with me, Ralph. I feel that there's no chance o' my bein' saved."

"Don't say that, Bill," said I, in deep compassion, "don't say that. I'm quite sure there's hope even for you, but I can't remember the words of the Bible that make me think so. Is there not a Bible on board, Bill?"

"No; the last that was in the ship belonged to a poor boy that was taken aboard against his will. He died, poor lad, I think, through ill treatment and fear. After he was gone the captain found his Bible and flung it overboard."

I now reflected, with great sadness and self-reproach, on the way in which I had neglected my Bible; and it flashed across me that I was actually in the sight of God a greater sinner than this blood-

stained pirate; for, thought I, he tells me that he never read the Bible, and was never brought up to care for it; whereas I was carefully taught to read it by my own mother, and had read it daily as long as I possessed one, yet to so little purpose that I could not now call to mind a single text that would meet this poor man's case, and afford him the consolation he so much required. I was much distressed, and taxed my memory for a long time. At last a text did flash into my mind, and I wondered much that I had not thought of it before.

"Bill," said I, in a low voice, "'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'"

"Ay, Ralph, I've heard the missionaries say that before now, but what good can it do me? It's not for me that. It's not for the likes o' me."

I knew not now what to say, for, although I felt sure that that word was for him as well as for me, I could not remember any other word whereby I could prove it.

After a short pause, Bill raised his eyes to mine and said, "Ralph,

I've led a terrible life. I've been a sailor since I was a boy,
and I've gone from bad to worse ever since I left my father's roof.
I've been a pirate three years now. It is true I did not choose
the trade, but I was inveigled aboard this schooner and kept here
by force till I became reckless and at last joined them. Since
that time my hand has been steeped in human blood again and again.
Your young heart would grow cold if I - ; but why should I go on?
'Tis of no use, Ralph; my doom is fixed."

"Bill," said I, "'Though your sins be red like crimson, they shall
be white as snow.' 'Only believe.'"

"Only believe!" cried Bill, starting up on his elbow; "I've heard
men talk o' believing as if it was easy. Ha! 'tis easy enough for
a man to point to a rope and say, 'I believe that would bear my
weight;' but 'tis another thing for a man to catch hold o' that
rope, and swing himself by it over the edge of a precipice!"

The energy with which he said this, and the action with which it
was accompanied, were too much for Bill. He sank back with a deep
groan. As if the very elements sympathized with this man's
sufferings, a low moan came sweeping over the sea.

"Hist! Ralph," said Bill, opening his eyes; "there's a squall coming, lad. Look alive, boy. Clew up the fore-sail. Drop the main-sail peak. Them squalls come quick sometimes."

I had already started to my feet, and saw that a heavy squall was indeed bearing down on us. It had hitherto escaped my notice, owing to my being so much engrossed by our conversation. I instantly did as Bill desired, for the schooner was still lying motionless on the glassy sea. I observed with some satisfaction that the squall was bearing down on the larboard bow, so that it would strike the vessel in the position in which she would be best able to stand the shock. Having done my best to shorten sail, I returned aft, and took my stand at the helm.

"Now, boy," said Bill, in a faint voice, "keep her close to the wind."

A few seconds afterwards he said, "Ralph, let me hear those two texts again."

I repeated them.

"Are ye sure, lad, ye saw them in the Bible?"

"Quite sure," I replied.

Almost before the words had left my lips the wind burst upon us, and the spray dashed over our decks. For a time the schooner stood it bravely, and sprang forward against the rising sea like a war-horse. Meanwhile clouds darkened the sky, and the sea began to rise in huge billows. There was still too much sail on the schooner, and, as the gale increased, I feared that the masts would be torn out of her or carried away, while the wind whistled and shrieked through the strained rigging. Suddenly the wind shifted a point, a heavy sea struck us on the bow, and the schooner was almost laid on her beam-ends, so that I could scarcely keep my legs. At the same moment Bill lost his hold of the belaying-pin which had served to steady him, and he slid with stunning violence against the sky-light. As he lay on the deck close beside me, I could see that the shock had rendered him insensible, but I did not dare to quit the tiller for an instant, as it required all my faculties, bodily and mental, to manage the schooner. For an hour the blast drove us along, while, owing to the sharpness of the

vessel's bow and the press of canvass, she dashed through the waves instead of breasting over them, thereby drenching the decks with water fore and aft. At the end of that time the squall passed away, and left us rocking on the bosom of the agitated sea.

My first care, the instant I could quit the helm, was to raise Bill from the deck and place him on the couch. I then ran below for the brandy bottle and rubbed his face and hands with it, and endeavoured to pour a little down his throat. But my efforts, although I continued them long and assiduously, were of no avail; as I let go the hand which I had been chafing it fell heavily on the deck. I laid my hand over his heart, and sat for some time quite motionless, but there was no flutter there - the pirate was dead!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Alone on the deep - Necessity the mother of invention - A valuable book discovered - Natural phenomenon - A bright day in my history.

IT was with feelings of awe, not unmingled with fear, that I now seated myself on the cabin sky-light and gazed upon the rigid features of my late comrade, while my mind wandered over his past history and contemplated with anxiety my present position. Alone! in the midst of the wide Pacific, having a most imperfect knowledge of navigation, and in a schooner requiring at least eight men as her proper crew. But I will not tax the reader's patience with a minute detail of my feelings and doings during the first few days that followed the death of my companion. I will merely mention that I tied a cannon ball to his feet and, with feelings of the deepest sorrow, consigned him to the deep.

For fully a week after that a steady breeze blew from the east, and, as my course lay west-and-by-north, I made rapid progress towards my destination. I could not take an observation, which I very much regretted, as the captain's quadrant was in the cabin; but, from the day of setting sail from the island of the savages, I had kept a dead reckoning, and as I knew pretty well now how much lee-way the schooner made, I hoped to hit the Coral Island without much difficulty. In this I was the more confident that I knew its

position on the chart (which I understood was a very good one), and so had its correct bearings by compass.

As the weather seemed now quite settled and fine, and as I had got into the trade-winds, I set about preparations for hoisting the top-sails. This was a most arduous task, and my first attempts were complete failures, owing, in a great degree, to my reprehensible ignorance of mechanical forces. The first error I made was in applying my apparatus of blocks and pulleys to a rope which was too weak, so that the very first heave I made broke it in two, and sent me staggering against the after-hatch, over which I tripped, and, striking against the main-boom, tumbled down the companion ladder into the cabin. I was much bruised and somewhat stunned by this untoward accident. However, I considered it fortunate that I was not killed. In my next attempt I made sure of not coming by a similar accident, so I unreeved the tackling and fitted up larger blocks and ropes. But although the principle on which I acted was quite correct, the machinery was now so massive and heavy that the mere friction and stiffness of the thick cordage prevented me from moving it at all. Afterwards, however, I came to proportion things more correctly; but I could not avoid reflecting at the time how much better it would have been had I learned all

this from observation and study, instead of waiting till I was forced to acquire it through the painful and tedious lessons of experience.

After the tackling was prepared and in good working order, it took me the greater part of a day to hoist the main-top sail. As I could not steer and work at this at the same time, I lashed the helm in such a position that, with a little watching now and then, it kept the schooner in her proper course. By this means I was enabled also to go about the deck and down below for things that I wanted, as occasion required; also to cook and eat my victuals. But I did not dare to trust to this plan during the three hours of rest that I allowed myself at night, as the wind might have shifted, in which case I should have been blown far out of my course ere I awoke. I was, therefore, in the habit of heaving-to during those three hours; that is, fixing the rudder and the sails in such a position as that by acting against each other, they would keep the ship stationary. After my night's rest, therefore, I had only to make allowance for the lee-way she had made, and so resume my course.

Of course I was to some extent anxious lest another squall should

come, but I made the best provision I could in the circumstances, and concluded that by letting go the weather-braces of the top-sails and the top-sail halyards at the same time, I should thereby render these sails almost powerless. Besides this, I proposed to myself to keep a sharp look-out on the barometer in the cabin, and if I observed at any time a sudden fall in it, I resolved that I would instantly set about my multiform appliances for reducing sail, so as to avoid being taken at unawares. Thus I sailed prosperously for two weeks, with a fair wind, so that I calculated I must be drawing near to the Coral Island; at the thought of which my heart bounded with joyful expectation.

The only book I found on board, after a careful search, was a volume of Captain Cook's voyages. This, I suppose, the pirate captain had brought with him in order to guide him, and to furnish him with information regarding the islands of these seas. I found this a most delightful book indeed, and I not only obtained much interesting knowledge about the sea in which I was sailing, but I had many of my own opinions, derived from experience, corroborated; and not a few of them corrected. Besides the reading of this charming book, and the daily routine of occupations, nothing of particular note happened to me during this voyage, except once,

when on rising one night, after my three hours' nap, while it was yet dark, I was amazed and a little alarmed to find myself floating in what appeared to be a sea of blue fire! I had often noticed the beautiful appearance of phosphorescent light, but this far exceeded anything of the sort I ever saw before. The whole sea appeared somewhat like milk and was remarkably luminous.

I rose in haste, and, letting down a bucket into the sea, brought some of the water on board and took it down to the cabin to examine it; but no sooner did I approach the light than the strange appearance disappeared, and when I removed the cabin lamp the luminous light appeared again. I was much puzzled with this, and took up a little of the water in the hollow of my hand and then let it run off, when I found that the luminous substance was left behind on my palm. I ran with it to the lamp; but when I got there it was gone. I found, however, that when I went into the dark my hand shone again; so I took the large glass of the ship's telescope and examined my hand minutely, when I found that there were on it one or two small patches of a clear, transparent substance like jelly, which were so thin as to be almost invisible to the naked eye. Thus I came to know that the beautiful phosphoric light, which I had so often admired before, was caused by animals, for I

had no doubt that these were of the same kind as the medusae or jelly-fish which are seen in all parts of the world.

On the evening of my fourteenth day, I was awakened out of a nap into which I had fallen by a loud cry, and starting up, I gazed around me. I was surprised and delighted to see a large albatross soaring majestically over the ship. I immediately took it into my head that this was the albatross I had seen at Penguin Island. I had, of course, no good reason for supposing this, but the idea occurred to me, I know not why, and I cherished it, and regarded the bird with as much affection as if he had been an old friend. He kept me company all that day and left me as night fell.

Next morning as I stood motionless and with heavy eyes at the helm, for I had not slept well, I began to weary anxiously for day-light, and peered towards the horizon, where I thought I observed something like a black cloud against the dark sky. Being always on the alert for squalls, I ran to the bow. There could be no doubt it was a squall, and as I listened I thought I heard the murmur of the coming gale. Instantly I began to work might and main at my cumbrous tackle for shortening sail, and in the course of an hour and a half had the most of it reduced, - the top-sail yards down on

the caps, the top-sails clewed up, the sheets hauled in, the main and fore peaks lowered, and the flying-jib down. While thus engaged the dawn advanced, and I cast an occasional furtive glance ahead in the midst of my labour. But now that things were prepared for the worst, I ran forward again and looked anxiously over the bow. I now heard the roar of the waves distinctly, and as a single ray of the rising sun gleamed over the ocean I saw - what! could it be that I was dreaming? - that magnificent breaker with its ceaseless roar! - that mountain top! - yes, once more I beheld the Coral Island!

CHAPTER XXIX.

The effect of a cannon-shot - A happy reunion of a somewhat moist nature - Retrospects and explanations - An awful dive - New plans - The last of the Coral Island.

I ALMOST fell upon the deck with the tumult of mingled emotions that filled my heart, as I gazed ardently towards my beautiful island. It was still many miles away, but sufficiently near to enable me to trace distinctly the well-remembered outlines of the two mountains. My first impulse was to utter an exclamation of gratitude for being carried to my former happy home in safety; my second, to jump up, clap my hands, shout, and run up and down the deck, with no other object in view than that of giving vent to my excited feelings. Then I went below for the telescope, and spent nearly ten minutes of the utmost impatience in vainly trying to get a focus, and in rubbing the skin nearly off my eyes, before I discovered that having taken off the large glass to examine the phosphoric water with I had omitted to put it on again.

After that I looked up impatiently at the sails, which I now regretted having lowered so hastily, and for a moment thought of hoisting the main-top sail again; but recollecting that it would take me full half a day to accomplish, and that, at the present rate of sailing, two hours would bring me to the island, I immediately dismissed the idea.

The remainder of the time I spent in making feverish preparations

for arriving and seeing my dear comrades. I remembered that they were not in the habit of rising before six, and, as it was now only three, I hoped to arrive before they were awake. Moreover, I set about making ready to let go the anchor, resolving in my own mind that, as I knew the depth of water in the passage of the reef and within the lagoon, I would run the schooner in and bring up opposite the bower. Fortunately the anchor was hanging at the cat-head, otherwise I should never have been able to use it. Now, I had only to cut the tackling, and it would drop of its own weight. After searching among the flags, I found the terrible black one, which I ran up to the peak. While I was doing this, a thought struck me. I went to the powder magazine, brought up a blank cartridge and loaded the big brass gun, which, it will be remembered, was unhoused when we set sail, and, as I had no means of housing it, there it had stood, bristling alike at fair weather and foul all the voyage. I took care to grease its mouth well, and, before leaving the fore part of the ship, thrust the poker into the fire.

All was now ready. A steady five-knot breeze was blowing, so that I was now not more than quarter of a mile from the reef. I was soon at the entrance, and, as the schooner glided quietly through,

I glanced affectionately at the huge breaker, as if it had been the same one I had seen there when I bade adieu, as I feared for ever, to the island. On coming opposite the Water Garden, I put the helm hard down. The schooner came round with a rapid, graceful bend, and lost way just opposite the bower. Running forward, I let go the anchor, caught up the red-hot poker, applied it to the brass gun, and the mountains with a BANG, such as had only once before broke their slumbering echoes!

Effective although it was, however, it was scarcely equal to the bang with which, instantly after, Peterkin bounded from the bower, in scanty costume, his eye-balls starting from his head with surprise and terror. One gaze he gave, one yell, and then fled into the bushes like a wild cat. The next moment Jack went through exactly the same performance, the only difference being, that his movements were less like those of Jack-in-the-box, though not less vigorous and rapid than those of Peterkin.

"Hallo!" I shouted, almost mad with joy, "what, ho! Peterkin!
Jack! hallo! it's me!"

My shout was just in time to arrest them. They halted and turned

round, and, the instant I repeated the cry, I saw that they recognised my voice, by both of them running at full speed towards the beach. I could no longer contain myself. Throwing off my jacket, I jumped overboard at the same moment that Jack bounded into the sea. In another moment we met in deep water, clasped each other round the neck, and sank, as a matter of course, to the bottom! We were well-nigh choked, and instantly struggled to the surface, where Peterkin was spluttering about like a wounded duck, laughing and crying by turns, and choking himself with salt water!

It would be impossible to convey to my reader, by description, an adequate conception of the scene that followed my landing on the beach, as we stood embracing each other indiscriminately in our dripping garments, and giving utterance to incoherent rhapsodies, mingled with wild shouts. It can be more easily imagined than described, so I will draw a curtain over this part of my history, and carry the reader forward over an interval of three days.

During the greater part of that period Peterkin did nothing but roast pigs, taro, and bread-fruit, and ply me with plantains, plums, potatoes, and cocoa-nuts, while I related to him and Jack the terrible and wonderful adventures I had gone through since we

last met. After I had finished the account, they made me go all over it again; and, when I had concluded the second recital, I had to go over it again, while they commented upon it piecemeal. They were much affected by what I told them of the probable fate of Avatea, and Peterkin could by no means brook the idea of the poor girl being converted into a LONG PIG! As for Jack, he clenched his teeth, and shook his fist towards the sea, saying at the same time, that he was sorry he had not broken Tararo's head, and he only hoped that one day he should be able to plant his knuckles on the bridge of that chief's nose! After they had "pumped me dry," as Peterkin said, I begged to be informed of what had happened to them during my long absence, and particularly as to how they got out of the Diamond Cave.

"Well, you must know," began Jack, "after you had dived out of the cave, on the day you were taken away from us, we waited very patiently for half an hour, not expecting you to return before the end of that time. Then we began to upbraid you for staying so long, when you knew we would be anxious; but when an hour passed, we became alarmed, and I resolved at all hazards to dive out, and see what had become of you, although I felt for poor Peterkin, because, as he truly said, 'If you never come back, I'm shut up

here for life.' However, I promised not to run any risk, and he let me go; which, to say truth, I thought very courageous of him!"

"I should just think it was!" interrupted Peterkin, looking at Jack over the edge of a monstrous potato which he happened to be devouring at the time.

"Well," continued Jack, "you may guess my consternation when you did not answer to my halloo. At first I imagined that the pirates must have killed you, and left you in the bush, or thrown you into the sea; then it occurred to me that this would have served no end of theirs, so I came to the conclusion that they must have carried you away with them. As this thought struck me, I observed the pirate schooner standing away to the nor'ard, almost hull-down on the horizon, and I sat down on the rocks to watch her as she slowly sank from my sight. And I tell you, Ralph, my boy, that I shed more tears that time, at losing you, than I have done, I verify believe, all my life before - "

"Pardon me, Jack, for interrupting," said Peterkin; "surely you must be mistaken in that; you've often told me that, when you were a baby, you used to howl and roar from morning to - "

"Hold your tongue, Peterkin," cried Jack. "Well, after the schooner had disappeared, I dived back into the cave, much to Peterkin's relief, and told him what I had seen. We sat down and had a long talk over this matter, and then we agreed to make a regular, systematic search through the woods, so as to make sure, at least, that you had not been killed. But now we thought of the difficulty of getting out of the cave without your help. Peterkin became dreadfully nervous when he thought of this; and I must confess that I felt some alarm, for, of course, I could not hope alone to take him out so quickly as we two together had brought him in; and he himself vowed that, if we had been a moment longer with him that time, he would have had to take a breath of salt water. However, there was no help for it, and I endeavoured to calm his fears as well as I could: 'for,' said I, 'you can't live here, Peterkin;' to which he replied, 'Of course not, Jack, I can only die here, and, as that's not at all desirable, you had better propose something.' So I suggested that he should take a good long breath, and trust himself to me.

"'Might we not make a large bag of cocoa-nut cloth, into which I could shove my head, and tie it tight round my neck?' he asked,

with a haggard smile. 'It might let me get one breath under water!'

"No use,' said I; 'it would fill in a moment and suffocate you. I see nothing for it, Peterkin, if you really can't keep your breath so long, but to let me knock you down, and carry you out while in a state of insensibility.'

"But Peterkin didn't relish this idea. He seemed to fear that I could not be able to measure the exact force of the blow, and might, on the one hand, hit him so softly as to render a second or third blow necessary, which would be very uncomfortable; or, on the other hand, give him such a smash as would entirely spoil his figure-head, or, mayhap, knock the life out of him altogether! At last I got him persuaded to try to hold his breath, and commit himself to me; so he agreed, and down we went. But I had not got him half way through, when he began to struggle and kick like a wild bull, burst from my grasp, and hit against the roof of the tunnel. I was therefore, obliged to force him violently back into the cave gain, where he rose panting to the surface. In short, he had lost his presence of mind, and - "

"Nothing of the sort," cried Peterkin, indignantly, "I had only lost my wind; and if I had not had presence of mind enough to kick as I did, I should have bu'st in your arms!"

"Well, well, so be it," resumed Jack, with a smile, "but the upshot of it was, that we had to hold another consultation on the point, and I really believe that, had it not been for a happy thought of mine, we should have been consulting there yet."

"I wish we had," again interrupted Peterkin with a sigh. "I'm sure, Ralph, if I had thought that you were coming back again, I would willingly have awaited your return for months, rather than have endured the mental agony which I went through! But proceed."

"The thought was this," continued Jack, "that I should tie Peterkin's hands and feet with cords, and then lash him firmly to a stout pole about five feet long, in order to render him quite powerless, and keep him straight and stiff. You should have seen his face of horror, Ralph, when I suggested this: but he came to see that it was his only chance, and told me to set about it as fast as I could; 'for,' said he, 'this is no jokin', Jack, I can tell you, and the sooner it's done the better.' I soon procured

the cordage and a suitable pole, with which I returned to the cave, and lashed him as stiff and straight as an Egyptian mummy; and, to say truth, he was no bad representation of what an English mummy would be, if there were such things, for he was as white as a dead man."

"'Now,' said Peterkin, in a tremulous voice, 'swim with me as near to the edge of the hole as you can before you dive, then let me take a long breath, and, as I sha'nt be able to speak after I've taken it, you'll watch my face, and the moment you see me wink - dive! And oh!' he added, earnestly, 'pray don't be long!'"

"I promised to pay the strictest attention to his wishes, and swam with him to the outlet of the cave. Here I paused. 'Now then,' said I, 'pull away at the wind, lad.'"

Peterkin drew in a breath so long that I could not help thinking of the frog in the fable, that wanted to swell itself as big as the ox. Then I looked into his face earnestly. Slap went the lid of his right eye; down went my head, and up went my heels. We shot through the passage like an arrow, and rose to the surface of the open sea before you could count twenty!

"Peterkin had taken in such an awful load of wind that, on reaching the free air, he let it out with a yell loud enough to have been heard a mile off, and then, the change in his feelings was so sudden and great, that he did not wait till we landed, but began, tied up as he was, to shout and sing for joy as I supported him with my left arm to the shore. However, in the middle of a laugh that a hyaena might have envied, I let him accidentally slip, which extinguished him in a moment.

"After this happy deliverance, we immediately began our search for your dead body, Ralph, and you have no idea how low our hearts sank as we set off, day after day, to examine the valleys and mountain sides with the utmost care. In about three weeks we completed the survey of the whole island, and had at least the satisfaction of knowing that you had not been killed. But it occurred to us that you might have been thrown into the sea, so we examined the sands and the lagoon carefully, and afterwards went all round the outer reef. One day, while we were upon the reef, Peterkin espied a small dark object lying among the rocks, which seemed to be quite different from the surrounding stones. We hastened towards the spot, and found it to be a small keg. On knocking out the head we

discovered that it was gunpowder."

"It was I who sent you that, Jack," said I, with a smile.

"Fork out!" cried Peterkin, energetically, starting to his feet and extending his open hand to Jack. "Down with the money, sir, else I'll have you shut up for life in a debtor's prison the moment we return to England!"

"I'll give you an I.O.U. in the meantime," returned Jack, laughing, "so sit down and be quiet. The fact is, Ralph, when we discovered this keg of powder, Peterkin immediately took me a bet of a thousand pounds that you had something to do with it, and I took him a bet of ten thousand that you had not.

"Peterkin was right then," said I, explaining how the thing had occurred.

"Well, we found it very useful," continued Jack; "although some of it had got a little damp; and we furbished up the old pistol, with which Peterkin is a crack shot now. But, to continue. We did not find any other vestige of you on the reef, and, finally, gave up

all hope of ever seeing you again. After this the island became a dreary place to us, and we began to long for a ship to heave in sight and take us off. But now that you're back again, my dear fellow, it looks as bright and cheerful as it used to do, and I love it as much as ever."

"And now," continued Jack, "I have a great desire to visit some of the other islands of the South Seas. Here we have a first-rate schooner at our disposal, so I don't see what should hinder us."

"Just the very thing I was going to propose," cried Peterkin; "I vote for starting at once."

"Well, then," said Jack, "it seems to me that we could not do better than shape our course for the island on which Avatea lives, and endeavour to persuade Tararo to let her marry the black fellow to whom she is engaged, instead of making a long pig of her. If he has a spark of gratitude in him he'll do it. Besides, having become champions for this girl once before, it behoves us, as true knights, not to rest until we set her free; at least, all the heroes in all the story-books I have ever read would count it foul disgrace to leave such a work unfinished."

"I'm sure I don't know, or care, what your knights in story-books would do," said Peterkin, "but I'm certain that it would be capital fun, so I'm your man whenever you want me."

This plan of Jack's was quite in accordance with his romantic, impulsive nature; and, having made up his mind to save this black girl, he could not rest until the thing was commenced.

"But there may be great danger in this attempt," he said, at the end of a long consultation on the subject; "will you, lads, go with me in spite of this?"

"Go with you?" we repeated in the same breath.

"Can you doubt it?" said I.

"For a moment," added Peterkin.

I need scarcely say that, having made up our minds to go on this enterprise, we lost no time in making preparations to quit the island; and as the schooner was well laden with stores of every

kind for a long cruise, we had little to do except to add to our abundant supply a quantity of cocoa-nuts, bread-fruit, taro, yams, plums, and potatoes, chiefly with the view of carrying the fragrance of our dear island along with us as long as we could.

When all was ready, we paid a farewell visit to the different familiar spots where most of our time had been spent. We ascended the mountain top, and gazed for the last time at the rich green foliage in the valleys, the white sandy beach, the placid lagoon, and the barrier coral-reef with its crested breakers. Then we descended to Spouting Cliff, and looked down at the pale-green monster which we had made such fruitless efforts to spear in days gone by. From this we hurried to the Water Garden and took a last dive into its clear waters, and a last gambol amongst its coral groves. I hurried out before my companions, and dressed in haste, in order to have a long examination of my tank, which Peterkin, in the fulness of his heart, had tended with the utmost care, as being a vivid remembrancer of me, rather than out of love for natural history. It was in superb condition; - the water as clear and pellucid as crystal; the red and green sea-weed of the most brilliant hues; the red, purple, yellow, green, and striped anemones fully expanded, and stretching out their arms as if to

welcome and embrace their former master; the starfish, zoophytes, sea-pens, and other innumerable marine insects, looking fresh and beautiful; and the crabs, as Peterkin said, looking as wide awake, impertinent, rampant, and pugnacious as ever. It was indeed so lovely and so interesting that I would scarcely allow myself to be torn away from it.

Last of all, we returned to the bower and collected the few articles we possessed, such as the axe, the pencil-case, the broken telescope, the pen-knife, the hook made from the brass ring, and the sail-needle, with which we had landed on the island; - also, the long boots and the pistol, besides several curious articles of costume which we had manufactured from time to time.

These we conveyed on board in our little boat, after having carved our names on a chip of iron-wood, thus:-

JACK MARTIN,

RALPH ROVER,

PETERKIN GAY,

which we fixed up inside of the bower. The boat was then hoisted on board and the anchor weighed; which latter operation cost us great labour and much time, as the anchor was so heavy that we could not move it without the aid of my complex machinery of blocks and pulleys. A steady breeze was blowing off shore when we set sail, at a little before sunset. It swept us quickly past the reef and out to sea. The shore grew rapidly more indistinct as the shades of evening fell, while our clipper bark bounded lightly over the waves. Slowly the mountain top sank on the horizon, until it became a mere speck. In another moment the sun and the Coral Island sank together into the broad bosom of the Pacific.

CHAPTER XXX.

The voyage - The island, and a consultation in which danger is scouted as a thing unworthy of consideration - Rats and cats - The

native teacher - Awful revelations - Wonderful effects of Christianity.

OUR voyage during the next two weeks was most interesting and prosperous. The breeze continued generally fair, and at all times enabled us to lie our course; for being, as I have said before, clipper-built, the pirate schooner could lie very close to the wind, and made little lee-way. We had no difficulty now in managing our sails, for Jack was heavy and powerful, while Peterkin was active as a kitten. Still, however, we were a very insufficient crew for such a vessel, and if any one had proposed to us to make such a voyage in it before we had been forced to go through so many hardships from necessity, we would have turned away with pity from the individual making such proposal as from a madman. I pondered this a good deal, and at last concluded that men do not know how much they are capable of doing till they try, and that we should never give way to despair in any undertaking, however difficult it may seem:- always supposing, however, that our cause is a good one, and that we can ask the divine blessing on it.

Although, therefore, we could now manage our sails easily, we

nevertheless found that my pulleys were of much service to us in some things; though Jack did laugh heartily at the uncouth arrangement of ropes and blocks, which had, to a sailor's eye, a very lumbering and clumsy appearance. But I will not drag my reader through the details of this voyage. Suffice it to say, that, after an agreeable sail of about three weeks, we arrived off the island of Mango, which I recognised at once from the description that the pirate, Bill, had given me of it during one of our conversations.

As soon as we came within sight of it we hove the ship to, and held a council of war.

"Now, boys," said Jack, as we seated ourselves beside him on the cabin sky-light, "before we go farther in this business, we must go over the pros and cons of it; for, although you have so generously consented to stick by me through thick and thin, it would be unfair did I not see that you thoroughly understand the danger of what we are about to attempt."

"Oh! bother the danger," cried Peterkin; "I wonder to hear YOU, Jack, talk of danger. When a fellow begins to talk about it, he'll

soon come to magnify it to such a degree that he'll not be fit to face it when it comes, no more than a suckin' baby!"

"Nay, Peterkin," replied Jack, gravely, "I won't be jested out of it. I grant you, that, when we've once resolved to act, and have made up our minds what to do, we should think no more of danger. But, before we have so resolved, it behoves us to look at it straight in the face, and examine into it, and walk round it; for if we flinch at a distant view, we're sure to run away when the danger is near. Now, I understand from you, Ralph, that the island is inhabited by thorough-going, out-and-out cannibals, whose principal law is - 'Might is right, and the weakest goes to the wall?'"

"Yes," said I, "so Bill gave me to understand. He told me, however, that, at the southern side of it, the missionaries had obtained a footing amongst an insignificant tribe. A native teacher had been sent there by the Wesleyans, who had succeeded in persuading the chief at that part to embrace Christianity. But instead of that being of any advantage to our enterprise, it seems the very reverse; for the chief Tararo is a determined heathen, and persecutes the Christians, - who are far too weak in numbers to

offer any resistance, - and looks with dislike upon all white men, whom he regards as propagators of the new faith."

"'Tis a pity," said Jack, "that the Christian tribe is so small, for we shall scarcely be safe under their protection, I fear. If Tararo takes it into his head to wish for our vessel, or to kill ourselves, he could take us from them by force. You say that the native missionary talks English?"

"So I believe."

"Then, what I propose is this," said Jack: "We will run round to the south side of the island, and cut anchor off the Christian village. We are too far away just now to have been descried by any of the savages, so we shall get there unobserved, and have time to arrange our plans before the heathen tribes know of our presence. But, in doing this, we run the risk of being captured by the ill-disposed tribes, and being very ill used, if not - a - "

"Roasted alive and eaten," cried Peterkin. "Come, out with it, Jack; according to your own showing, it's well to look the danger straight in the face!"

"Well, that is the worst of it, certainly. Are you prepared, then, to take your chance of that?"

"I've been prepared and had my mind made up long ago," cried Peterkin, swaggering about the deck with his hands thrust into his breeches' pockets. "The fact is, Jack, I don't believe that Tararo will be so ungrateful as to eat us; and I'm, quite sure that he'll be too happy to grant us whatever we ask: so the sooner we go in and win the better."

Peterkin was wrong, however, in his estimate of savage gratitude, as the sequel will show.

The schooner was now put before the wind, and, after making a long run to the south'ard, we put about and beat up for the south side of Mango, where we arrived before sunset, and hove-to off the coral reef. Here we awaited the arrival of a canoe, which immediately put off on our rounding to. When it arrived, a mild-looking native, of apparently forty years of age, came on board, and, taking off his straw hat, made us a low bow. He was clad in a respectable suit of European clothes; and the first words he

uttered, as he stepped up to Jack and shook hands with him, were, -

"Good day, gentlemen; we are happy to see you at Mango - you are heartily welcome."

After returning his salutation, Jack exclaimed, "You must be the native missionary teacher of whom I have heard - are you not?"

"I am. I have the joy to be a servant of the Lord Jesus at this station."

"You're the very man I want to see, then," replied Jack; "that's lucky. Come down to the cabin, friend, and have a glass of wine. I wish particularly to speak with you. My men there" (pointing to Peterkin and me) "will look after your people."

"Thank you," said the teacher, as he followed Jack to the cabin, "I do not drink wine or any strong drink."

"Oh! then, there's lots of water, and you can have biscuit."

"Now, 'pon my word, that's cool!" said Peterkin; "his MEN,

forsooth! Well, since we are to be men, we may as well come it as strong over these black chaps as we can. Hallo, there!" he cried to the half dozen of natives who stood upon the deck, gazing in wonder at all they saw, "here's for you;" and he handed them a tray of broken biscuit and a can of water. Then, thrusting his hands into his pockets, he walked up and down the deck with an enormous swagger, whistling vociferously.

In about half an hour Jack and the teacher came on deck, and the latter, bidding us a cheerful good evening, entered his canoe and paddled to the shore. When he was gone, Peterkin stepped up to Jack, and, touching his cap, said, -

"Well, captain, have you any communications to make to your MEN?"

"Yes," cried Jack; "ready about, mind the helm and clew up your tongue, while I con the schooner through the passage in the reef. The teacher, who seems a first-rate fellow, says it's quite deep, and good anchorage within the lagoon close to the shore."

While the vessel was slowly advancing to her anchorage, under a light breeze, Jack explained to us that Avatea was still on the

island, living amongst the heathens; that she had expressed a strong desire to join the Christians, but Tararo would not let her, and kept her constantly in close confinement.

"Moreover," continued Jack, "I find that she belongs to one of the Samoan Islands, where Christianity had been introduced long before her capture by the heathens of a neighbouring island; and the very day after she was taken, she was to have joined the church which had been planted there by that excellent body, the London Missionary Society. The teacher tells me, too, that the poor girl has fallen in love with a Christian chief, who lives on an island some fifty miles or so to the south of this one, and that she is meditating a desperate attempt at escape. So, you see, we have come in the nick of time. I fancy that this chief is the fellow whom you heard of, Ralph, at the Island of Emo. Besides all this, the heathen savages are at war among themselves, and there's to be a battle fought the day after to-morrow, in which the principal leader is Tararo; so that we'll not be able to commence our negotiations with the rascally chief till the day after."

The village off which we anchored was beautifully situated at the head of a small bay, from the margin of which trees of every

description peculiar to the tropics rose in the richest luxuriance to the summit of a hilly ridge, which was the line of demarcation between the possessions of the Christians and those of the neighbouring heathen chief.

The site of the settlement was an extensive plot of flat land, stretching in a gentle slope from the sea to the mountain. The cottages stood several hundred yards from the beach, and were protected from the glare of the sea by the rich foliage of rows of large Barringtonia and other trees, which girt the shore. The village was about a mile in length, and perfectly straight, with a wide road down the middle, on either side of which were rows of the tufted-topped ti tree, whose delicate and beautiful blossoms, hanging beneath their plume-crested tops, added richness to the scene. The cottages of the natives were built beneath these trees, and were kept in the most excellent order, each having a little garden in front, tastefully laid out and planted, while the walks were covered with black and white pebbles.

Every house had doors and Venetian windows, painted partly with lamp black made from the candle-nut, and partly with red ochre, which contrasted powerfully with the dazzling coral lime that

covered the walls. On a prominent position stood a handsome church, which was quite a curiosity in its way. It was a hundred feet long by fifty broad, and was seated throughout to accommodate upwards of two thousand persons. It had six large folding doors and twelve windows with Venetian blinds; and, although a large and substantial edifice, it had been built, we were told by the teacher, in the space of two months! There was not a single iron nail in the fabric, and the natives had constructed it chiefly with their stone and bone axes and other tools, having only one or two axes or tools of European manufacture. Everything around this beautiful spot wore an aspect of peace and plenty, and, as we dropped our anchor within a stone's cast of the substantial coral wharf, I could not avoid contrasting it with the wretched village of Emo, where I had witnessed so many frightful scenes. When the teacher afterwards told me that the people of this tribe had become converts only a year previous to our arrival, and that they had been living before that in the practice of the most bloody system of idolatry, I could not refrain from exclaiming, "What a convincing proof that Christianity is of God!"

On landing from our little boat, we were received with a warm welcome by the teacher and his wife; the latter being also a

native, clothed in a simple European gown and straw bonnet. The shore was lined with hundreds of natives, whose persons were all more or less clothed with native cloth. Some of the men had on a kind of poncho formed of this cloth, their legs being uncovered. Others wore clumsily-fashioned trousers, and no upper garment except hats made of straw and cloth. Many of the dresses, both of women and men, were grotesque enough, being very bad imitations of the European garb; but all wore a dress of some sort or other. They seemed very glad to see us, and crowded round us as the teacher led the way to his dwelling, where we were entertained, in the most sumptuous manner, on baked pig and all the varieties of fruits and vegetables that the island produced. We were much annoyed, however, by the rats: they seemed to run about the house like domestic animals. As we sat at table, one of them peeped up at us over the edge of the cloth, close to Peterkin's elbow, who floored it with a blow on the snout from his knife, exclaiming as he did so -

"I say, Mister Teacher, why don't you set traps for these brutes? - surely you are not fond of them!"

"No," replied the teacher, with a smile; "we would be glad to get

rid of them if we could; but if we were to trap all the rats on the island, it would occupy our whole time."

"Are they, then, so numerous?" inquired Jack.

"They swarm everywhere. The poor heathens on the north side eat them, and think them very sweet. So did my people formerly; but they do not eat so many now, because the missionary who was last here expressed disgust at it. The poor people asked if it was wrong to eat rats; and he told them that it was certainly not wrong, but that the people of England would be much disgusted were they asked to eat rats."

We had not been an hour in the house of this kind-hearted man when we were convinced of the truth of his statement as to their numbers, for the rats ran about the floors in dozens, and, during our meal, two men were stationed at the table to keep them off!

"What a pity you have no cats," said Peterkin, as he aimed a blow at another reckless intruder, and missed it.

"We would, indeed, be glad to have a few," rejoined the teacher,

"but they are difficult to be got. The hogs, we find, are very good rat-killers, but they do not seem to be able to keep the numbers down. I have heard that they are better than cats."

As the teacher said this, his good-natured black face was wrinkled with a smile of merriment. Observing that I had noticed it, he said:-

"I smiled just now when I remembered the fate of the first cat that was taken to Raratonga. This is one of the stations of the London Missionary Society. It, like our own, is infested with rats, and a cat was brought at last to the island. It was a large black one.

On being turned loose, instead of being content to stay among men, the cat took to the mountains, and lived in a wild state, sometimes paying visits during the night to the houses of the natives; some of whom, living at a distance from the settlement, had not heard of the cat's arrival, and were dreadfully frightened in consequence, calling it a 'monster of the deep,' and flying in terror away from it. One night the cat, feeling a desire for company, I suppose, took its way to the house of a chief, who had recently been converted to Christianity, and had begun to learn to read and pray. The chief's wife, who was sitting awake at his side while he slept,

beheld with horror two fires glistening in the doorway, and heard with surprise a mysterious voice. Almost petrified with fear, she awoke her husband, and began to upbraid him for forsaking his old religion, and burning his god, who, she declared, was now come to be avenged of them. 'Get up and pray! get up and pray!' she cried. The chief arose, and, on opening his eyes, beheld the same glaring lights, and heard the same ominous sound. Impelled by the extreme urgency of the case, he commenced, with all possible vehemence, to vociferate the alphabet, as a prayer to God to deliver them from the vengeance of Satan! On hearing this, the cat, as much alarmed as themselves, fled precipitately away, leaving the chief and his wife congratulating themselves on the efficacy of their prayer."

We were much diverted with this anecdote, which the teacher related in English so good, that we certainly could not have supposed him a native but for the colour of his face and the foreign accent in his tone. Next day we walked out with this interesting man, and were much entertained and instructed by his conversation, as we rambled through the cool shady groves of bananas, citrons, limes, and other trees, or sauntered among the cottages of the natives, and watched them while they laboured diligently in the taro beds, or manufactured the tapa or native cloth.

questions through the medium of the missionary; and the replies were such as to surprise us at the extent of their knowledge.

Indeed, Peterkin very truly remarked that "they seemed to know a considerable deal more than Jack himself!"

Among other pieces of interesting information that we obtained was the following, in regard to coral formations:-

"The islands of the Pacific," said our friend, "are of three different kinds or classes. Those of the first class are volcanic, mountainous, and wild; some shooting their jagged peaks into the clouds at an elevation of ten and fifteen thousand feet. Those of the second class are of crystalized limestone, and vary in height from one hundred to five hundred feet. The hills on these are not so wild or broken as those of the first class, but are richly clothed with vegetation, and very beautiful. I have no doubt that the Coral Island on which you were wrecked was one of this class. They are supposed to have been upheaved from the bottom of the sea by volcanic agency, but they are not themselves volcanic in their nature, neither are they of coral formation. Those of the third class are the low coralline islands usually having lagoons of water in their midst; they are very numerous.

"As to the manner in which coral islands and reefs are formed; there are various opinions on this point. I will give you what seems to me the most probable theory, - a theory, I may add, which is held by some of the good and scientific missionaries. It is well known that there is much lime in salt water; it is also known that coral is composed of lime. It is supposed that the polypes, or coral insects, have the power of attracting this lime to their bodies; and with this material they build their little cells or habitations. They choose the summit of a volcano, or the top of a submarine mountain, as a foundation on which to build; for it is found that they never work at any great depth below the surface. On this they work; the polypes on the mountain top, of course, reach the surface first, then those at the outer edges reach the top sooner than the others between them and the centre, thus forming the coral reef surrounding the lagoon of water and the central island; after that the insects within the lagoon cease working. When the surface of the water is reached, these myriads of wonderful creatures die. Then birds visit the spot, and seeds are thus conveyed thither, which take root, and spring up, and flourish. Thus are commenced those coralline islets of which you have seen so many in these seas.

are formed in a similar manner. When we consider," added the missionary, "the smallness of the architects used by our heavenly Father in order to form those lovely and innumerable islands, we are filled with much of that feeling which induced the ancient king to exclaim, 'How manifold, O God, are thy works! in wisdom thou hast made them all.'"

We all heartily agreed with the missionary in this sentiment, and felt not a little gratified to find that the opinions which Jack and I had been led to form from personal observation on our Coral Island were thus to a great extent corroborated.

The missionary also gave us an account of the manner in which Christianity had been introduced among them. He said: "When missionaries were first sent here, three years ago, a small vessel brought them; and the chief, who is now dead, promised to treat well the two native teachers who were left with their wives on the island. But scarcely had the boat which landed them returned to the ship, than the natives began to maltreat their guests, taking away all they possessed, and offering them further violence, so that, when the boat was sent in haste to fetch them away, the clothes of both men and women were torn nearly off their backs.

"Two years after this the vessel visited them again, and I, being in her, volunteered to land alone, without any goods whatever; begging that my wife might be brought to me the following year, - that is, THIS year; and, as you see, she is with me. But the surf was so high that the boat could not land me; so with nothing on but my trousers and shirt, and with a few catechisms and a Bible, besides some portions of the Scripture translated into the Mango tongue, I sprang into the sea, and swam ashore on the crest of a breaker. I was instantly dragged up the beach by the natives; who, on finding I had nothing worth having upon me, let me alone. I then made signs to my friends in the ship to leave me; which they did. At first the natives listened to me in silence, but laughed at what I said while I preached the gospel of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ to them. Afterwards they treated me ill sometimes; but I persevered, and continued to dwell among them, and dispute, and exhort them to give up their sinful ways of life, burn their idols, and come to Jesus.

"About a month after I landed, I heard that the chief was dead. He was the father of the present chief, who is now a most consistent member of the church. It is a custom here that, when a chief dies,

his wives are strangled and buried with him. Knowing this, I hastened to his house to endeavour to prevent such cruelty if possible. When I arrived, I found two of the wives had already been killed, while another was in the act of being strangled. I pleaded hard for her, but it was too late; she was already dead. I then entreated the son to spare the fourth wife; and, after much hesitation, my prayer was granted: but, in half an hour afterwards, this poor woman repented of being unfaithful, as she termed it, to her husband, and insisted on being strangled; which was accordingly done.

"All this time the chief's son was walking up and down before his father's house with a brow black as thunder. When he entered, I went in with him, and found, to my surprise, that his father was not dead! The old man was sitting on a mat in a corner, with an expression of placid resignation on his face.

"'Why,' said I, 'have you strangled your father's wives before he is dead?'

"To this the son replied, 'He is dead. That is no longer my father. He is as good as dead now. He is to be BURIED ALIVE.'

"I now remembered having heard that it is a custom among the Feejee islanders, that when the reigning chief grows old or infirm, the heir to the chieftainship has a right to depose his father; in which case he is considered as dead, and is buried alive. The young chief was now about to follow this custom, and, despite my earnest entreaties and pleadings, the old chief was buried that day before my eyes in the same grave with his four strangled wives! Oh! my heart groaned when I saw this, and I prayed to God to open the hearts of these poor creatures, as he had already opened mine, and pour into them the light and the love of the gospel of Jesus. My prayer was answered very soon. A week afterwards, the son, who was now chief of the tribe, came to me, bearing his god on his shoulders, and groaning beneath its weight. Flinging it down at my feet, he desired me to burn it!

"You may conceive how overjoyed I was at this. I sprang up and embraced him, while I shed tears of joy. Then we made a fire, and burned the god to ashes, amid an immense concourse of the people, who seemed terrified at what was being done, and shrank back when we burned the god, expecting some signal vengeance to be taken upon us; but seeing that nothing happened, they changed their minds, and

thought that our God must be the true one after all. From that time the mission prospered steadily, and now, while there is not a single man in the tribe who has not burned his household gods, and become a convert to Christianity, there are not a few, I hope, who are true followers of the Lamb, having been plucked as brands from the burning by Him who can save unto the uttermost. I will not tell you more of our progress at this time, but you see," he said, waving his hand around him, "the village and the church did not exist a year ago!"

We were indeed much interested in this account, and I could not help again in my heart praying God to prosper those missionary societies that send such inestimable blessings to these islands of dark and bloody idolatry. The teacher also added that the other tribes were very indignant at this one for having burned its gods, and threatened to destroy it altogether, but they had done nothing yet; "and if they should," said the teacher, "the Lord is on our side; of whom shall we be afraid?"

"Have the missionaries many stations in these seas?" inquired Jack.

"Oh, yes. The London Missionary Society have a great many in the

Tahiti group, and other islands in that quarter. Then the Wesleyans have the Feejee Islands all to themselves, and the Americans have many stations in other groups. But still, my friend, there are hundreds of islands here the natives of which have never heard of Jesus, or the good word of God, or the Holy Spirit; and thousands are living and dying in the practice of those terrible sins and bloody murders of which you have already heard. I trust, my friends," he added, looking earnestly into our faces, "I trust that if you ever return to England, you will tell your Christian friends that the horrors which they hear of in regard to these islands are LITERALLY TRUE, and that when they have heard the worst, the 'HALF HAS NOT BEEN TOLD THEM;' for there are perpetrated here foul deeds of darkness of which man may not speak. You may also tell them," he said, looking around with a smile, while a tear of gratitude trembled in his eye and rolled down his coal-black cheek, - "tell them of the blessings that the gospel has wrought HERE!"

We assured our friend that we would certainly not forget his request. On returning towards the village, about noon, we remarked on the beautiful whiteness of the cottages.

"That is owing to the lime with which they are plastered," said the teacher. "When the natives were converted, as I have described, I set them to work to build cottages for themselves, and also this handsome church which you see. When the framework and other parts of the houses were up, I sent the people to fetch coral from the sea. They brought immense quantities. Then I made them cut wood, and, piling the coral above it, set it on fire.

"Look! look!" cried the poor people, in amazement; 'what wonderful people the Christians are! He is roasting stones. We shall not need taro or bread-fruit any more; we may eat stones!'

"But their surprise was still greater when the coral was reduced to a fine soft white powder. They immediately set up a great shout, and, mingling the lime with water, rubbed their faces and their bodies all over with it, and ran through the village screaming with delight. They were also much surprised at another thing they saw me do. I wished to make some household furniture, and constructed a turning-lathe to assist me. The first thing that I turned was the leg of a sofa; which was no sooner finished than the chief seized it with wonder and delight, and ran through the village

exhibiting it to the people, who looked upon it with great admiration. The chief then, tying a string to it, hung it round his neck as an ornament! He afterwards told me that if he had seen it before he became a Christian he would have made it his god!"

As the teacher concluded this anecdote we reached his door. Saying that he had business to attend to, he left us to amuse ourselves as we best could.

"Now, lads," said Jack, turning abruptly towards us, and buttoning up his jacket as he spoke, "I'm off to see the battle. I've no particular fondness for seein' blood-shed, but I must find out the nature o' these fellows and see their customs with my own eyes, so that I may be able to speak of it again, if need be, authoritatively. It's only six miles off, and we don't run much more risk than that of getting a rap with a stray stone or an over-shot arrow. Will you go?"

"To be sure we will," said Peterkin.

"If they chance to see us we'll cut and run for it," added Jack.

"Dear me!" cried Peterkin, - "YOU run! thought you would scorn to run from any one."

"So I would, if it were my duty to fight," returned Jack, coolly;
"but as I don't want to fight, and don't intend to fight, if they offer to attack us I'll run away like the veriest coward that ever went by the name of Peterkin. So come along."

CHAPTER XXXI.

A strange and bloody battle - The lion bearded in his den -
Frightful scenes of cruelty, and fears for the future.

WE had ascertained from the teacher the direction to the spot on which the battle was to be fought, and after a walk of two hours reached it. The summit of a bare hill was the place chosen; for,

unlike most of the other islanders, who are addicted to bush-fighting, those of Mango are in the habit of meeting on open ground. We arrived before the two parties had commenced the deadly struggle, and, creeping as close up as we dared among the rocks, we lay and watched them.

The combatants were drawn up face to face, each side ranged in rank four deep. Those in the first row were armed with long spears; the second, with clubs to defend the spearmen; the third row was composed of young men with slings; and the fourth consisted of women, who carried baskets of stones for the slingers, and clubs and spears with which to supply the warriors. Soon after we arrived, the attack was made with great fury. There was no science displayed. The two bodies of savages rushed headlong upon each other and engaged in a general MELEE, and a more dreadful set of men I have never seen. They wore grotesque war-caps made of various substances and decorated with feathers. Their faces and bodies were painted so as to make them look as frightful as possible; and as they brandished their massive clubs, leaped, shouted, yelled, and dashed each other to the ground, I thought I had never seen men look so like demons before.

We were much surprised at the conduct of the women, who seemed to be perfect furies, and hung about the heels of their husbands in order to defend them. One stout young woman we saw, whose husband was hard pressed and about to be overcome: she lifted a large stone, and throwing it at his opponent's head, felled him to the earth. But the battle did not last long. The band most distant from us gave way and were routed, leaving eighteen of their comrades dead upon the field. These the victors brained as they lay; and putting some of their brains on leaves went off with them, we were afterwards informed, to their temples, to present them to their gods as an earnest of the human victims who were soon to be brought there.

We hastened back to the Christian village with feelings of the deepest sadness at the sanguinary conflict which we had just witnessed.

Next day, after breakfasting with our friend the teacher, we made preparations for carrying out our plan. At first the teacher endeavoured to dissuade us.

"You do not know," said he, turning to Jack, "the danger you run in

venturing amongst these ferocious savages. I feel much pity for poor Avatea; but you are not likely to succeed in saving her, and you may die in the attempt."

"Well," said Jack, quietly, "I am not afraid to die in a good cause."

The teacher smiled approvingly at him as he said this, and after a little further conversation agreed to accompany us as interpreter; saying that, although Tararo was unfriendly to him, he had hitherto treated him with respect.

We now went on board the schooner, having resolved to sail round the island and drop anchor opposite the heathen village. We manned her with natives, and hoped to overawe the savages by displaying our brass gun to advantage. The teacher soon after came on board, and setting our sails we put to sea. In two hours more we made the cliffs reverberate with the crash of the big gun, which we fired by way of salute, while we ran the British ensign up to the peak and cast anchor. The commotion on shore showed us that we had struck terror into the hearts of the natives; but seeing that we did not offer to molest them, a canoe at length put off and paddled

cautiously towards us. The teacher showed himself, and explaining that we were friends and wished to palaver with the chief, desired the native to go and tell him to come on board.

We waited long and with much impatience for an answer. During this time the native teacher conversed with us again, and told us many things concerning the success of the gospel among those islands; and perceiving that we were by no means so much gratified as we ought to have been at the hearing of such good news, he pressed us more closely in regard to our personal interest in religion, and exhorted us to consider that our souls were certainly in as great danger as those of the wretched heathen whom we pitied so much, if we had not already found salvation in Jesus Christ. "Nay, further," he added, "if such be your unhappy case, you are, in the sight of God, much worse than these savages (forgive me, my young friends, for saying so); for they have no knowledge, no light, and do not profess to believe; while you, on the contrary, have been brought up in the light of the blessed gospel and call yourselves Christians. These poor savages are indeed the enemies of our Lord; but you, if ye be not true believers, are traitors!"

I must confess that my heart condemned me while the teacher spoke

in this earnest manner, and I knew not what to reply. Peterkin, too, did not seem to like it, and I thought would willingly have escaped; but Jack seemed deeply impressed, and wore an anxious expression on his naturally grave countenance, while he assented to the teacher's remarks and put to him many earnest questions. Meanwhile the natives who composed our crew, having nothing particular to do, had squatted down on the deck and taken out their little books containing the translated portions of the New Testament, along with hymns and spelling-books, and were now busily engaged, some vociferating the alphabet, others learning prayers off by heart, while a few sang hymns, - all of them being utterly unmindful of our presence. The teacher soon joined them, and soon afterwards they all engaged in a prayer which was afterwards translated to us, and proved to be a petition for the success of our undertaking and for the conversion of the heathen.

While we were thus engaged a canoe put off from shore and several savages leaped on deck, one of whom advanced to the teacher and informed him that Tararo could not come on board that day, being busy with some religious ceremonies before the gods, which could on no account be postponed. He was also engaged with a friendly chief who was about to take his departure from the island, and therefore

begged that the teacher and his friends would land and pay a visit to him. To this the teacher returned answer that we would land immediately.

"Now, lads," said Jack, as we were about to step into our little boat, "I'm not going to take any weapons with me, and I recommend you to take none either. We are altogether in the power of these savages, and the utmost we could do, if they were to attack us, would be to kill a few of them before we were ourselves overpowered. I think that our only chance of success lies in mild measures. Don't you think so?"

To this I assented gladly, and Peterkin replied by laying down a huge bell-mouthed blunderbuss, and divesting himself of a pair of enormous horse-pistols with which he had purposed to overawe the natives! We then jumped into our boat and rowed ashore.

On reaching the beach we were received by a crowd of naked savages, who shouted a rude welcome, and conducted us to a house or shed where a baked pig and a variety of vegetables were prepared for us. Having partaken of these, the teacher begged to be conducted to the chief; but there seemed some hesitation, and after some

consultation among themselves, one of the men stood forward and spoke to the teacher.

"What says he?" inquired Jack when the savage had concluded.

"He says that the chief is just going to the temple of his god and cannot see us yet; so we must be patient, my friend."

"Well," cried Jack, rising; "if he won't come to see me, I'll e'en go and see him. Besides, I have a great desire to witness their proceedings at this temple of theirs. Will you go with me, friend?"

"I cannot," said the teacher, shaking his head; "I must not go to the heathen temples and witness their inhuman rites, except for the purpose of condemning their wickedness and folly."

"Very good," returned Jack; "then I'll go alone, for I cannot condemn their doings till I have seen them."

Jack arose, and we, having determined to go also, followed him through the banana groves to a rising ground immediately behind the

village, on the top of which stood the Bure, or temple, under the dark shade of a group of iron-wood trees. As we went through the village, I was again led to contrast the rude huts and sheds, and their almost naked savage-looking inhabitants, with the natives of the Christian village, who, to use the teacher's scriptural expression, were now "clothed and in their right mind."

As we turned into a broad path leading towards the hill, we were arrested by the shouts of an approaching multitude in the rear. Drawing aside into the bushes we awaited their coming up, and as they drew near we observed that it was a procession of the natives, many of whom were dancing and gesticulating in the most frantic manner. They had an exceedingly hideous aspect, owing to the black, red, and yellow paints with which their faces and naked bodies were bedaubed. In the midst of these came a band of men carrying three or four planks, on which were seated in rows upwards of a dozen men. I shuddered involuntarily as I recollected the sacrifice of human victims at the island of Emo, and turned with a look of fear to Jack as I said, -

"Oh, Jack! I have a terrible dread that they are going to commit some of their cruel practices on these wretched men. We had better

not go to the temple. We shall only be horrified without being able to do any good, for I fear they are going to kill them."

Jack's face wore an expression of deep compassion as he said, in a low voice, "No fear, Ralph; the sufferings of these poor fellows are over long ago."

I turned with a start as he spoke, and, glancing at the men, who were now quite near to the spot where we stood, saw that they were all dead. They were tied firmly with ropes in a sitting posture on the planks, and seemed, as they bent their sightless eye-balls and grinning mouths over the dancing crew below, as if they were laughing in ghastly mockery at the utter inability of their enemies to hurt them now. These, we discovered afterwards, were the men who had been slain in the battle of the previous day, and were now on their way to be first presented to the gods, and then eaten.

Behind these came two men leading between them a third, whose hands were pinioned behind his back. He walked with a firm step, and wore a look of utter indifference on his face, as they led him along; so that we concluded he must be a criminal who was about to receive some slight punishment for his faults. The rear of the procession was brought up by a shouting crowd of women and

children, with whom we mingled and followed to the temple.

Here we arrived in a few minutes. The temple was a tall circular building, open at one side. Around it were strewn heaps of human bones and skulls. At a table inside sat the priest, an elderly man, with a long gray beard. He was seated on a stool, and before him lay several knives, made of wood, bone, and splinters of bamboo, with which he performed his office of dissecting dead bodies. Farther in lay a variety of articles that had been dedicated to the god, and among them were many spears and clubs. I observed among the latter some with human teeth sticking in them, where the victims had been clubbed in their mouths.

Before this temple the bodies, which were painted with vermilion and soot, were arranged in a sitting posture; and a man, called a "dan-vosa" (orator), advanced, and, laying his hands on their heads, began to chide them, apparently, in a low bantering tone. What he said we knew not, but, as he went on, he waxed warm, and at last shouted to them at the top of his lungs, and finally finished by kicking the bodies over and running away, amid the shouts and laughter of the people, who now rushed forward. Seizing the bodies by a leg, or an arm, or by the hair of the head, they dragged them

over stumps and stones and through sloughs, until they were exhausted. The bodies were then brought back to the temple and dissected by the priest, after which they were taken out to be baked.

Close to the temple a large fire was kindled, in which stones were heated red hot. When ready these were spread out on the ground, and a thick coating of leaves strewn over them to slack the heat. On this "lovo," or oven, the bodies were then placed, covered over, and left to bake.

The crowd now ran, with terrible yells, towards a neighbouring hill or mound, on which we observed the frame-work of a house lying ready to be erected. Sick with horror, yet fascinated by curiosity, we staggered after them mechanically, scarce knowing where we were going or what we did, and feeling a sort of impression that all we saw was a dreadful dream.

Arrived at the place, we saw the multitude crowding round a certain spot. We pressed forward and obtained a sight of what they were doing. A large wooden beam or post lay on the ground, beside the other parts of the frame-work of the house, and close to the end of

it was a hole about seven feet deep and upwards of two feet wide. While we looked, the man whom we had before observed with his hands pinioned, was carried into the circle. His hands were now free, but his legs were tightly strapped together. The post of the house was then placed in the hole, and the man put in beside it. His head was a good way below the surface of the hole, and his arms were clasped round the post. Earth was now thrown in until all was covered over and stamped down; and this, we were afterwards told, was a CEREMONY usually performed at the dedication of a new temple, or the erection of a chief's house

"Come, come," cried Jack, on beholding this horrible tragedy, "we have seen enough, enough, far more than enough! Let us go."

Jack's face looked ghastly pale and haggard as we hurried back to rejoin the teacher, and I have no doubt that he felt terrible anxiety when he considered the number and ferocity of the savages, and the weakness of the few arms which were ready indeed to essay, but impotent to effect, Avatea's deliverance from these ruthless men.

CHAPTER XXXII.

An unexpected discovery, and a bold, reckless defiance, with its consequences - Plans of escape, and heroic resolves.

WHEN we returned to the shore, and related to our friend what had passed, he was greatly distressed, and groaned in spirit; but we had not sat long in conversation, when we were interrupted by the arrival of Tararo on the beach, accompanied by a number of followers bearing baskets of vegetables and fruits on their heads.

We advanced to meet him, and he expressed, through our interpreter, much pleasure in seeing us.

"And what is it that my friends wish to say to me?" he inquired.

The teacher explained that we came to beg that Avatea might be

spared.

"Tell him," said Jack, "that I consider that I have a right to ask this of him, having not only saved the girl's life, but the lives of his own people also; and say that I wish her to be allowed to follow her own wishes, and join the Christians."

While this was being translated, the chiefs brow lowered, and we could see plainly that our request met with no favourable reception. He replied with considerable energy, and at some length.

"What says he?" inquired Jack.

"I regret to say that he will not listen to the proposal. He says he has pledged his word to his friend that the girl shall be sent to him, and a deputy is even now on this island awaiting the fulfilment of the pledge."

Jack bit his lip in suppressed anger. "Tell Tararo," he exclaimed with flashing eye, "that if he does not grant my demand, it will be worse for him. Say I have a big gun on board my schooner that will

blow his village into the sea, if he does not give up the girl."

"Nay, my friend," said the teacher, gently, "I will not tell him that; we must overcome evil with good."

"What does my friend say?" inquired the chief, who seemed nettled by Jack's looks of defiance.

"He is displeased," replied the teacher.

Tararo turned away with a smile of contempt, and walked towards the men who carried the baskets of vegetables, and who had now emptied the whole on the beach in an enormous pile.

"What are they doing there?" I inquired.

"I think that they are laying out a gift which they intend to present to some one," said the teacher.

At this moment a couple of men appeared leading a young girl between them; and, going towards the heap of fruits and vegetables, placed her on the top of it. We started with surprise and fear,

for in the young female before us we recognised the Samoan girl,
Avatea!

We stood rooted to the earth with surprise and thick coming fears.

"Oh! my dear young friend," whispered the teacher, in a voice of deep emotion, while he seized Jack by the arm, "she is to be made a sacrifice even now!"

"Is she?" cried Jack, with a vehement shout, spurning the teacher aside, and dashing over two natives who stood in his way, while he rushed towards the heap, sprang up its side, and seized Avatea by the arm. In another moment he dragged her down, placed her back to a large tree, and, wrenching a war-club from the hand of a native who seemed powerless and petrified with surprise, whirled it above his head, and yelled, rather than shouted, while his face blazed with fury, "Come on, the whole nation of you, an ye like it, and do your worst!"

It seemed as though the challenge had been literally accepted; for every savage on the ground ran precipitately at Jack with club and spear, and, doubtless, would speedily have poured out his brave

blood on the sod, had not the teacher rushed in between them, and, raising his voice to its utmost, cried. -

"Stay your hands, warriors! It is not your part to judge in this matter. It is for Tararo, the chief, to say whether or not the young man shall live or die."

The natives were arrested; and I know not whether it was the gratifying acknowledgment of his superiority thus made by the teacher, or some lingering feeling of gratitude for Jack's former aid in time of need, that influenced Tararo, but he stepped forward, and, waving his hand, said to his people, - "Desist. The young man's life is mine." Then, turning to Jack, he said, "You have forfeited your liberty and life to me. Submit yourself, for we are more numerous than the sand upon the shore. You are but one; why should you die?"

"Villain!" exclaimed Jack, passionately, "I may die, but, assuredly, I shall not perish alone. I will not submit until you promise that this girl shall not be injured."

"You are very bold," replied the chief, haughtily, "but very

foolish. Yet I will say that Avatea shall not be sent away, at least for three days."

"You had better accept these terms," whispered the teacher, entreatingly. "If you persist in this mad defiance, you will be slain, and Avatea will be lost. Three days are worth having."

Jack hesitated a moment, then lowered his club, and, throwing it moodily to the ground, crossed his arms on his breast, and hung down his head in silence.

Tararo seemed pleased by his submission, and told the teacher to say that he did not forget his former services, and, therefore, would leave him free as to his person, but that the schooner would be detained till he had further considered the matter.

While the teacher translated this, he approached as near to where Avatea was standing as possible, without creating suspicion, and whispered to her a few words in the native language. Avatea, who, during the whole of the foregoing scene, had stood leaning against the tree perfectly passive, and seemingly quite uninterested in all that was going on, replied by a single rapid glance of her dark

eye, which was instantly cast down again on the ground at her feet.

Tararo now advanced, and taking the girl by the hand, led her unresistingly away, while Jack, Peterkin, and I returned with the teacher on board the schooner.

On reaching the deck, we went down to the cabin, where Jack threw himself, in a state of great dejection, on a couch; but the teacher seated himself by his side, and, laying his hand upon his shoulder, said, -

"Do not give way to anger, my young friend. God has given us three days, and we must use the means that are in our power to free this poor girl from slavery. We must not sit in idle disappointment, we must act" -

"Act!" cried Jack, raising himself, and tossing back his hair wildly; "it is mockery to balk of acting when one is bound hand and foot. How can I act? I cannot fight a whole nation of savages single-handed. Yes," he said, with a bitter smile, "I can fight them, but I cannot conquer them, or save Avatea."

"Patience, my friend; your spirit is not a good one just now. You cannot expect that blessing which alone can insure success, unless you are more submissive. I will tell you my plans if you will listen."

"Listen!" cried Jack, eagerly, "of course I will, my good fellow; I did not know you had any plans. Out with them. I only hope you will show me how I can get the girl on board of this schooner, and I'd up anchor and away in no time. But proceed with your plans."

The teacher smiled sadly: "Ah! my friend, if one fathom of your anchor chain were to rattle, as you drew it in, a thousand warriors would be standing on your deck. No, no, that could not be done. Even now, your ship would be taken from you were it not that Tararo has some feeling of gratitude toward you. But I know Tararo well. He is a man of falsehood, as all the unconverted savages are. The chief to whom he has promised this girl is very powerful, and Tararo MUST fulfil his promise. He has told you that he would do nothing to the girl for three days; but that is because the party who are to take her away will not be ready to start for three days. Still, as he might have made you a prisoner during those three days, I say that God has given them to us."

"Well, but what do you propose to do?" said Jack, impatiently.

"My plan involves much danger, but I see no other, and I think you have courage to brave it. It is this: There is an island about fifty miles to the south of this, the natives of which are Christians, and have been so for two years or more, and the principal chief is Avatea's lover. Once there, Avatea would be safe. Now, I suggest that you should abandon your schooner. Do you think that you can make so great a sacrifice?"

"Friend," replied Jack, "when I make up my mind to go through with a thing of importance, I can make any sacrifice."

The teacher smiled. "Well, then, the savages could not conceive it possible that, for the sake of a girl, you would voluntarily lose your fine vessel; therefore as long as she lies here they think they have you all safe: so I suggest that we get a quantity of stores conveyed to a sequestered part of the shore, provide a small canoe, put Avatea on board, and you three would paddle to the Christian island."

"Bravo!" cried Peterkin, springing up and seizing the teacher's hand. "Missionary, you're a regular brick. I didn't think you had so much in you."

"As for me," continued the teacher, "I will remain on board till they discover that you are gone. Then they will ask me where you are gone to, and I will refuse to tell."

"And what'll be the result of that?" inquired Jack.

"I know not. Perhaps they will kill me; but," he added, looking at Jack with a peculiar smile, "I too am not afraid to die in a good cause!"

"But how are we to get hold of Avatea?" inquired Jack.

"I have arranged with her to meet us at a particular spot, to which I will guide you to-night. We shall then arrange about it. She will easily manage to elude her keepers, who are not very strict in watching her, thinking it impossible that she could escape from the island. Indeed, I am sure that such an idea will never enter their heads. But, as I have said, you run great danger. Fifty miles in

a small canoe, on the open sea, is a great voyage to make. You may miss the island, too, in which case there is no other in that direction for a hundred miles or more; and if you lose your way and fall among other heathens, you know the law of Feejee - a cast-away who gains the shore is doomed to die. You must count the cost, my young friend."

"I have counted it," replied Jack. "If Avatea consents to run the risk, most certainly I will; and so will my comrades also. Besides," added Jack, looking seriously into the teacher's face, "your Bible, - OUR Bible, tells of ONE who delivers those who call on Him in the time of trouble; who holds the winds in his fists and the waters in the hollow of his hand."

We now set about active preparations for the intended voyage; collected together such things as we should require, and laid out on the deck provisions sufficient to maintain us for several weeks, purposing to load the canoe with as much as she could hold consistently with speed and safety. These we covered with a tarpaulin, intending to convey them to the canoe only a few hours before starting. When night spread her sable curtain over the scene, we prepared to land; but, first, kneeling along with the

natives and the teacher, the latter implored a blessing on our enterprise. Then we rowed quietly to the shore and followed our sable guide, who led us by a long detour, in order to avoid the village, to the place of rendezvous. We had not stood more than five minutes under the gloomy shade of the thick foliage when a dark figure glided noiselessly up to us.

"Ah! here you are," said Jack, as Avatea approached. "Now, then, tell her what we've come about, and don't waste time."

"I understand English," said Avatea, in a low voice.

"Why, where did you pick up English?" exclaimed Jack, in amazement; "you were dumb as a stone when I saw you last."

"She has learned all she knows of it from me," said the teacher, "since she came to the island."

We now gave Avatea a full explanation of our plans, entering into all the details, and concealing none of the danger, so that she might be fully aware of the risk she ran. As we had anticipated, she was too glad of the opportunity thus afforded her to escape

from her persecutors to think of the danger or risk.

"Then you're willing to go with us, are you?" said Jack.

"Yis, I am willing to go."

"And you're not afraid to trust yourself out on the deep sea so far?"

"No, I not 'fraid to go. Safe with Christian."

After some further consultation, the teacher suggested that it was time to return, so we bade Avatea good night, and having appointed to meet at the cliff where the canoe lay, on the following night, just after dark, we hastened away - we to row on board the schooner with muffled oars - Avatea to glide back to her prison-hut among the Mango savages.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The flight - The pursuit - Despair and its results - The lion
bearded in his den again - Awful danger threatened and wonderfully
averted - A terrific storm.

AS the time for our meditated flight drew near, we became naturally
very fearful lest our purpose should be discovered, and we spent
the whole of the following day in a state of nervous anxiety. We
resolved to go a-shore and ramble about the village, as if to
observe the habits and dwellings of the people, as we thought that
an air of affected indifference to the events of the previous day
would be more likely than any other course of conduct to avert
suspicion as to our intentions. While we were thus occupied, the
teacher remained on board with the Christian natives, whose
powerful voices reached us ever and anon as they engaged in singing
hymns or in prayer.

At last the long and tedious day came to a close, the sank into the
sea, and the short-lived twilight of those regions, to which I have

already referred, ended abruptly in a dark night. Hastily throwing a few blankets into our little boat, we stepped into it, and, whispering farewell to the natives in the schooner, rowed gently over the lagoon, taking care to keep as near to the beach as possible. We rowed in the utmost silence and with muffled oars, so that had any one observed us at the distance of a few yards, he might have almost taken us for a phantom-boat or a shadow on the dark water. Not a breath of air was stirring; but fortunately the gentle ripple of the sea upon the shore, mingled with the soft roar of the breaker on the distant reef, effectually drowned the slight plash that we unavoidably made in the water by the dipping of our oars.

Quarter of an hour sufficed to bring us to the over-hanging cliff under whose black shadow our little canoe lay, with her bow in the water ready to be launched, and most of her cargo already stowed away. As the keel of our little boat grated on the sand, a hand was laid upon the bow, and a dim form was seen.

"Ha!" said Peterkin in a whisper, as he stepped upon the beach, "is that you, Avatea?"

"Yis, it am me," was the reply.

"All right! Now, then, gently. Help me to shove off the canoe," whispered Jack to the teacher; "and Peterkin, do you shove these blankets aboard, we may want them before long. Avatea, step into the middle; - that's right."

"Is all ready?" whispered the teacher.

"Not quite," replied Peterkin. "Here, Ralph, lay hold o' this pair of oars, and stow them away if you can. I don't like paddles. After we're safe away I'll try to rig up rollicks for them."

"Now, then, in with you and shove off."

One more earnest squeeze of the kind teacher's hand, and, with his whispered blessing yet sounding in our ears, we shot like an arrow from the shore, sped over the still waters of the lagoon, and paddled as swiftly as strong arms and willing hearts could urge us over the long swell of the open sea.

All that night and the whole of the following day we plied our

paddles in almost total silence and without halt, save twice to recruit our failing energies with a mouthful of food and a draught of water. Jack had taken the bearing of the island just after starting, and laying a small pocket-compass before him, kept the head of the canoe due south, for our chance of hitting the island depended very much on the faithfulness of our steersman in keeping our tiny bark exactly and constantly on its proper course. Peterkin and I paddled in the bow, and Avatea worked untiringly in the middle.

As the sun's lower limb dipped on the gilded edge of the sea Jack ceased working, threw down his paddle, and called a halt.

"There," he cried, heaving a deep, long-drawn sigh, "we've put a considerable breadth of water between us and these black rascals, so now we'll have a hearty supper and a sound sleep."

"Hear, hear," cried Peterkin. "Nobly spoken, Jack. Hand me a drop water, Ralph. Why, girl what's wrong with you? You look just like a black owl blinking in the sunshine."

Avatea smiled. "I sleepy," she said; and as if to prove the truth

of this, she laid her head on the edge of the canoe and fell fast asleep.

"That's uncommon sharp practice," said Peterkin, with a broad grin. "Don't you think we should awake her to make her eat something first? or, perhaps," he added, with a grave, meditative look, "perhaps we might put some food in her mouth, which is so elegantly open at the present moment, and see if she'd swallow it while asleep. If so, Ralph, you might come round to the front here and feed her quietly, while Jack and I are tucking into the victuals. It would be a monstrous economy of time."

I could not help smiling at Peterkin's idea, which, indeed, when I pondered it, seemed remarkably good in theory; nevertheless I declined to put it in practice, being fearful of the result should the victual chance to go down the wrong throat. But, on suggesting this to Peterkin, he exclaimed -

"Down the wrong throat, man! why, a fellow with half an eye might see that if it went down Avatea's throat it could not go down the wrong throat! - unless, indeed, you have all of a sudden become inordinately selfish, and think that all the throats in the world

are wrong ones except your own. However, don't talk so much, and hand me the pork before Jack finishes it. I feel myself entitled to at least one minute morsel."

"Peterkin, you're a villain. A paltry little villain," said Jack, quietly, as he tossed the hind legs (including the tail) of a cold roast pig to his comrade; "and I must again express my regret that unavoidable circumstances have thrust your society upon me, and that necessity has compelled me to cultivate your acquaintance. Were it not that you are incapable of walking upon the water, I would order you, sir, out of the canoe."

"There! you've wakened Avatea with your long tongue," retorted Peterkin, with a frown, as the girl gave vent to a deep sigh.

"No," he continued, "it was only a snore. Perchance she dreameth of her black Apollo. I say, Ralph, do leave just one little slice of that yam. Between you and Jack I run a chance of being put on short allowance, if not - yei - a - a - ow!"

Peterkin's concluding remark was a yawn of so great energy that Jack recommended him to postpone the conclusion of his meal till next morning, - a piece of advice which he followed so quickly,

that I was forcibly reminded of his remark, a few minutes before,
in regard to the sharp practice of Avatea.

My readers will have observed, probably, by this time, that I am
much given to meditation; they will not, therefore, be surprised to
learn that I fell into a deep reverie on the subject of sleep,
which was continued without intermission into the night, and
prolonged without interruption into the following morning. But I
cannot feel assured that I actually slept during that time,
although I am tolerably certain that I was not awake.

Thus we lay like a shadow on the still bosom of the ocean, while
the night closed in, and all around was calm, dark, and silent.

A thrilling cry of alarm from Peterkin startled us in the morning,
just as the gray dawn began to glimmer in the east.

"What's wrong?" cried Jack, starting up.

Peterkin replied by pointing with a look of anxious dread towards
the horizon; and a glance sufficed to show us that one of the
largest sized war-canoes was approaching us!

With a groan of mingled despair and anger Jack seized his paddle, glanced at the compass, and, in a suppressed voice, commanded us to "give way."

But we did not require to be urged. Already our four paddles were glancing in the water, and the canoe bounded over the glassy sea like a dolphin, while a shout from our pursuers told that they had observed our motions.

"I see something like land ahead," said Jack, in a hopeful tone.

"It seems impossible that we could have made the island yet; still, if it is so, we may reach it before these fellows can catch us, for our canoe is light and our muscles are fresh."

No one replied; for, to say truth, we felt that, in a long chase, we had no chance whatever with a canoe which held nearly a hundred warriors. Nevertheless, we resolved to do our utmost to escape, and paddled with a degree of vigour that kept us well in advance of our pursuers. The war-canoe was so far behind us that it seemed but a little speck on the sea, and the shouts, to which the crew occasionally gave vent, came faintly towards us on the morning

breeze. We therefore hoped that we should be able to keep in advance for an hour or two, when we might, perhaps, reach the land ahead. But this hope was suddenly crushed by the supposed land, not long after, rising up into the sky; thus proving itself to be a fog-bank!

A bitter feeling of disappointment filled each heart, and was expressed on each countenance, as we beheld this termination to our hopes. But we had little time to think of regret. Our danger was too great and imminent to permit of a moment's relaxation from our exertions. No hope now animated our bosoms; but a feeling of despair, strange to say, lent us power to work, and nerved our arms with such energy, that it was several hours ere the savages overtook us. When we saw that there was indeed no chance of escape, and that paddling any longer would only serve to exhaust our strength, without doing any good, we turned the side of our canoe towards the approaching enemy, and laid down our paddles.

Silently, and with a look of bitter determination on his face, Jack lifted one of the light boat-oars that we had brought with us, and, resting it on his shoulder, stood up in an attitude of bold defiance. Peterkin took the other oar and also stood up, but there

was no anger visible on his countenance. When not sparkling with fun, it usually wore a mild, sad expression, which was deepened on the present occasion, as he glanced at Avatea, who sat with her face resting in her hands upon her knees. Without knowing very well what I intended to do, I also arose and grasped my paddle with both hands.

On came the large canoe like a war-horse of the deep, with the foam curling from its sharp bow, and the spear-heads of the savages glancing the beams of the rising sun. Perfect silence was maintained on both sides, and we could hear the hissing water, and see the frowning eyes of the warriors, as they came rushing on. When about twenty yards distant, five or six of the savages in the bow rose, and, laying aside their paddles, took up their spears. Jack and Peterkin raised their oars, while, with a feeling of madness whirling in my brain, I grasped my paddle and prepared for the onset. But, before any of us could strike a blow, the sharp prow of the war-canoe struck us like a thunderbolt on the side, and hurled us into the sea!

What occurred after this I cannot tell, for I was nearly drowned; but when I recovered from the state of insensibility into which I

had been thrown, I found myself stretched on my back, bound hand and foot between Jack and Peterkin, in the bottom of the large canoe.

In this condition we lay the whole day, during which time the savages only rested one hour. When night came, they rested again for another hour, and appeared to sleep just as they sat. But we were neither unbound nor allowed to speak to each other during the voyage, nor was a morsel of food or a draught of water given to us. For food, however, we cared little; but we would have given much for a drop of water to cool our parched lips, and we would have been glad, too, had they loosened the cords that bound us, for they were tightly fastened and occasioned us much pain. The air, also, was unusually hot, so much so that I felt convinced that a storm was brewing. This also added to our sufferings. However, these were at length relieved by our arrival at the island from which we had fled.

While we were being led ashore, we caught a glimpse of Avatea, who was seated in the hinder part of the canoe. She was not fettered in any way. Our captors now drove us before them towards the hut of Tararo, at which we speedily arrived, and found the chief seated

with an expression on his face that boded us no good. Our friend the teacher stood beside him, with a look of anxiety on his mild features.

"How comes it," said Tararo, turning to the teacher, "that these youths have abused our hospitality?"

"Tell him," replied Jack, "that we have not abused his hospitality, for his hospitality has not been extended to us. I came to the island to deliver Avatea, and my only regret is that I have failed to do so. If I get another chance, I will try to save her yet."

The teacher shook his head. "Nay, my young friend, I had better not tell him that. It will only incense him."

"Fear not," replied Jack. "If you don't tell him that, you'll tell him nothing, for I won't say anything softer."

On hearing Jack's speech, Tararo frowned and his eye flashed with anger.

"Go," he said, "presumptuous boy. My debt to you is cancelled."

You and your companions shall die."

As he spoke he rose and signed to several of his attendants, who seized Jack, and Peterkin, and me, violently by the collars, and, dragging us from the hut of the chief, led us through the wood to the outskirts of the village. Here they thrust us into a species of natural cave in a cliff, and, having barricaded the entrance, left us in total darkness.

After feeling about for some time - for our legs were unshackled, although our wrists were still bound with thongs - we found a low ledge of rock running along one side of the cavern. On this we seated ourselves, and for a long time maintained unbroken silence.

At last I could restrain my feelings no longer. "Alas! dear Jack and Peterkin," said I, "what is to become of us? I fear that we are doomed to die."

"I know not," replied Jack, in a tremulous voice, "I know not; Ralph, I regret deeply the hastiness of my violent temper, which, I must confess, has been the chief cause of our being brought to this sad condition. Perhaps the teacher may do something for us. But I

have little hope."

"Ah! no," said Peterkin, with a heavy sigh; "I am sure he can't help us. Tararo doesn't care more for him than for one of his dogs."

"Truly," said I, "there seems no chance of deliverance, unless the Almighty puts forth his arm to save us. Yet I must say that I have great hope, my comrades, for we have come to this dark place by no fault of ours - unless it be a fault to try to succour a woman in distress."

I was interrupted in my remarks by a noise at the entrance to the cavern, which was caused by the removal of the barricade.

Immediately after, three men entered, and, taking us by the collars of our coats, led us away through the forest. As we advanced, we heard much shouting and beating of native drums in the village, and at first we thought that our guards were conducting us to the hut of Tararo again. But in this we were mistaken. The beating of drums gradually increased, and soon after we observed a procession of the natives coming towards us. At the head of this procession we were placed, and then we all advanced together towards the

temple where human victims were wont to be sacrificed!

A thrill of horror ran through my heart as I recalled to mind the awful scenes that I had before witnessed at that dreadful spot. But deliverance came suddenly from a quarter whence we little expected it. During the whole of that day there had been an unusual degree of heat in the atmosphere, and the sky assumed that lurid aspect which portends a thunder-storm. Just as we were approaching the horrid temple, a growl of thunder burst overhead and heavy drops of rain began to fall

Those who have not witnessed gales and storms in tropical regions can form but a faint conception of the fearful hurricane that burst upon the island of Mango at this time. Before we reached the temple, the storm burst upon us with a deafening roar, and the natives, who knew too well the devastation that was to follow, fled right and left through the woods in order to save their property, leaving us alone in the midst of the howling storm. The trees around us bent before the blast like willows, and we were about to flee in order to seek shelter, when the teacher ran toward us with a knife in his hand.

"Thank the Lord," he said, cutting our bonds, "I am in time! Now, seek the shelter of the nearest rock."

This we did without a moment's hesitation, for the whistling wind burst, ever and anon, like thunder-claps among the trees, and, tearing them from their roots, hurled them with violence to the ground. Rain cut across the land in sheets, and lightning played like forked serpents in the air; while, high above the roar of the hissing tempest, the thunder crashed, and burst, and rolled in awful majesty.

In the village the scene was absolutely appalling. Roofs were blown completely off the houses in many cases; and in others, the houses themselves were levelled with the ground. In the midst of this, the natives were darting to and fro, in some instances saving their goods, but in many others seeking to save themselves from the storm of destruction that whirled around them. But, terrific although the tempest was on land, it was still more tremendous on the mighty ocean. Billows sprang, as it were, from the great deep, and while their crests were absolutely scattered into white mist, they fell upon the beach with a crash that seemed to shake the solid land. But they did not end there. Each successive wave

swept higher and higher on the beach, until the ocean lashed its angry waters among the trees and bushes, and at length, in a sheet of white curdled foam, swept into the village and upset and carried off, or dashed into wreck, whole rows of the native dwellings! It was a sublime, an awful scene, calculated, in some degree at least, to impress the mind of beholders with the might and the majesty of God.

We found shelter in a cave that night and all the next day, during which time the storm raged in fury; but on the night following it abated somewhat, and in the morning we went to the village to seek for food, being so famished with hunger that we lost all feeling of danger and all wish to escape in our desire to satisfy the cravings of nature. But no sooner had we obtained food than we began to wish that we had rather endeavoured to make our escape into the mountains. This we attempted to do soon afterwards, but the natives were now able to look after us, and on our showing a disposition to avoid observation and make towards the mountains, we were seized by three warriors, who once more bound our wrists and thrust us into our former prison.

It is true Jack made a vigorous resistance, and knocked down the

first savage who seized him, with a well-directed blow of his fist, but he was speedily overpowered by others. Thus we were again prisoners, with the prospect of torture and a violent death before us.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Imprisonment - Sinking hopes - Unexpected freedom to more than one, and in more senses than one.

FOR a long long month we remained in our dark and dreary prison, during which dismal time we did not see the face of a human being, except that of the silent savage who brought us our daily food.

There have been one or two seasons in my life during which I have felt as if the darkness of sorrow and desolation that crushed my inmost heart could never pass away, until death should make me

cease to feel the present was such a season.

During the first part of our confinement we felt a cold chill at our hearts every time we heard a foot-fall near the cave - dreading lest it should prove to be that of our executioner. But as time dragged heavily on, we ceased to feel this alarm, and began to experience such a deep, irrepressible longing for freedom, that we chafed and fretted in our confinement like tigers. Then a feeling of despair came over us, and we actually longed for the time when the savages would take us forth to die! But these changes took place very gradually, and were mingled sometimes with brighter thoughts; for there were times when we sat in that dark cavern on our ledge of rock and conversed almost pleasantly about the past, until we well-nigh forgot the dreary present. But we seldom ventured to touch upon the future.

A few decayed leaves and boughs formed our bed; and a scanty supply of yams and taro, brought to us once a-day, constituted our food.

"Well, Ralph, how have you slept?" said Jack, in a listless tone, on rising one morning from his humble couch. "Were you much disturbed by the wind last night?"

"No," said I; "I dreamed of home all night, and I thought that my mother smiled upon me, and beckoned me to go to her; but I could not, for I was chained."

"And I dreamed, too," said Peterkin; "but it was of our happy home on the Coral Island. I thought we were swimming in the Water Garden; then the savages gave a yell, and we were immediately in the cave at Spouting Cliff, which, somehow or other, changed into this gloomy cavern; and I awoke to find it true."

Peterkin's tone was so much altered by the depressing influence of his long imprisonment, that, had I not known it was he who spoke, I should scarcely have recognised it, so sad was it, and so unlike to the merry, cheerful voice we had been accustomed to hear. I pondered this much, and thought of the terrible decline of happiness that may come on human beings in so short a time; how bright the sunshine in the sky at one time, and, in a short space, how dark the overshadowing cloud! I had no doubt that the Bible would have given me much light and comfort on this subject, if I had possessed one, and I once more had occasion to regret deeply having neglected to store my memory with its consoling truths.

While I meditated thus, Peterkin again broke the silence of the cave, by saying, in a melancholy tone, "Oh, I wonder if we shall ever see our dear island more."

His voice trembled, and, covering his face with both hands, he bent down his head and wept. It was an unusual sight for me to see our once joyous companion in tears, and I felt a burning desire to comfort him; but, alas! what could I say? I could hold out no hope; and although I essayed twice to speak, the words refused to pass my lips. While I hesitated, Jack sat down beside him, and whispered a few words in his ear, while Peterkin threw himself on his friend's breast, and rested his head on his shoulder.

Thus we sat for some time in deep silence. Soon after, we heard footsteps at the entrance of the cave, and immediately our jailer entered. We were so much accustomed to his regular visits, however, that we paid little attention to him, expecting that he would set down our meagre fare, as usual, and depart. But, to our surprise, instead of doing so, he advanced towards us with a knife in his hand, and, going up to Jack, he cut the thongs that bound his wrists, then he did the same to Peterkin and me! For fully

five minutes we stood in speechless amazement, with our freed hands hanging idly by our sides. The first thought that rushed into my mind was, that the time had come to put us to death; and although, as I have said before, we actually wished for death in the strength of our despair, now that we thought it drew really near I felt all the natural love of life revive in my heart, mingled with a chill of horror at the suddenness of our call

But I was mistaken. After cutting our bonds, the savage pointed to the cave's mouth, and we marched, almost mechanically, into the open air. Here, to our surprise, we found the teacher standing under a tree, with his hands clasped before him, and the tears trickling down his dark cheeks. On seeing Jack, who came out first, he sprang towards him, and clasping him in his arms, exclaimed, -

"Oh! my dear young friend, through the great goodness of God you are free!"

"Free!" cried Jack.

"Ay, free," repeated the teacher, shaking us warmly by the hands

again and again; "free to go and come as you will. The Lord has unloosed the bands of the captive and set the prisoners free. A missionary has been sent to us, and Tararo has embraced the Christian religion! The people are even now burning their gods of wood! Come, my dear friends, and see the glorious sight."

We could scarcely credit our senses. So long had we been accustomed in our cavern to dream of deliverance, that we imagined for a moment this must surely be nothing more than another vivid dream. Our eyes and minds were dazzled, too, by the brilliant sunshine, which almost blinded us after our long confinement to the gloom of our prison, so that we felt giddy with the variety of conflicting emotions that filled our throbbing bosoms; but as we followed the footsteps of our sable friend, and beheld the bright foliage of the trees, and heard the cries of the paroquets, and smelt the rich perfume of the flowering shrubs, the truth, that we were really delivered from prison and from death, rushed with overwhelming power into our souls, and, with one accord, while tears sprang to our eyes, we uttered a loud long cheer of joy.

It was replied to by a shout from a number of the natives who chanced to be near. Running towards us, they shook us by the hand

with every demonstration of kindly feeling. They then fell behind, and, forming a sort of procession, conducted us to the dwelling of Tararo.

The scene that met our eyes here was one that I shall never forget.

On a rude bench in front of his house sat the chief. A native stood on his left hand, who, from his dress, seemed to be a teacher. On his right stood an English gentleman, who, I at once and rightly concluded, was a missionary. He was tall, thin, and apparently past forty, with a bald forehead, and thin gray hair.

The expression of his countenance was the most winning I ever saw, and his clear gray eye beamed with a look that was frank, fearless, loving, and truthful. In front of the chief was an open space, in the centre of which lay a pile of wooden idols, ready to be set on fire; and around these were assembled thousands of natives, who had come to join in or to witness the unusual sight. A bright smile overspread the missionary's face as he advanced quickly to meet us, and he shook us warmly by the hands.

"I am overjoyed to meet you, my dear young friends," he said. "My friend, and your friend, the teacher, has told me your history; and I thank our Father in heaven, with all my heart, that he has guided

me to this island, and made me the instrument of saving you."

We thanked the missionary most heartily, and asked him in some surprise how he had succeeded in turning the heart of Tararo in our favour.

"I will tell you that at a more convenient time," he answered, "meanwhile we must not forget the respect due to the chief. He waits to receive you."

In the conversation that immediately followed between us and Tararo, the latter said that the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ had been sent to the island, and that to it we were indebted for our freedom. Moreover, he told us that we were at liberty to depart in our schooner whenever we pleased, and that we should be supplied with as much provision as we required. He concluded by shaking hands with us warmly, and performing the ceremony of rubbing noses.

This was indeed good news to us, and we could hardly find words to express our gratitude to the chief and to the missionary.

"And what of Avatea?" inquired Jack.

The missionary replied by pointing to a group of natives in the midst of whom the girl stood. Beside her was a tall, strapping fellow, whose noble mien and air of superiority bespoke him a chief of no ordinary kind.

"That youth is her lover. He came this very morning in his war-canoe to treat with Tararo for Avatea. He is to be married in a few days, and afterwards returns to his island home with his bride!"

"That's capital," said Jack, as he stepped up to the savage and gave him a hearty shake of the hand. "I wish you joy, my lad; - and you too, Avatea."

As Jack spoke, Avatea's lover took him by the hand and led him to the spot where Tararo and the missionary stood, surrounded by most of the chief men of the tribe. The girl herself followed, and stood on his left hand while her lover stood on his right, and, commanding silence, made the following speech, which was translated by the missionary:-

"Young friend, you have seen few years, but your head is old. Your heart also is large and very brave. I and Avatea are your debtors, and we wish, in the midst of this assembly, to acknowledge our debt, and to say that it is one which we can never repay. You have risked your life for one who was known to you only for a few days. But she was a woman in distress, and that was enough to secure to her the aid of a Christian man. We, who live in these islands of the sea, know that the true Christians always act thus. Their religion is one of love and kindness. We thank God that so many Christians have been sent here - we hope many more will come. Remember that I and Avatea will think of you and pray for you and your brave comrades when you are far away."

To this kind speech Jack returned a short sailor-like reply, in which he insisted that he had only done for Avatea what he would have done for any woman under the sun. But Jack's forte did not lie in speech-making, so he terminated rather abruptly by seizing the chief's hand and shaking it violently, after which he made a hasty retreat.

"Now, then, Ralph and Peterkin," said Jack, as we mingled with the

crowd, "it seems to me that the object we came here for having been satisfactorily accomplished, we have nothing more to do but get ready for sea as fast as we can, and hurrah for dear old England!"

"That's my idea precisely," said Peterkin, endeavouring to wink, but he had wept so much of late, poor fellow, that he found it difficult; "however, I'm not going away till I see these fellows burn their gods."

Peterkin had his wish, for, in a few minutes afterwards, fire was put to the pile, the roaring flames ascended, and, amid the acclamations of the assembled thousands, the false gods of Mango were reduced to ashes!

CHAPTER XXXV.

Conclusion.

TO part is the lot of all mankind. The world is a scene of constant leave-taking, and the hands that grasp in cordial greeting to-day, are doomed ere long to unite for the last time, when the quivering lips pronounce the word - "Farewell." It is a sad thought, but should we on that account exclude it from our minds? May not a lesson worth learning be gathered in the contemplation of it? May it not, perchance, teach us to devote our thoughts more frequently and attentively to that land where we meet, but part no more?

How many do we part from in this world with a light "Good-bye," whom we never see again! Often do I think, in my meditations on this subject, that if we realized more fully the shortness of the fleeting intercourse that we have in this world with many of our fellow-men, we would try more earnestly to do them good, to give them a friendly smile, as it were, in passing (for the longest intercourse on earth is little more than a passing word and glance), and show that we have sympathy with them in the short quick struggle of life, by our kindly words and looks and action.

The time soon drew near when we were to quit the islands of the South Seas; and, strange though it may appear, we felt deep regret at parting with the natives of the island of Mango; for, after they embraced the Christian faith, they sought, by showing us the utmost kindness, to compensate for the harsh treatment we had experienced at their hands; and we felt a growing affection for the native teachers and the missionary, and especially for Avatea and her husband.

Before leaving, we had many long and interesting conversations with the missionary, in one of which he told us that he had been making for the island of Raratonga when his native-built sloop was blown out of its course, during a violent gale, and driven to this island. At first the natives refused to listen to what he had to say; but, after a week's residence among them, Tararo came to him and said that he wished to become a Christian, and would burn his idols. He proved himself to be sincere, for, as we have seen, he persuaded all his people to do likewise. I use the word persuaded advisedly; for, like all the other Feejee chiefs, Tararo was a despot and might have commanded obedience to his wishes; but he entered so readily into the spirit of the new faith that he perceived at once the impropriety of using constraint in the

propagation of it. He set the example, therefore; and that example was followed by almost every man of the tribe.

During the short time that we remained at the island, repairing our vessel and getting her ready for sea, the natives had commenced building a large and commodious church, under the superintendence of the missionary, and several rows of new cottages were marked out; so that the place bid fair to become, in a few months, as prosperous and beautiful as the Christian village at the other end of the island.

After Avatea was married, she and her husband were sent away, loaded with presents, chiefly of an edible nature. One of the native teachers went with them, for the purpose of visiting still more distant islands of the sea, and spreading, if possible, the light of the glorious gospel there.

As the missionary intended to remain for several weeks longer, in order to encourage and confirm his new converts, Jack and Peterkin and I held a consultation in the cabin of our schooner, - which we found just as we had left her, for everything that had been taken out of her was restored. We now resolved to delay our departure no

longer. The desire to see our beloved native land was strong upon us, and we could not wait.

Three natives volunteered to go with us to Tahiti, where we thought it likely that we should be able to procure a sufficient crew of sailors to man our vessel; so we accepted their offer gladly.

It was a bright clear morning when we hoisted the snow-white sails of the pirate schooner and left the shores of Mango. The missionary, and thousands of the natives, came down to bid us God-speed, and to see us sail away. As the vessel bent before a light fair wind, we glided quickly over the lagoon under a cloud of canvass.

Just as we passed through the channel in the reef the natives gave us a loud cheer; and as the missionary waved his hat, while he stood on a coral rock with his gray hairs floating in the wind, we heard the single word "Farewell" borne faintly over the sea.

That night, as we sat on the taffrail, gazing out upon the wide sea and up into the starry firmament, a thrill of joy, strangely mixed with sadness, passed through our hearts, - for we were at length

"homeward bound," and were gradually leaving far behind us the beautiful, bright, green, coral islands of the Pacific Ocean.

End