

CARRIED OFF

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"HARRY'S BLOOD WAS UP." p. 12

CARRIED OFF
A STORY OF PIRATE TIMES

BY
ESMÉ STUART

AUTHOR OF 'FOR HALF-A-CROWN' 'THE LAST HOPE'
'THE WHITE CHAPEL' ETC.

WITH FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO
CLARISSA AND JOHN

I dedicate this story, knowing they are already fond of travelling. They may be glad to hear that the chief events in it are true, and are taken out of an old book written more than two hundred years ago. Yet they may now safely visit the West Indies without fear of being made prisoners by the much dreaded Buccaneers.

E.S.

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CARRIED OFF.

CHAPTER I.

THE SACRIFICE.

It was a beautiful warm spring evening, and as the sun sank slowly in the west it illuminated with quivering golden light the calm waters that surrounded green, marshy Canvey Island, which lies opposite South Benfleet, in the estuary of the Thames.

Harry Fenn had just come out of church, and, as was often his wont, he ran up a slight hill, and, shading his eyes, looked intently out towards Canvey and then yet more to his left, where Father Thames clasps hands with the ocean.

The eminence on which young fair-haired Harry stood was the site of a strong castle, built long ago by Hæsten, the Danish rover, in which he stowed away Saxon spoil and Saxon prisoners, till King Alfred came down upon him, pulled down the rover's fortress, seized his wife and his two sons, and relieved the neighbourhood of this Danish scourge. How often, indeed, had the peaceful inhabitants trembled at the sight of the sea robber's narrow war-vessels creeping up the creek in search of plunder!

Harry, however, was not thinking of those ancient days; his whole soul and mind was in the present, in vague longings for action; full, too, of young inquisitiveness as to the future, especially his own future, so that he forgot why he had come to this spot, and did not even hear the approach of the Rev. Mr. Aylett, who, having been listening to a tale of distress from one of his parishioners at the end of the evening service, had now come to enjoy the view from Hæsten's hill. As he walked slowly towards the immovable form of the boy, he could not help being struck by the lad's graceful outline; the lithe, yet strongly built figure, the well-balanced head, now thrown back as the eyes sought the distant horizon; whilst the curly fair locks appeared to have been dashed impatiently aside, and now were just slightly lifted by the evening breeze; for Harry Fenn held his cap in his hand as he folded his arms across his chest. He might have stood for the model of a young Apollo had any artist been by, but art and artists were unknown things in South Benfleet at that time.

Mr. Aylett shook his head as he walked towards the lad, even though a smile of pleasure parted his lips as he noted the comeliness of his young parishioner, whom he now addressed.

'Well, Harry, my boy, what may be the thoughts which are keeping you so unusually still?' Harry started and blushed like a girl, and yet his action was simple enough.

'Indeed, sir, I did not hear you. I—I came here to have a look at our cows down on the marsh. Father—'

Mr. Aylett laughed good-humouredly.

'Am I to believe that that earnest look is all on account of the cattle, Harry?' Harry felt at this moment as if he had told a lie, and had been found out by Mr. Aylett, who was so good and clever that he could almost, nay, sometimes did, tell one's thoughts.

'No, sir;' then, with a winning smile, the lad added, 'in truth I had forgotten all about the cattle. I was dreaming of—'

'Of the future, Harry. Listen, did not those same thoughts run thus? That it is dull work staying at home on the farm; that some of thy relations in past days had famous times in our civil wars, and went to battle and fought for the King, and that some even had been settlers in the old days of Queen Bess, and

that, when all is said and done, it wants a great deal of self-denial to stay as thou art now doing, cheering the declining years of thy good father and mother. Some such thought I fancied I could read in your face, boy, when singing in the choir just now. Was it so? I would have you use candour with me.'

Harry turned his cap round and round slowly in his hands. Mr. Aylett was certainly a diviner of thoughts; but Harry was far too honest, and of too good principle, to deny the truth. It was his honesty, as well as his pluck and courage, that made him so dear to the clergyman, who had taught the boy a great deal more learning than usually fell to the lot of a yeoman's son in those days, even though Mr. Fenn farmed his own land, was well-to-do, and could, had he so willed, have sent his son to Oxford; but he himself had been reared on Pitsea Farm, had married there, and there he had watched his little ones carried to the grave, all but Harry. Yes, Harry was his all, his mother's darling, his father's pride; the parson was welcome to teach him his duty to his Church, his King and his country, and what more he liked, but no one must part the yeoman from his only child.

And Harry knew this, and yet often and often his soul was moved with that terribly strong desire for change and for a larger horizon, which, so long as the world lasts, will take possession of high-spirited boys. However, the lad was as good as he was brave; he knew that he must crush down his desire, or at least that he must not show it to his parents; but he did not try to resist the pleasure of indulging in thoughts of a larger life, thoughts which Mr. Aylett guessed very easily, but which would have made his father's hair stand on end. This evening Mr. Aylett's face looked so kind that Harry's boyish reserve gave way, and with rising colour he exclaimed:

'Oh, sir, I can't deny it; it is all true, that, and much more; just now I had such dreadful thoughts. I felt that I must go out yonder, away and away, and learn what the world is like; I felt that even father's sorrow and mother's tears would not grieve me much, and that I must break loose from here or die. I know it was wicked, and I will conquer the feeling, but it seems as if the devil himself tempts me to forget my duty; and worse,' added poor Harry, who having begun his confession thought he would make a clean breast of it, 'I feel as if I must go straight to my father and tell him I will not spend my life in minding cattle and seeing after the labourers, and that after telling him, I would work my way out into the big world without asking him for a penny. Sir, would that be possible?'

Harry looked up with trembling eagerness, as if on this one frail chance of Mr. Aylett's agreement depended his life's happiness; but the clergyman did not give him a moment's hope.

'No, Harry, that is not possible, my lad. You are an only child. On you depends the happiness of your parents. This sacrifice is asked of you by God,

and is it too hard a matter to give up your own will? Look you, my dear Harry, I am not over-blaming you, nor am I thinking that the crushing of this desire is not a difficult matter, but we who lived through the late troublous times see farther than young heads, who are easily persuaded to cozen their conscience according to their wishes. And if you travelled, Harry, temptations and trials would follow too, and be but troublesome companions; and further, there would be always a worm gnawing at your heart when you thought of the childless old folks at home. Believe me, Harry, even out in "the golden yonder," as some one calls it, you would not find what you expect; there would be no joy for you who had deprived those dependent on you of it. Take my advice, boy, wait for God's own good time, and do not fall into strong distemper of mind.'

Mr. Aylett paused and put a kind hand on the boy's shoulder. Harry did not answer at once, but slowly his eyes turned away from the waters and the golden sun, slowly they were bent upon the marshes where the cattle were grazing, and then nearer yet to where Pitsea Manor Farm raised its head above a plantation of elms and oaks. Then a great struggle went on in the boy's mind; he remembered he was but sixteen years old, and that many a year must most likely elapse before he became the owner of Pitsea Farm and could do as he pleased, and that those years must be filled with dull routine labour, where little room was left for any adventure beyond fishing in the creek, or going over to Canvey Island to watch when the high waves broke over the new embankments made by Joas Croppenburg, the Dutchman, whose son still owned a third of the rich marshland of the island as a recompense for his father's sea walls. But young Joas used to tell tales of great Dutch sea fights and exploits, which, if Harry made the sacrifice Mr. Aylett was asking him to make, would but probe the wound of his desire, and so Croppenburg's stories must also be given up.

Harry's courage, however, was not merely nominal, it was of the right sort. The sacrifice he was asked to make was none the less great because it was one not seen of men. He was to give up his will, the hardest thing a man or a boy can do; but it needed only Mr. Aylett's firm answer to show Harry that his duty was very plain, and that God required this of him.

It was like taking a plunge into cold water, where it is the first resolution that is the worst part of the action; suddenly, with a quick lifting of his head, and a new hopeful light in his blue eyes very different from the unsatisfied longing gaze of ten minutes ago, Harry spoke, and as he did so his clenched hands and his whole demeanour told plainly that the boy meant what he said.

'I will give it up, sir; as it is, the wishing brings me no happiness, so I will even put the wishing to flight.'

Mr. Aylett grasped the lad's hand warmly.

'God bless you, Harry, you are a brave fellow. I am proud of you. Come to

me to-morrow, and I will show you a new book a friend has sent me; or, better, walk back with me to the Vicarage.'

'I would willingly, sir,' said Harry quietly, 'but father bade me go to the meadow and see if White Star should be driven in under shelter to-night. Our man Fiske has met with an accident, so I promised to see after White Star before sundown. She was a little sick this morning.'

'To-morrow will do well enough,' said Mr. Aylett, glad to see that Harry was beginning already to turn his mind steadily to home matters, 'and if you have time we will go to St. Catherine's Church on Canvey. There is a young clergyman come there to see if he will accept the cure, and I know you will row me over.' Harry promised gladly, and then Mr. Aylett with another shake of the hand turned his face homeward. When he was gone Harry flung himself on the ground to think over the promise he had just given. He would—yes, he would keep his word.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTURED.

How long he lay there, Harry never could recollect afterwards, but feeling a chilliness creeping over him he suddenly remembered his duty. He must make haste, for the sun was setting, and if White Star did not seem to be better she must be led home from the damp marsh meadows that bordered the water. Though Harry was feeling intensely sad, he had a secret feeling of satisfaction at having conquered in a very hard struggle, and this perhaps made him look more at the things he was passing than, as he was wont to do, at the distant sea. This evening everything was calm and quiet, both on the darkening waters and on the green meadows. Harry noted a gate that needed repairing, and made up his mind to tell his father that it must be seen to, or the cattle would be straying; then he glanced at the little cart-horse foal that promised to be a rival of its mother. The Pitsea Farm cart-horses were deservedly famous, and Harry's father, George Fenn, was as good a breeder of horses as he was a staunch Churchman and opposed to the Puritan element only now quieting down.

At last Harry reached the meadow where White Star was grazing and where some thirty sheep were sharing the pasture. He went up to examine the gentle creature, and she knew well enough the young master's voice and touch,

so that she hardly stopped chewing the cud to give him a kindly stare.

'White Star seems not so bad,' thought Harry. 'I'll tell father to give her another day in the meadow, she is not too ill to enjoy this sweet grass.'

Harry had been so much engaged in attending to White Star that he did not hear the soft splash of some oars at the bottom of the meadow he was in, nor did he see that four strong, rough-looking men in seafaring attire had quietly moored their long-boat to an old willow stump, and that two of them were hastily scanning the sheep and cattle that were only a few yards away.

'Zounds!' muttered the first who stepped up the bank, 'what have we here? a lad in this very field. I'faith, I saw no one from the creek.'

'A mere sapling,' laughed the other, 'take no heed of him, and he will soon take to his heels at the sight of us. Now, quick's the word, the captain is impatient to be off with the tide.'

In another instant the men had begun their work. They had come for the purpose of carrying off some sheep and cattle, and having waited till this late hour they had not expected to find a witness to their robbery. Quietly and stealthily as they had landed, however, their intentions could not be carried out without some disturbance, and Harry was first made aware of their presence by the sudden helter-skelter of the sheep and the immediate curiosity expressed by poor White Star, whose evening meal was to be so violently disturbed.

In a moment more Harry had seized the situation, which indeed it was not difficult to do, as he now beheld one of his father's sheep suddenly captured by the clever expedient of an extemporised lasso, and when the poor animal had been dragged towards its captor the robber made short work of tying his victim's legs together, and leaving it to bleat beside him whilst he proceeded to capture another in the same manner, before dragging them to the long-boat.

All the fierce courage of the hardy yeoman's son rose to its height as he beheld this daring robbery carried on under his very eyes. Nay, when the strongest and foremost man began unconcernedly to make his way towards White Star herself, the boy's indignation knew no bounds.

'How now?' he cried indignantly. 'What do you mean, you rascals, by coming here? this is our field and our cattle; away at once, and unloose the sheep, or, by'r laykin! it will be worse for you. I will call for help, and you will soon be treated in such a manner as you deserve.'

This fierce speech had not, however, the desired effect. The man laughed ironically as if Harry were a mere baby, and approaching White Star he swiftly threw the lasso over the animal's sleek head.

'Out of the way, young blusterer, or it will be the worse for thee. Our master, the captain, requires these cattle to victual our ship before sailing; come, off with thee! and don't halloo all the breath out of thy body.'

But Harry's blood was up. Enraged at the man's daring and effrontery, he seized a stout stick from the hedge-row and sprang upon the intruder with the fury of a young lion. He never considered the inequality of the struggle or the folly of his engaging single-handed with a ruffian of this description; he only thought of saving his father's property and avenging the insult. Nor were his well-directed blows mere make-believe, and as the man before him was suddenly aware of a sharp stinging pain across his forehead, he let go the lasso and sprang on to the boy with a fierce oath.

[image]

"HARRY'S BLOOD WAS UP"

'What, you young viper, you dare to strike me? Well, take that. Here, Jim, this way, bring the rope here; I'll teach this churl to bethump me.'

As he spoke he wrenched away poor Harry's stick, and with a well-directed blow he laid the boy on the ground. Harry felt a terrible pain in his head, his brain seemed to reel; bright, blood-red flashes blotted out the familiar fields, and then with a groan of pain he stretched out his right arm to grasp at some support, after which he remembered no more.

The man appealed to as Jim had now run up, and laughed as he saw Harry fall insensible on the dewy grass.

'Bravo! the lad fell in fair fight, Joseph; but i'fecks! who would have thought of seeing you engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with such a stripling? Hast done for him, comrade?' he added with curiosity, in which was mingled neither pity nor fear. And yet the sight of Harry Fenn might have softened even a hard heart, one would have thought, as he lay there in the twilight on the dewy grass, whilst a slow trickling line of red blood fell from his forehead over his fair curling hair.

'Here, make haste,' said the first man, whom his friend addressed as Coxon, 'the captain's orders were that we must lose no time; there'll be several more trips this evening, and he means to run down the Channel before morning.'

'Then we'd best not leave the lad here. What say you, Coxon, shall I despatch him for fear of his waking up and telling tales before we return?'

Coxon looked down on the brave lad, and decided, he knew not why, to act more mercifully.

'Let him be, or wait—tie his legs and throw him in the long-boat; on our ship he'll tell no tales, and when we cast anchor we can drop him somewhere, or give him a seaman's burial if he's dead, for, to tell the truth, it was a good whack

that I dealt him. Now, Jim, quick, for fear some of those land dolts come down upon us, and deafen us with their complaints.'

After this quick certainly was the word. Harry was tied, much after the fashion of his own sheep, and cast with little ceremony into the long-boat; further booty was secured, till no more could be carried during this trip, and then, as silently as it had come, the boat was rowed swiftly down the creek till they reached their destination, namely, the good ship 'Scorpion,' a privateer bound for the West Indies, after having lately made a very successful bargain with the cargo it had safely brought home.

How long Harry remained unconscious he never knew: when he came to himself it was some time before he could collect any sequence in his thoughts. He felt, however, that he was in a cramped and confined place, and so put out his hands to make more room, as it were, for his limbs; but he could give no explanation to himself of his whereabouts, though he half realised that the night air was blowing in his face, and that something like sea spray now and then seemed to be dashed on his head. His hands were free, but what of his legs? He experienced a sharp cutting pain above his ankles, and with some difficulty he reached down to the seat of pain with one of his hands. Yes, there was a rope tied round his legs; who had done this, and where was he? He remembered standing on Hæsten's mound looking longingly at the sea, and he also recalled Mr. Aylett's words and his own fierce struggle against his strong inclinations, and then—what had followed?

Here for a long time his mind remained a blank, till a decided lurch forced the conviction upon him that he was certainly in a ship, not on the green marsh meadow at home.

Home! He must make haste and get home; his father would wonder what kept him so long, it was quite dark; how anxious his fond mother would be. He must at once get rid of that horrid thing that prevented his rising, and he must run as fast as he could back to Pitsea Farm. But what of White Star? White Star, the meadow, the—the—

All at once the scene of his conflict flashed into his mind, and the awful truth burst upon him. He was a prisoner in some enemy's ship—or could it be in one of those dreadful privateers, whose ravages were often spoken of, and whom Mr. Aylett had said ought to be put down by Government with a firm hand? Ay, and those ruffians who had treated him with such brutality, they must be no other than some of those dreaded buccaneers, whose atrocities in the West Indies made the blood of peaceable people run cold, and wonder why God's judgments did not descend on all who abetted such crimes. Harry, as we know, was very brave, and yet he shuddered as the truth forced itself on his mind; it was not so much from a feeling of fear, but because, to the boy's weak, fevered brain, the

terrible calamity that had overtaken him seemed to be, as it were, a punishment for his old and secret longings, and his discontent at the dull home life.

Then followed a period of great mental pain for the boy, and after having vainly tried to free himself, he lay back utterly spent with the exertion, and with the feeling that perhaps he was reserved for worse tortures. Harry had heard many and many a terrible story of the doings of these buccaneers, who plundered, without distinction, the ships of all nations, and amassed treasures in the West Indies and the Spanish Main, and whose inhuman conduct to their prisoners was not much better than that experienced by the unfortunate Christian prisoners from the pirates of Algiers. Harry's courage was nearly giving way at these thoughts, and as no one was by to see him a few bitter tears rolled down his cheeks; but as he put up his hand to brush them away he suddenly felt ashamed of his weakness.

'God helping me,' thought he, 'whatever these rascals call themselves they shall not see me in tears, be the pretence never so great; it were a pretty story to take back to my father and good Mr. Aylett, that I was found weeping like a girl; but all the same I wish they would give me something to eat. In truth I could devour very willingly a sirloin of beef if it were offered me.'

Hunger is but a melancholy companion, and as the time still passed on and no one came near him, though Harry could hear the tramp of feet above him distinctly enough, the boy began to fear he should be left to die of slow starvation; and though this idea was very fearful to a growing lad, yet he determined that even this suffering should not make him cry out, and, clenching his teeth together, he lay down again and tried to say a few mental prayers. Evidently he must have dozed off, for the next thing he remembered was the sound of a rough voice telling him to get up; at the same time the rope that tied his feet was hastily cut and he felt himself led along a dark passage and pushed up a hatchway, feeling too dazed and weak to notice anything till he was thrust through the door of a small cabin.

By this time Harry's spirit had returned; he forgot his pain and his hunger, and, straightening himself, tried to wrench his arm away from the iron grasp of the sailor that led him.

'What right have you fellows to keep me prisoner here?' cried Harry. 'But as we are upon the high seas it's not likely I can escape, so you need not pinion me down in this fashion.'

At this moment a tall, powerful, and very handsome man entered the cabin, and, hearing Harry's words, burst into a loud and cheerful laugh.

'What, Mings! is this the boy you spoke of? By my faith, you have caged a little eaglet! But we can soon cut his claws and stop his pretty prating. How now, boy: answer truly, and tell me thy name; for we are no lovers of ill-manners

and insolence.'

Harry Fenn had been struck dumb by the appearance of the new comer, so that he had ceased struggling with Mings, and now gazed at the courtly-looking man, whose whole bearing spoke of a certain rough refinement and assured courage, such as Harry had believed attainable only by a gentleman of birth and breeding. Evidently the man before him was the captain of the crew, but he was no mere rough sailor such as Harry had often seen at home; on the contrary, his dress was both rich and elegant; he wore his hair in flowing locks just below his neck; a cravat of muslin edged with rich lace was round his throat, and the ends of the bow hung over his thick doublet, which was embroidered in a running pattern. His scarf, thrown over one shoulder and tied at his waist, was heavy with gold embroidery and fringe, and the sword that dangled at his side was evidently of Spanish make, and richly chased. As to his countenance, the more Harry gazed the less he could believe this man had anything to do with the buccaneers of the West Indies he had heard so much about, for the Captain's expression was open, and even pleasant. His eyes were of a pale blue, shaded by soft and reddish eyebrows; his nose straight and well formed; and though his mouth was somewhat full and coarse, yet there was nothing bad-tempered about it; and the curling moustache and small tuft of hair on his chin reminded one of a jolly cavalier more than of a dreaded sea-captain. Yes, Harry fancied he might be mistaken, and that this gentleman was in truth a loyal captain of His Majesty's Navy, and that his own capture was all some terrible mistake. This idea gave him courage, and, shaking himself free from his jailor, he advanced boldly towards the handsome-looking man, who surely must be the soul of honour, and no enemy to the public.

'Oh, sir, I fancied I had fallen into the hands of evil men; but surely I am mistaken, and you will see justice done me. I am a yeoman's son. My name is Harry Fenn, and my father owns a farm at South Benfleet. I had but gone down to see after one of our cows who had been sick, when suddenly your men waylaid me when I defended our cattle, and used me in a brutish manner. Had they wanted to buy cattle, my father could have directed them to those willing to sell. I did but my duty in defending my father's property, and I doubt not that they gave you quite a wrong tale of my behaviour; but indeed, sir, it was not true, and though I have been treated very roughly I beg you to see justice done to me, and to have me landed on our English coast; for my parents will be sadly put about on account of my disappearance, and very solicitous about my safety.'

Harry paused, expecting the handsome captain to express his regret at what had happened. Instead of this, his words were received with a loud laugh by Mings; and apparently they also much tickled the fancy of the Captain, for he joined in the merriment, though he looked with kindly eyes on the handsome

youth, who, in spite of his being a good deal bespattered with mud and blood stains, was yet a very pleasant picture of a bold, fearless English boy.

'Thou art over-bold, young fellow,' said Mings when he had laughed heartily. 'Doubtless our captain will teach thee how to mind thy speech. Shall I stow the lad away, sir, in the hold? I take it he will come forth in a humbler frame of mind, and with less zeal for defending cattle.'

'Nay, Mings, leave him to me; such a home bird is an uncommon sight, and having fallen on deck for want of a stronger wing, he must needs stay aboard. Go and attend to the guns, and tell the watch to keep a sharp look-out for any strange sail, and I'll see to the boy.'

Mings appeared a little sulky at this order, and took the opportunity of roughly grasping Harry's shoulder as he went by, with the remark:

'Keep a civil tongue in thy head, young scarecrow, or Captain Henry Morgan will soon teach thee to wag it less glibly. It would want but a small gun to blow thee back to the English shore if thou art so anxious to get back—eh, Captain?'

The Captain frowned instead of answering, and Mings made off as quickly as possible; but by this time Harry had recovered from his surprise.

'Then it's true,' he said quickly; 'you are in truth the infamous Henry Morgan the buccaneer, whose name is a terror to all honest folk. I only hope one of His Majesty's men-of-war will give chase, and I will do all in my power to give information. It is a dastardly act that you have done, for you have stolen our property and allowed your men shamefully to ill-use me.'

Harry never stayed to think how unwise his words were: he was so angry at having made a mistake and having fancied this courtly man was an honest gentleman, that he cared nothing at the moment about the consequences of his violent language; indeed, he was all the more furious when he noticed that Captain Morgan seemed only amused by his burst of indignation.

'Thou art a brave lad, and I like to see thy spirit. Tell me thy name. I wager it is an honest one.'

'Ay, truly. Harry Fenn is my name—an honest English yeoman's son, and one that will receive no favours from a buccaneer,' answered Harry, crossing his arms.

'Then thou art my namesake, lad, i' fecks! See, I'll forgive thy hasty words, and take thee for my godson. As for thy parents, well, they must take the chances of war as others do, for there can be no putting back to land now. We had to be very crafty to avoid a large three-decker of sixty-four guns that, I fancy, had scent of my poor frigate; but we ran up the French flag, and so got off; and now we are making a very fair journey towards Jamaica. Art hungry, lad? There's no use lying about thy stomach, for it's a hard taskmaster, and, now I come to think of

it, no one has heeded thee or thy wants since the cutter put thee aboard.'

Hunger was indeed a very hard taskmaster for at this moment Harry Fenn felt a dizziness which he could hardly control, and he half fell on a bench which was beside him, and against which he had been leaning. Captain Morgan continued:

'Come, Harry Fenn, you're a brave lad, and we'll strike a bargain. I've taken a fancy to you, my boy, and I'll try and protect you from the sailors. We are rough people at times, but not so bad as we're painted; so if you'll work like the rest, I'll warrant you good provender and as merry a life as we sea-folk know how to lead.'

'I will not work for such as you,' said Harry boldly; 'my father brought me up in honest ways. I would rather die than join hands with such men as your crew.'

'By my troth, boy, you are ignorant of our good deeds, I well see,' said Captain Morgan. 'Many of those in power are glad enough of our inroads on the Spanish Settlements, for those rogues get only their deserts if we make them discharge a little of their gold. Hast never heard of our worthy predecessors? The authorities were less squeamish in those days, and called the deeds of bold men by fine names, whereas now, in truth, it is convenient to dub us buccaneers. There was Sir Thomas Seymour, and before him there were fine doings by Clarke's squadron. By St. George, he was a lucky man! and after six weeks' cruise he brought back a prize of 50,000*1.* taken from the Spaniards. And how about Drake, Hawkins, and Cavendish? There were no ugly names hurled at them, and yet methinks they and we go much on the same lines. In truth we have done good service also against those rascally Dutch, and for that alone we deserve better treatment than we get.'

Captain Morgan now noticed that Harry had become deadly pale, and, hastily rising, the buccaneer opened a locker and took from it a black bottle, the contents of which he poured into a glass.

'Here, lad, thou art faint; this will revive thy courage. But first swear that thou wilt be one of us.'

Harry had eagerly stretched forth his hand to take the glass, but at these words he drew back.

'Nay, but I will not swear; if God wills, I can die, but I will not sully my father's name.'

Captain Morgan frowned angrily, and, striding up to Harry, took hold of his arm with his left hand, and with his right seized the hilt of his sword as he exclaimed—

'Swear, boy, or it will be worse for thee.' Harry Fenn made one last great effort and staggered to his feet; then with his right hand he struck the glass with

as much strength as he possessed, and saw the red wine spurt out upon the floor and upon the Captain's doublet.

'God helping me, I will not swear,' he cried; but the words were barely audible, as he fell fainting on the floor.

'As brave a lad as I ever cast eyes on!' said the Captain, losing his stern expression, and, stooping down, he poured a few drops of the wine into Harry's mouth; then, calling for the cook, he bade him tend the boy till he should have regained his strength.

'Harry Fenn shall be under my protection,' said the Captain to himself, 'but in time he must be one of us.'

CHAPTER III. A BEAUTIFUL ISLAND.

It is the beginning of December 1670 in the beautiful little Island of St. Catherine, one of the West Indian Islands, which were at this time the rich treasure-house of most of the European nations, where Spaniards, French, English, and Dutch all hoped to make their fortunes in some way or other, and where, alas! the idle and good-for-nothing men of the Old World attempted by unlawful means to win fame and fortune, which, when achieved, as often as not brought them neither happiness nor profit.

Though it is December, in St. Catherine there is nothing cold or disagreeable in the weather, and all around the beauty of the scene delights the eye. The mountains, though of no great height, are wooded with the loveliest tropical vegetation; the well-watered valleys are little Gardens of Eden; whilst in some portions, not yet cleared by either natives, Spaniards, or Englishmen, the original forests rise up like giants of nature whom no hand of man has laid low. In these forests are endless varieties of birds—parrots, pigeons, and hummingbirds of every colour. Here, too, can be found land-crabs which much resemble sea-crabs in shape and manner of walking; but instead of finding a home under rocks and boulders, these crabs burrow in the forests, and once a year form themselves into a regiment and march down to the sea-coast for the purpose of depositing their young in the waters. This regiment has only one line of march; it never diverges from it, but whatever comes in its way is climbed over—straight over it go the crabs; and such a noise they make that you can hear the clattering of their claws

for a considerable distance.

We must not now stop to describe this West Indian island, which is full of beauty and curious plants and trees; but if you come to the wood that leads to the great Spanish fortress of Santa Teresa, you will find a steep path through the luxurious forest, leading over a drawbridge to the castle. What a view can be seen from thence over the port! But it was not the view that the Governor's children were thinking of as they walked together in the garden which sloped down towards the sea, and which was especially reserved for the Governor and his family.

Felipa del Campo was a tall dark girl of about fourteen years of age, but she looked older, and there was a sad expression on her face as she gazed up to her brother, a noble-looking fellow a year older, with the long, grave-looking countenance of the Spanish nobility. He was dressed, after the fashion of that time, in embroidered doublet, short velvet tunic, and trunk hose; whilst his well-shaped limbs were displayed to perfection in silk stockings. His shoes had buckles set with diamonds, and his tall Spanish hat was plumed.

Felipa, on her side, had a long silver-embroidered skirt, beneath which her dainty feet hardly appeared; a small stomacher sewn with seed pearls set off her lithe figure, whilst her pretty, dark hair strayed from beneath a rich black lace kerchief.

'Where is my father, Carlo?' asked Felipa. 'Old Catalina says he has been down to-day to give orders about the repair of the bridge between the two islands. Do you think he is expecting any danger? Surely the forts are well protected; but what can make him so busy?'

'I don't know what to think,' said Carlo sadly, 'our father is so strange of late. I have been trying to speak to you about it, Felipa, for several days, but sometimes I fancy he seems to watch me as if he suspected me; though of what I cannot imagine. And then—have you noticed?—he cannot make up his mind to anything; he orders something one day, and the next he has altered his mind. He promised me the command of the little fort of Santa Cruz when I should be fifteen; but this morning when I reminded him of this he spoke quite roughly, and told me I was fit for nothing but playing with girls.'

Carlo's colour heightened at the very idea of this rebuke; for if there was one virtue the boy admired more than any other it was courage. These two children had been early left motherless; but old Catalina, a faithful servant, had done all she could to make their lives happy since she had brought them here from Spain, after the Marquis Don Estevan del Campo had been made Governor of St. Catherine.

'Catalina says that our father is not the same man he was when our mother first married him,' said Felipa thoughtfully. 'The many worries he has have made

the change. But never mind, Carlo, this mood will pass by, and we shall be happy again. When our brave uncle, Don Alvarez, comes with dear Aunt Elena, then they will advise our father, and he always takes Uncle Alvarez's opinion. He always does, because uncle speaks so decidedly.'

The two children spoke in Spanish, but, strangely enough, they often put in English words and whole English phrases; and the reason of this was soon apparent, for at this moment a pretty, fair girl was seen running towards them with nimble feet down the slope, and, picking her way among the gorgeous flower-beds, she cried out in pure English, though with a slightly foreign accent:

'Dear Felipa, what do you think! There is a trading-vessel in the port, and the merchant has just come to offer us some beautiful cloth, and silver buckles! Catalina dares not send him away till you have seen him.'

Carlo smiled as he looked at the English girl's beautiful fair hair, rosy cheeks, and active limbs. To him she appeared like some angel, for he was accustomed to seeing only dark people, and the Spanish women in the island were anything but beautiful. Felipa shook her head as she answered:

'Tell Catalina to say I want nothing.' The Governor's daughter spoke with just that tone of command which showed she was accustomed to be first, even though her gentle manner and sad face plainly indicated that her real nature was rather yielding than imperious.

'I can see Etta admired the silver buckles,' said Carlo kindly. 'Come, Mistress Englishwoman, I will buy you a pair; for, with the dislike to long petticoats that comes from your English blood, the pretty buckles are more necessary for you than for Felipa.'

'Oh, dear Carlo, will you really!' said Etta, her face beaming with pleasure. 'How good you are to me!' All at once, however, the smile died away, and, sitting down on a seat near Felipa, the English girl added, with tears in her blue eyes:

'But no, Carlo, I will not accept your buckles: a prisoner has no right to wear pretty things.'

'A prisoner! Oh, Etta!' said Felipa, throwing her arms round Etta's neck, 'why do you say that? Do we not love you dearly? Am I not a sister to you? and Carlo a dear brother? Do I not share all my things with you? And when Catalina is cross to you I make her sorry.'

'And my father has almost forgotten you are not one of his own,' added Carlo, standing behind Etta and taking one of the fair curls in his hand; for he dearly loved this English sister, as he called Etta Allison.

'Yes, yes, it is all true, and Santa Teresa is a lovely home; but I cannot forget I am English, and that I am really a prisoner. I once asked Don Estevan to send me back to England by one of the big ships, and he refused; and yet my mother's last words were that I was not to forget my own land.'

At the thought of her mother Etta's tears came fast; but at this moment the Governor of St. Catherine himself appeared in the garden, and Etta, being afraid to be seen crying, dried her tears and stooped down to play with Felipa's little dog, so as not to show her red eyes. When she looked up again the sunshine had returned to her bonnie-looking face.

The Marquis Don Estevan del Campo was a small thin-looking man, who had long suffered from a liver complaint, and in consequence his whole nature seemed to be changed. From a determined, clever administrator he had become peevish, undecided, and ill-tempered; and the men under him hardly knew how to obey his orders, which were often very contradictory.

To-day he walked towards Carlo, with a troubled expression on his face, and on the way he took occasion to find fault with a slave who was watering the flower-beds. The slave trembled, as he was bidden in a very imperious fashion to be quicker about his work.

Carlo came to meet his father, doffing his hat in the courtly fashion of a young Spanish noble.

'What are you doing here, children?' the Marquis said. 'Is not this your hour of study?'

'You have forgotten, my father, that it is a holiday to-day; and I was coming to ask if Felipa and Etta might not come down to the bay with me and have a row in my canoe.'

The Marquis looked up quickly.

'No, no: there must be no rowing to-day; I have set workmen to repair the bridge, and you had best keep at home.'

'Then we will go to the Orange Grove,' said Felipa, coming up and putting her hand on her father's arm, 'and Etta and I will pick some of the sweetest fruit for your dessert this evening.'

'As you like, Felipa; but do not go far, and take Catalina and some of the slaves with you, for I hear several of the wild dogs have been seen in this neighbourhood. Anyhow, you will not have very long before sunset.'

'I will let the girls go alone, then,' said Carlo, 'and come with you, father.' And so saying the Marquis and his son walked away, whilst the girls with an escort of slaves entered the forest and went down the mountain side. This forest was not, however, such a one as could be found in England. Here the pleasant breeze played among the leaves of a huge fan palm with leaf-stalks ten feet long and fans twelve feet broad; next to it might be found a groo-groo or coco palm, and bananas and plantains; and below these giant trees of the tropics were lovely shrubs, covered with flowers of every hue and shape, round which flitted great orange butterflies larger than any we can see in our colder climate; and Etta with her English blood and active nature was never tired of chasing them, though now

and then a little afraid of meeting with snakes.

A great deal of this forest had not been cleared; but close by the path the Governor had had much of the undergrowth cut away, and lower down he had planted a grove of orange-trees, whose green fruit Etta and Felipa loved to pick; and round about was a lovely wild garden where grew sensitive plants and scarlet-flowered balisiers and climbing ferns, over which twined convolvuli of every colour, whilst the bees buzzed about these honeycups, never caring to fly up to the great cotton-trees so far above them, because they found enough beauty and sweetness in the flowers below.

Felipa and Etta did not know the names of even half the beautiful flowers they gathered that evening; but they invented fancy names for many of them, and arranged with good taste a bunch of roses they picked from a bush twenty feet high, glad that a few were within their reach, and longing for Carlo, so that he might pull down some more for them.

Of course there were drawbacks even in this lovely place, for there were the wasps and the spiders to avoid, and centipedes and ants, too; though Etta was never tired of watching the 'parasol ants' who walk in procession, each carrying a bit of green leaf over its head, on which were to be found now and then baby ants, having a ride home in their elegant carriage.

Ah, it was a beautiful and wonderful home these young Spaniards had on this Santa Teresa hill; but at that time even the children in West Indian homes knew there were dangers that might come upon them, and St. Catherine had already been the scene of disasters which Etta could just remember, but which Felipa had seen nothing of as yet, having only been brought from Spain when the Marquis was firmly established as Governor of the island.

After the girls had gathered as big nosegays as they could carry they began to ascend the hill again, for darkness would soon come upon them, there being no twilight in this lovely region, and even with their escort of slaves they were not allowed to be out after sunset.

'Dear Etta,' said Felipa, putting her arm round her friend's neck, 'promise me you will never again call yourself a prisoner. You would not care to leave me and beautiful Santa Teresa to go back to that dreadfully cold, foggy England? Surely you have not found us such cruel Spaniards as your people talk of; and Carlo loves you better than he loves me, I think.'

Etta smiled and kissed her friend, but she answered:

'I love you and Carlo very, very much, Felipa; but my dear mother told me before she died that I was never to part with the letters she gave me, and that some day I must go home and find my relations; for in my country I come from an honourable family, but here I am only an English prisoner.'

Felipa was going to argue the question again, when Carlo came running

down to meet them.

'Make haste, Felipa and Etta: my father has suddenly made up his mind to go to the other island this evening; he means to sleep at the Fort St. Jerome, and he says we may accompany him.' The girls, always ready for a little journey, as they seldom left Santa Teresa, clapped their hands in joy and ran up the narrow path to the entrance of the castle, in high glee at the unexpected pleasure.

CHAPTER IV. THE PIRATES ARE COMING.

St. Catherine is composed of two islands, but so small was the space between them that the Marquis had had a secure bridge built across the tiny strait, and the two islands were always reckoned as one. The children were quite ignorant of the reason of their sudden trip to the greater island, and indeed they only thought of enjoying the fun of going to a new residence; for close to St. Jerome was the Governor's house, near a battery called the Platform, and in sight of the Bay of Aquada Grande. A river ran from the Platform to the sea, and the Marquis had wished to assure himself of the forts being in good order, as the captain of a friendly ship touching lately at St. Catherine had sent a message to him that there were rumours of some attempt on Panama being set on foot by the pirates, and that the Governor of Panama begged Don Estevan del Campo to keep a sharp look-out at St. Catherine, for that island had once been in the hands of the English pirates, and it was known that since the great buccaneer Mansfelt had died and the island had been re-taken by the Spaniards great hopes were entertained by several bands of English pirates that this little island might once more belong to them. It was for this reason that the Spaniards had constructed many forts on the island, especially on the lesser St. Catherine, which was not quite so well provided with natural defences as was the larger island.

It was the receipt of this news that had so greatly disturbed the much-worn-out Marquis, and his nerves were indeed hardly equal to the difficult duties entrusted to him. Pirates had increased terribly of late years. Jamaica, though it had a Governor supposed to be engaged in suppressing them, was yet quite a nest of these bold outlaws, who, taking advantage of the English jealousy of Spain, cared not what outrage they committed on Spanish towns and Spanish islands; though, in truth, other nations fared but little better at their hands.

The Marquis had examined the fortresses in the lesser island, and was much troubled at the few men that were at his disposal for manning them, and for the defence of the island generally; and now, having come to St. Jerome, he determined to send a boat down the river this very evening in order to ask for help and advice from the Governor of Costa Rica, Don John Perez de Guzman, who had five years before so ably retaken the island. But all this amount of thought and anxiety had quite unnerved the poor Marquis, who scolded every one about him, found fault with the garrison, and severely punished some negro slaves for their idleness in the plantations of the Platform; but, as the negroes were always idle, they considered their punishment very unfair.

The next evening Carlo went into the pretty sitting-room of the girls, which looked upon the river and out towards the beautiful bay; but when Felipa, who was very musical, and could sing in French, Spanish, and English, took up her lute, begging him to join in, he shook his head and surprised her by his answer.

'Felipa, don't ask me to sing; I am sure something is the matter with our father. He has got into a passion with Espada, and has put him in irons. It is very unwise, for Espada is a revengeful man, and he has great influence with the other men in the fort, some of whom were once outlaws from Puerto Velo. I wish I were a man and that my father would consult me. His Catholic Majesty ought to give my father a pension and let us all go back to Spain, for I am sure this place does not agree with him.'

Etta listened sadly to Carlo's words; when he was troubled about his father she was very sorry, for the boy was one whom nobody could help loving and admiring.

'Dear Carlo, if the King of Spain knew you he would, I am sure, make you Governor of beautiful St. Catherine, and then the poor negroes would not be oppressed, nor the gentle Indians hunted with dogs as you say they are sometimes. My father used to tell me of the dreadful cruelties used towards those poor people in past days. In England such things would not be allowed.' And, so saying, Etta raised her head proudly, feeling that an Englishman was better than a Spaniard.

Felipa passed her hands over the lute, saying, as the sweet tones were wafted through the room:

'Do not talk of such things, Etta. I am sure our Indians are not unhappy. Andreas loves us clearly; and we make the negroes, not the Indians, work on the marshes. Now I shall sing to drive away your ugly fancies.'

And she sang softly an evening hymn in Spanish, and Carlo and Etta joined in too, so that the sound of the young voices floated over the clear waters of the river, whilst the scent of sweet spice plants was wafted in. Surely Felipa was right: it was not suitable to talk of human miseries when all around nature was so exquisite. Old Catalina soon came in with the evening supper, saying the

Marquis had gone out and would sup alone; and very early the girls retired to bed; Carlo told them not to dream of troubles, because he should be next door to them in case they were frightened. He felt that his sister was under his charge now that their father the Marquis was so little able to see after her.

Old Catalina counted her beads and muttered her prayers long after the two girls were sleeping soundly; and as she stooped over Etta's bed and noticed how fair the girl was, she murmured: 'It is a pity this pretty child is a Protestant; but I hope when she is older she will be one with us; for otherwise the Marquis will thrust her out and not let her come home with us to Spain, and my darling Felipa will break her heart, for she loves her English playfellow dearly.'

But the night was not to pass as quietly and peacefully as it had begun. Catalina lay on a mattress in her young mistress's room; but, being a heavy sleeper, she did not hear a hasty knock at the door, and the repeated call of 'Catalina! Felipa! quick! open the door! Why do you all sleep so soundly!'

Etta was the first to awake, and, throwing a coloured shawl about her, she ran to the door and opened it.

'What is up, Carlo?' she said rather sleepily.

'Wake Catalina and Felipa, and make haste and dress yourselves. My father says we must fly from here at once: the pirates are outside the bay. They will land early to-morrow, perhaps opposite this very fort. I beseech you, make all haste you can.' In a few minutes the frightened girl had shaken Catalina, and was trying to explain to Felipa what the danger was which threatened them.

'Oh, Felipa, the pirates are coming! Quick! quick! make haste and dress, for the Marquis says we must go back to Santa Teresa at once.'

Catalina began wringing her hands as poor Felipa turned deadly pale.

'We shall all be killed! May the saints protect us! Ah, my poor lamb! who could have believed those wicked wretches would have dared to show themselves here again, and in your father's lifetime. Alas! alas! make haste, sweetheart, and let us fly!'

Felipa was so frightened that she could hardly dress herself; and poor Etta, who knew more about the dreaded sea-robbers than did Felipa, tried to be brave in order not to increase the Spanish girl's terror. Etta was brave, and in many ways fearless in all ordinary affairs; but the cry 'The pirates are coming!' was one of the most dreaded in the West Indies—a cry which had often taken the spirit out of the heart of a bold sea-captain, who knew the desperate courage and reckless indifference to life exhibited by the men who infested these seas.

When Catalina and the girls were dressed they stepped forth, to find the Marquis and Carlo waiting for them. The former was walking up and down the hall of the house discussing the terrible news with some Spanish officers.

'Your Excellency knows that this fort cannot long resist a fierce assault,'

said one of them. 'Were it not better to evacuate the Platform and concentrate our forces on the lesser island batteries? The fortresses there are strongly built, and with our men we could put them in a better state of resistance.'

'They will not land to-night,' said the wretched Marquis, looking the picture of an undecided man. 'If you think, Don Francisco, that flight would be the best plan, give orders to your men. Ah, here are the children. Are the horses ready? We have no time to waste; and yet what say you? Perhaps these wretches will think better of it, and leave Port St. Catherine in peace. Were it not better after all to stay here?'

'Let us stay, father,' put in Carlo. 'If you will let me fight, I am sure I shall be able to defend this place. Do not let this handful of rascals believe we fear them.'

'Give your opinion, Carlo, when you are asked, and not before. Are the horses ready? Now, Felipa, wrap your scarf well round you; we have a long way to go. Yes, I think it is better to go than to stay.'

'We shall be safe at Santa Teresa, father, are you sure?' sobbed Felipa; whilst Etta, looking at Carlo's fearless expression of face, determined to say nothing, for he had once said girls were always afraid.

It was a very anxious and silent cavalcade that made its way back towards the small island that night, and contrasted strangely with that which had come hither but quite lately, laughing and chatting to their hearts' content.

Carlo, however, managed to ride near Etta occasionally when the ground was clearer so as to allow their horses to walk abreast. Felipa kept close to her father, as if near him she would be quite safe from the dreaded foes. Every now and then she looked back into the darkness towards the little village at the foot of the Platform; where, however, all was at present still and quiet.

'Is it really true?' whispered Etta to Carlo, as if she could be heard from this distance; 'have they been seen?'

'I think so. José the one-eyed, who, they say, was once a pirate himself, noticed the ships creeping round towards the bay just before sundown, and he came all the way from San Salvador to give the news, hearing my father was here. However, of course they may think better of attacking us. José believes he recognises one of Mansfelt's old ships; but I think terror gives him double sight. For all that, I wish my father would have stayed and driven off the rascals on their first landing. It looks as if we feared them, and that will make them bolder.'

Not much more was said, and the cavalcade rode through the dark forest, and then emerged on the sea coast, for towards the north of the island the cliffs became lower, and before reaching the bridge there was a good stretch of open country.

'God be praised, and all his saints!' said Catalina, 'I can see the crest of

Santa Teresa. We shall now soon be in safety. The rascals cannot climb our mountain; and if they come we can hurl them down into the sea. I wouldn't mind helping to do that with my own hands.'

The Marquis had already sent on a messenger to collect several officers at the Castle of Santa Teresa, which, with its thick walls, its great moat, its impregnable cliff on the sea-side, and its difficult ascent towards the land, was a secure retreat, where the Governor could hold a council of war, and decide what course to take as to repulsing the enemy should he land on the shores of St. Catherine.

'I wish my father would take his own counsel,' thought Carlo for the hundredth time, 'and then he would at least know his own mind. However, now there is real danger, he cannot prevent my helping to defend my sister and my home.' And this feeling made the proud, brave boy forget that fighting does not always mean victory, and caused him not to be altogether sorry that he should have a chance of distinguishing himself, and perhaps—who knew?—the King of Spain would hear of it. Carlo had read of the deeds of brave knights and of their wonderful exploits, and was eager to begin also his own career of fame; but reality is often, alas, very unlike our dreams.

All nature was fully awake when the Governor reached Santa Teresa; and the girls, once more safely surrounded by habitual sights and sounds, forgot their fears, and, after a little rest and refreshment, began, as before, running happily about the gardens within the enclosure. The guards were, however, at once doubled, and the negro slaves posted in the wood.

'Here we shall not see the pirates land,' said Felipa, now almost disappointed, 'nor the punishment our people will give them. I am sure Carlo would have been able to defeat them with the help of a few men. Don't you think so, Etta?'

'I do not know; but, Felipa, let us say our prayers, and then we shall be sure they will not hurt us. Do you know that, in the excitement of the journey, I forgot mine this morning; and I promised my mother never to leave them out.'

'So did I,' exclaimed Felipa, 'but I shall tell Padre Augustine and he will forgive me.' Etta had no such comfort, for she had been early imbued by her parents with a great disbelief in the religion of the Spanish settlers; but from living with Felipa, and being kindly treated by her captors, she had begun to take Felipa's opinions as a matter of course; though now and then the girls had little differences as to the various merits of their Churches. Had Etta not been of a very determined character, most likely she would have forgotten her own faith; but early troubles had made her old in ideas, and passionate love for her dead parents kept all their wishes in her mind. She would sooner have died than have become a Roman Catholic, and at present the Marquis had not taken the trouble to inquire into the matter. Had Felipa not wanted a companion, Etta's fate might

have been a sad one; as it was, she enjoyed all the privileges of the Governor's little daughter. But often the English girl would steal away to read over some of her precious letters, or to kiss the few relics she possessed of the gentle mother who had died at St. Catherine. In these days many sad stories might have been told of the sufferings of the wives of the merchants or Governors who had to live away from their country, or who for some reason crossed the seas to come to the West Indies. The prisons of Algeria and the haunts of the West Indian pirates could have revealed, and did reveal, many a sad story of captivity and ill-treatment.

But the day was not to pass without news of the enemy; for in the afternoon Carlo, who had been round the fort with his father, ran in to tell the girls that a messenger had just arrived from the other island.

'The saints protect us! And what does he say? Have they made dried meat of them already?' said Catalina, referring to the meaning of the word buccaneer.

'The enemy has landed below the Platform; they are about a thousand strong, and their leader is no other than the terrible Captain Morgan the Englishman,' said Carlo, much excited.

'A thousand strong!' exclaimed Felipa. 'Then we shall need all our men. But they cannot reach us here. What does our father say?'

Carlo shrugged his shoulders.

'He will give no positive orders, but the rascals are really marching through the woods towards us. I wonder at their rashness, for here we are so well prepared to receive them that they will find it too warm for them. We are to have a council of war this evening. Now, if I were Governor I would starve them out.'

'Will father let you attend the council?' asked Felipa, looking upon her brother as already a knight of renown.

'Nay, but he must. I can use a sword as well as any one. Etta, you shall tie my scarf, and I will wear your colours on my scabbard.'

Etta shook her head sadly.

'The pirates are from my country. Your father will be angry with me, Carlo; and yet my father was none of them. He was a brave and honest merchant.'

'No one shall blame thee, dear Etta,' said the boy, 'or if they do, I will offer single combat.' And Carlo went through his military exercises with great show and laughter, till Catalina and some slaves arrived, and desired the young people to come and help with the defence of the castle by taking away all the valuables and hiding them in the dungeons below or in a well under the flags of the inner courtyard.

Carlo was very angry at this order of his father's: it seemed to presuppose the taking of Santa Teresa.

'As if the pirates would ever enter this stronghold!' he said impatiently. 'If

I may be allowed to speak, I will offer to lead out a party from Santa Teresa, and the robbers will see something worth seeing then. I must go and find my father and persuade him.'

In spite of his objection, however, Carlo, as well as every one else, had to work with a will within the walls of Santa Teresa; whilst the Marquis, hardly able to hide his fears, paced restlessly up and down without the castle, often sending negro scouts on all sides to ascertain the real truth; but he got such contradictory answers that he half feared the negroes were too much afraid to venture near enough to the advancing enemy to ascertain how matters stood.

CHAPTER V. THE SCOUTS.

The council of war presided over by the Marquis took place late that afternoon; and Carlo, bent on proving his capabilities as a soldier, slipped in with the officers and various Spaniards in authority who had been able to leave their several stations to join in the discussion. The Marquis was so much disturbed and troubled that he took no heed of his son, for as the officers entered the private room of the Governor the sound of cannon was distinctly heard in the distance, much to the dismay of many present.

'Those are the guns of St. Jerome,' said one of the officers. 'The enemy must have reached the bridge, and we may expect them here by sunset. Shall we give the order for all the neighbouring guns to fire, sir?'

'That will not be necessary,' answered the Marquis, testily. 'How many guns are there at St. Jerome? Surely enough to drive these robbers back to their boats?'

'We have eight, Señor, at St. Jerome, and those will play freely on them; they will be caught in a trap.'

'Well, then, that will settle them. We know they cannot advance up the river below this hill.'

'Only a canoe could reach us here, and that would hold but a few men,' said Don Francisco.

'The blacks declare that Captain Morgan has only four hundred men with him; if so, there will be no great difficulty.'

'Nay, but the Indian Andreas,' said Carlo, 'has just told me they are more

like a thousand strong. I believe Andreas is the only scout who gets near enough to know.'

Carlo had an especial liking for Andreas, who often accompanied him out into the woods to kill the birds. He was a very sharp fellow, and knew every turn and winding in the islands.

'A thousand strong! What nonsense, Carlo! Your opinion was not asked, boy, and silence is your best course,' said the Marquis, angrily.

Carlo blushed, but all the same he knew he was right, and was terribly annoyed at hearing his father ask counsel first of one and then of another, without coming to any decision. He saw several of the officers looking evidently anxious, and when the council of war broke up—having decided nothing but that a scout should be sent to St. Jerome for news, and that there should be another meeting next morning—Carlo went up to an officer and said hastily:

'Why do we not collect a force of men and go out to meet them in the marshes?—for that is surely the way they will advance.'

'The Marquis thinks otherwise, Señorito; and he may be right, for they may find themselves in a sad fix in some of the swamps in the low ground or in the woods, and then they may think it better to return without trying to take a fortress. Besides, we do not know how much powder they may have brought, and we must not waste our own ammunition.'

This was all the consolation Carlo could get, and he went back to his sister's room looking very crestfallen and anxious. So to her eager questioning he answered:

'I wish father would let Don Francisco de Paratta take the command; he himself is quite unable to take it. I could see by Don Francisco's face that he thinks we are doing wrong. We have not even got true information yet as to their number. I have a great mind—' Carlo paused, for a sudden idea now entered his head.

'What are you thinking of?' said Felipa, turning pale. 'Oh, Carlo, do not do anything rash. What should we do without you?'

'Oh, you are safe enough here at Santa Teresa; it would be impossible to take this place by storm with a thousand men, or even double that number, so you need not be afraid, dear Felipa.'

'I know you mean to go and see for yourself,' said Etta. 'I wish I were a boy and I could go with you. To stay still makes one imagine many impossible things.'

'Hush! don't tell any one, especially Catalina,' said Carlo, looking round and seeing they were alone; 'she chatters so much. My plan is this: I will slip outside presently before the gate is shut and run down the hill to the river. There Andreas has a canoe safely hidden in the bushes, and he will paddle me down

to the mangrove swamps, and from there we may get near to them and see for ourselves how the pirates are situated.'

'But you will get killed,' sobbed Felipa. 'These wicked English pirates are worse than cannibals; Catalina says that they roast their prisoners alive, and—'

'Nonsense! Dry your tears, little sister, and believe me, Andreas is too clever a fellow to let us get eaten. I shall be back before very late, and I know the only breach that can be climbed.'

Seeing her brother so cheerful, Felipa dried her tears, and hung a little coin round his neck, which, she said, would keep him from harm; and then she and Etta determined to sit up till he should come back, for when he was once gone they would not mind telling Catalina.

In the meantime all was bustle within the fort. The Spaniards had found out now that the Governor had entirely lost his nerve, and this increased the panic of the garrison. The men on watch amused themselves by telling thrilling and horrible stories of the various tortures inflicted by the pirates on their prisoners, and speculated as to the fate of the garrison of St. Jerome, whose fire had ceased when the sun went down. However, every one knew that Santa Teresa was safe enough, and that even if some bold spirits climbed up the steep path on the land side no great number could come on at the same time and so carry the place by assault.

At nightfall, Carlo, unseen by any one, slipped out of the fort; and, plunging into the wood, he was soon joined by the Indian Andreas, who was a fine fellow, a Christian, and, moreover, devotedly fond of the young Spaniard, who had always treated him with kindness. Andreas spoke fluent Spanish, from having been early taught by the Spanish priests, who had brought him up after his father's death.

'That's right, Andreas,' said Carlo, when he saw him. 'Now make haste and show me your path down to the river; the other one is watched by the slaves, and they might set the dogs on us by mistake. I reckon we can reach the swamps in two hours with your canoe, and you tell me that you are sure the enemy is encamped near there.'

'Yes, Señorito, that is the truth; my little boy brought me word. And I believe they are in great distress for want of food; but we shall see. Look, noble Carlo: I have brought my arrows; and woe to any one that tries to touch us!'

After some very difficult walking in the mazes of the forest, through which no one but an Indian could have steered, the two at last reached the river, which ran far below Santa Teresa; and though this stream was only navigable for canoes, it was often used by the Indians and Spaniards when in haste to reach the sea, instead of taking the longer journey by the land road. Andreas had powers of sight which appeared quite extraordinary to Carlo; and when the two were seated in the frail canoe, it was wonderful how the Indian paddled the boat, swiftly and

surely, avoiding the rocks as if it were broad daylight, and never mistaking the many bends. Had Carlo been alone he would have grounded the boat half a dozen times, and not have reached his destination before daylight; but as it was, in two hours the boat glided swiftly into the midst of the mangrove swamp through which the river here made its way. All was quiet at first; the canoe did not even disturb the herons and pelicans which slept near by on the interlaced roots of the mangroves.

'If the pirates could have got into this swamp,' whispered Andreas, 'there would be no need of our cannon; but they are too crafty for that. They have doubtless seized a good guide who would not dare to betray them; otherwise they never could have reached Guana's Creek, where, I hear, they have encamped to-night.'

They drew up the canoe near to a great stump standing out in the water, and, mooring it there, Andreas stepped on to a dry piece of ground; then, stooping down, he listened intently, till like a stealthy animal he returned to Carlo.

'I am sure, Señorito, that I can hear the sound of the enemy. I must creep up through the grove and get to the higher ground; then I will return with news, if you will wait. I dare not let you come till I have seen how the land lies. Lie down in the canoe, and I will make haste. But cover yourself up, for the air is bad here, Señor; indeed you must chew this root, and then you will feel no harm.' And so saying, Andreas drew a dark-looking bit of root from his pocket, which was a secret remedy against the swamp malaria, known only to the Indians; then, walking quickly towards the jungle, he disappeared into the darkness.

Carlo had to wait what seemed to him a long time before Andreas came back; and what made it worse for him was the rain, which began to fall heavily. At last, when he was beginning to think his Indian friend had been caught by the pirates, he was startled by hearing a little splash in the water beside him, and in another moment Andreas himself was in the canoe.

'The young Señor did not hear me,' said the Indian, smiling at the start Carlo gave. 'It was to show him how well Andreas can walk in silence that I came so quietly.'

'Did you see them, good Andreas? Tell me quickly, shall I come now, or must we go back?'

'Yes, yes, Señor, I saw them. They are many—a thousand, I fancy, or about that number; but they are in a bad position; they have no food, and no fire to cook it with. I went up quite close and saw the Captain.'

'Captain Morgan! Oh, Andreas, did he look a wicked man? Tell me what he looked like.'

'A tall, fair Englishman, Señor, but not evil-looking; only some of his followers had the bad countenances of wicked men. I could see that they were

discontented; and I heard some discussing if they should go back to their ships. Look now, Señor Carlo: if you can persuade the noble Governor to send a hundred well-armed soldiers to-night against these same men, we shall have no more trouble with them. We could drive them into the swamp, and then the swamp would do the rest. Why, they were badly off: some had naked feet like the poor Indians, and some had but ragged clothes, and very few had firearms. They were angry with the Captain at being led into the marsh, and they huddled together when the rain began to fall, cursing their misfortunes.'

'It will go on raining all night, I fancy,' said Carlo. 'I have been nicely sheltered here; but out where they are camped there are but few trees. How could you see all this, good Andreas, for it is still dark?'

'Well enough, Señor, for the rascals had pulled down some of the Indian huts that lie up above, and had made a fire of them. Captain Morgan was trying to make himself comfortable; and I saw a young lad about your size and your age, Señorito, in the Captain's rude tent. I thought he must be his son; but he looked sad and dejected, and not like one of the pirates. Perhaps some young prisoner they have taken. He was busy making up the fire, but I noticed that another fellow watched him pretty closely whenever he strayed a little. Yes, I am sure he was a prisoner.'

This did not interest Carlo so much as Andreas' idea about the hundred men being sent out against the pirates.

'Andreas, you are right. Quick, let us make haste home, and I will do my best to persuade my father to send a body of soldiers here by daybreak. If only he will believe us! Are you tired? Let me row a little.'

But Andreas laughed.

'The Señorito would stick us in the mud at the next bend,' he said, and, taking up his paddle, he sent the frail boat into mid-stream, and as silently as they had come they returned towards Santa Teresa. During the journey Carlo hardly spoke; he was planning the morning's expedition in his own mind; and already he had cleared the whole island of the dreaded horde, and covered the name of Estevan del Campo with glory and honour.

By the time the canoe shot into a tiny cove at the foot of Santa Teresa, Carlo was glad enough to jump up and follow his leader through the forest by an Indian path; and with Andreas' help the wall was scaled, and both entered the enclosure unperceived.

'It is to be hoped the pirates do not know this path,' he said to Andreas; 'but, even if they did, not more than a single file of men could get up here. Do the guides here know of it, Andreas?'

Andreas shook his head.

'Hush, young master, tell no one of it. It is known only to the Indians of

my tribe, and there are but few of us now. Good-night, Señorito; I will be ready in the morning if you want another guide.'

Carlo warmly shook the faithful Indian's hand as he bade him good-bye. Before the Spanish occupation Andreas had been a chief's son; but his father had long ago been killed by the white men, and the tribe was broken up. The boy had been educated by the missionaries, but had never altogether forgotten his childhood; and but for his love of Carlo del Campo some said he would ere this have run away from the Governor's estate, where he was forced to tend the gardens and to see his children brought up as something not much better than mere slaves, whilst his gentle wife was expected to help Catalina in household duties, cook the food for the black slaves, and wait on the young ladies.

Carlo was able to creep upstairs unheard by any one; and, seeing a light in his sister's sitting-room, he knocked softly. Catalina opened the door, and the girls, who had fallen asleep on a couch, jumped up eagerly.

'Carlo, there you are! Tell us the news! How glad I am you are safe home!'

'I dreamt you were drawn and quartered by the pirates. My poor lamb,' cried Catalina, 'how we prayed for you, till we fell asleep and forgot to finish the Litany of Danger!'

'Nonsense! there was no danger at all; the pirates are in a bad way, and it is raining hard. But tell me where my father is. We have only to send out men and we are saved. Andreas knows exactly where they are encamped.'

'The noble Marquis was in the guard-room below when I came up,' said Catalina. 'No one has gone to bed this night.'

Carlo hastened away cheerfully. He was some time absent; but when he returned his young face was clouded over with deep disappointment.

'It is of no use; my father will not believe me. He refuses to do anything till there can be another council, and then it may be too late. Why am I not a man!'

'Never mind, dear Carlo,' whispered Etta softly; 'the council may believe you, and then--'

But Carlo shook his head, and, tired out, he went to his own bed and fell asleep from sheer fatigue.

CHAPTER VI. HATCHING A PLOT.

The next morning the rain stopped, and the sun shone out brightly and powerfully over the beautiful wood which clothed the steep sides of Santa Teresa. The cocoa-nut trees and the various kinds of palms softly waved their beautiful heads in the morning breeze; the sulphur and black butterflies flew hither and thither about the crimson, yellow, and green pods of the cocoa, and on the orchids that hung from the giant stems. All this and much more beauty was unheeded by the people in Santa Teresa, for before the council of war could meet Andreas came running into the courtyard, where Carlo had just come down to hear what news he could, too angry to seek out his father after his disappointment of the previous night.

'Young master, where is the noble Marquis? Has he sent no one? No? Ah, Señorito, now it is too late, for a canoe is coming up the river, and it is not a mile distant. The pirates have sent a messenger, and the young English boy I told you of is with him. They are flying a white flag; that means, the pirate captain has sent them to parley. They have recovered their courage this morning, or they would not have come to treat. It will be too late to attack them now, and you see the rain has stopped.'

Andreas wrung his hands in a manner peculiar to the gentle Indian race to which he belonged; whilst Carlo, much excited by the news, impatiently drew him forward towards the Marquis's room.

'Come and tell my father, Andreas. I cannot persuade him you really saw the men. He says that you were mistaken last night, and that the pirates are armed to the teeth.'

'The great Governor will not believe! And yet I could have even brought something away from the vultures' tent,' added Andreas with a smile.

Alas! it was only too true. Instead of being surprised at the arrival of a pirate messenger, Don Estevan del Campo seemed greatly relieved. He had up to this hour decided on nothing, and was more excited and more unfit to issue commands than he had been even the day before. Carlo appealed to Don Francisco; but this officer was powerless without the sanction of the Governor, and the more the latter was urged to fight the less he seemed inclined to do so.

The Marquis listened to the news the Indian brought, and then ordered some soldiers to go down to the river and conduct the messengers into the castle. They were to be well guarded, and to have their eyes bandaged for fear of discovering any secrets, such as taking notes of the path up the steep hill of Santa Terea.

Great was the excitement in the castle when it was known that the pirates had been bold enough to send an envoy. Some suggested that these heralds of robbers should not be received; others, that they should be sent back with threats; others, that hanging was too good for them; whilst Don Francisco de-

clared plainly that a garrison of His Catholic Majesty of Spain had no business to parley with English rascals; but Don Estevan, going from one to the other, listened to all the contradictory advice, merely saying at the end:

'No, no, good sirs, but we must hear what they say. Most likely this herald brings us an unconditional surrender, in which case we shall have trapped the rats without wasting our powder.' But Don Francisco answered:

'That is not very likely, noble Marquis; there seems no doubt it is Henry Morgan who himself leads the band, and he was never known to surrender. Andreas swears there are a great number of them. If so, they will surely attack us.'

The surmises were at length set at rest by the entrance of the soldiers, who brought with them a short, thick-set man, whose determined face spoke of dauntless courage and daring. With him was a tall fair youth, with a noble but sad and care-worn expression of face.

From the windows of their dwelling-room Felipa and Etta had watched the entrance of the new arrivals; and Carlo, who had rushed in to do the same, could not help an exclamation of surprise at the sight of the lad, who was about his own age and size. As for Etta, her admiration found vent in words.

'Look, Felipa, that is an English boy! How handsome he is! He does not look wicked, does he? Perhaps he is Henry Morgan's son. How I wish these were not wicked pirates! I would talk to them of England, and perhaps they might know my relations and would some day take me back. But the man looks every inch of him like an evil buccaneer.'

'Etta, what nonsense you are talking!' said Carlo; 'the youth is most likely as wicked as the rest. Andreas saw him last night. Yes, he must be the Captain's son. Now I shall go and hear their propositions. If I had had my way there would have been no messengers alive by this hour to suggest any terms. One should give no quarter to such foes.'

After Carlo had gone, the two girls, who were busy over some beautiful Spanish embroidery, still sat by the window hoping to see the pirates go back blindfolded. Such excitement had not before fallen to the lot of Felipa; for during the five years she had been in this beautiful and peaceful island home, nothing more exciting had occurred than a few expeditions to the other island, or a row on the lagoon. The Marquis, her father, had been much blamed by his Spanish kindred for having sent for his daughter from Spain; but his reasons had been, besides his natural affection for her, a fear that after her mother's death her uncles might marry the young girl to one of their own friends and pass it off as an order of the King. Till now Del Campo had certainly not regretted the step, for he wished to keep Felipa with him till she should marry a man of his own choosing. In those days young girls were promised in marriage to men whom they had never seen, and very often their lovers were old and unattractive, though they

were of course wealthy or had some other recommendation in the eyes of the parents of the high-born Spanish maidens.

Felipa quite believed Carlo when he assured her and Etta that Santa Teresa was much too strong and well-fortified to be taken by even such a large number of pirates as had now landed; so the fears of the maidens were, in consequence, much diminished, and a good deal of curiosity mingled with their sympathy at Carlo's disappointment.

'After all,' said Felipa, who was not naturally brave, 'if Carlo had gone out to fight the pirates he might have been killed, so it is just as well our father waited for daylight, and to hear what Captain Morgan had to say. Don't you think so, Etta?'

'Brave soldiers never think whether they shall be killed or not,' said Etta. 'I am sure the Captain's son is brave; he walked in with his head thrown back, and looked so handsome.'

'Oh, Etta, if any one is an Englishman you think he must be perfect,' said Felipa, crossly. 'I tell you these pirates are all wicked, and make war on defenceless women and children. That is unworthy of any great nation.' But Etta retorted:

'Nay, but the Spaniards are more cruel than the English.' They might have gone on disputing over their nationalities had not Carlo reappeared, carrying with him a document which he was trying to decipher.

'Etta, here, quick. This is crabbed English writing, and the Marquis said that you were to help me to read it, and to write it out in fair Spanish, so that the council may deliberate on it. The boy who has accompanied the messenger cannot speak many words of Spanish, and will do nothing but shake his head. If I had my wish I would have both man and boy hung up on the tallest prickly palm of the estate.'

Etta in the meanwhile was deciphering the words, which had been written on the rind of the fruit of the cabbage-palm, which rind looked very much like a piece of parchment, and was indeed often used instead of it in the West Indies.

The writing ran thus, though it took all the three some time to make it out—

'To the Spanish Governor of the Island of St. Catherine.

'Hereby I, the world-wide famous Captain Henry Morgan, make known that if within a few hours you deliver not yourself and all your men into my hands, I do by my messenger swear unto you and all those that are in your company that I shall most certainly put you and them all to the sword, without granting quarter to any.'

Carlo flushed red with indignation when at last these words were made out and translated, then hurried away to his father and the officers, to give the writing into their hands.

'These words are an insult to our great country, my father. I hope you will give them a fitting answer. Such vile caitiffs deserve no pity.'

'We must have two hours to deliberate on this paper, gentlemen,' said the Governor, uneasily; 'for I hear there is great panic on the island, and that the people are leaving their homes and flocking to the fortresses. If so, a worse enemy than the pirates may trouble us, and that will be famine. Go, Carlo, and tell the messengers to return to him who sent them, and say that my answer shall be taken to Henry Morgan by my own trustworthy messengers, but that they must be promised a safe-conduct.'

Carlo had nothing to do but to obey. He found the man and the boy in the courtyard surrounded by a strong guard of Spaniards. He proudly gave his father's message, but, thinking of Etta's words, he could not help being struck with the noble bearing of the fair-haired youth, who appeared to be much disturbed by the rude looks and taunts of the soldiers about him, for he scarcely lifted his head till Carlo had done speaking, when he suddenly looked up at him, as if he were going to say something; but, evidently thinking better of it, he remained silent.

'Marry, then, in two hours our Captain will expect your answer,' said the pirate, 'and it were best not to trifle with him, as he is sure to keep his word. 'Tis no time to dally.'

'*Perros! nos veremos,*' exclaimed a soldier after Carlo had turned away in silence—which words mean in English, 'Dogs, we shall meet you,' and were accompanied by some insulting dumb show at the departing messengers.

After this the boy went back to the council-room; but what was his surprise at finding it barred and bolted, whilst a soldier, who was guarding it, said respectfully that the Governor's orders were that no one might enter.

'That does not include me,' said Carlo, angrily.

'Pardon, noble Señor Carlo; the Marquis said, "Not even my son."'

[Illustration: *CARLO REFUSED ADMISSION* (missing from book)]

Carlo turned away, too indignant to say anything in answer; and then he went sorrowfully upstairs to get some comfort where he knew he should always find

it. He told the girls what had just happened, adding:

'It is very unjust of my father.' Then, as Felipa blushed with sorrow, he added: 'No, I ought not to say that, for I fancy he did not mean to exclude me, only that stupid Luis wished to show his importance and invented the order.'

'Tell me, dear Carlo,' put in Etta, eagerly, 'did you speak to the English boy? I saw the soldier escort him and his fellow down the hill; and how I wished I could have had a few words with him!'

'What! with a pirate, Etta? But would that I could go into the council-room! If my father decides to despatch several hundred men, he must give me the command of at least a little band. You should see how well I could command.'

'Your noble father only meant, Señorito, that you must not disturb the meeting,' said Catalina, joining in; 'and I know there is a door at the other end, which is made but of light bamboos, and you can hear well enough there all that goes on.' Catalina spoke with so much certainty that it seemed as if she had herself been eavesdropping.

Carlo was delighted with the idea. 'Is that so, Catalina? The saints reward you, you dear old woman! I will give you a silk kerchief worked in gold thread the next time a merchant ship comes here from Panama. Ah, Etta, I am afraid you will never see your fair English boy again, so do not expect it, unless we take him prisoner; then I will spare him for your sake. That is a bargain. Now, Catalina, come and show me your secret way.' And delighted that he should not be quite excluded from hearing the plans of defence, the eager Carlo followed Catalina, quite believing that after all it was not his father but the stupid guard Luis who had prevented him from joining in the council of war. He was, however, soon to be undeceived.

CHAPTER VII. TREACHERY.

An hour later, when the Governor came out of the council-chamber and was entering his own private room, he looked ten years older. At this moment Carlo rushed into the room and threw himself at his father's feet.

Don Estevan looked much surprised, and the papers he held in his hand shook visibly.

'Father, you cannot mean it!' cried the Governor's only son, 'say it is not

true! There is yet time: the messengers have not yet started. I beseech you think better of it. I heard everything.'

'You heard everything? What do you mean, you insolent boy!' cried the Marquis, angrily; 'you were not in the council-chamber. Get up, Carlo; what is done is done for the best.'

'No, no, it cannot be for the best to betray this island. The stratagem you have suggested is unworthy of you; it cannot be true that Don Estevan del Campo will allow those villains to take this fortress without so much as a blow!'

Poor Carlo was beside himself with grief; he had indeed heard only too much from his hiding-place. The Governor had entirely lost his head, and was unable to make up his mind to fight the dreaded buccaneers; and now that he had found out their real number, and the number of their ships, he could think of nothing but temporising with them. He had forced the council to agree to send two messengers to Henry Morgan with these terms: They were to say that, feeling himself quite unable to hold the island against such a body of desperate men as Captain Morgan had with him, the Marquis begged the Captain to use a certain stratagem of war in order to make it appear to the people that the place was taken in honest fight. Captain Morgan was, according to this plan, to come at night to the bridge which divided the two islands, and here he was to attack Fort St. Jerome. In the meanwhile the pirate ships were to approach as near as possible to Santa Teresa and attack it from the sea; also at the same time to land a body of men at a place hard by, called St. Matthew. Here the Governor was to be intercepted on his way to Fort Jerome, taken prisoner, and forced to give up the keys of the castles of Santa Teresa and St. Jerome, and the possession of these two strong places would virtually mean that of the whole island. There was to be a feint, much firing on both sides, but no bullets were to be used; moreover, they were to fire in the air, to make sure of no one being killed on either side.

This was the shameful plan of surrender that Carlo had heard his father propose, and not only propose but enforce on the majority of the men composing the council; though Don Francisco de Paratta and a few others had firmly refused to give their consent to such a base affair.

The Marquis also knew that Carlo, young as he was, was too bold and fearless ever to give in his obedience to this idea, and for this reason he had had him shut out from the deliberations. He was therefore all the more indignant and angry when Carlo declared he had heard everything, and his burst of indignation was terrible to witness.

'You forget your position and mine,' said the unhappy Marquis in a passion. 'What can you know, Carlo, of the defences of the island? How can I consent to a general massacre of my garrisons, when by this simple means we shall avoid all loss? And in a few days these wild robbers will leave the island for other

more profitable fields, and—but why should I explain my reasons to you? What business had you to be eavesdropping? Is that the conduct to be expected from my son?’

Carlo did not seem to hear his father’s personal abuse; his mind was bent on averting the terrible blot which, if this plan were carried out, must come on his father’s name. However secret these negotiations might now be kept, sooner or later they would become known, and the name Carlo was so proud to bear would be for ever dishonoured.

‘Let me go and stop the canoe; or if it is gone, Andreas can easily overtake the messengers. Father, be angry with me, do anything; but do not let us sell our honour!’

The Marquis was now in a worse passion than ever with his son who dared to speak the truth to him.

‘Carlo, you shall not speak so! you forget yourself. Go from my presence at once, sir, and consider yourself a prisoner on parole. Do not leave your sister’s dwelling-room till I give you leave; and remember, if you disobey I shall have to show my son that he cannot break my rules with impunity.’

Carlo turned away, convinced now that his father could only be obstinate and firm in the wrong place. Covering his face with his hands, the brave boy sobbed as if his heart would break. He had dreamt of honour and glorious deeds, and these dreams had only ended in a story of shame. Going to his own room, he gazed down on the glorious tropical gardens and woods of his beloved home, and caught sight of the Governor’s canoe starting off with two men in her carrying the fatal message. The clock struck; the two hours allowed by the pirates were sped, and the Island of St. Catherine was as good as taken by Henry Morgan and his thousand men.

How long Carlo remained sunk in deep despondency, with now and then interludes of sudden impotent rage, he did not heed. He knew that the sham attack would not take place till night, for evil deeds hate daylight, and there was a long time yet before sundown. But, alas! all the need for exertion was gone, all the motive for brave resistance was taken away.

‘I will not be included in the treaty, however,’ he thought suddenly. ‘I have spoken against it, and I will use my bullets and my sword as a good and honourable soldier should do.’ Then, suddenly, the idea of danger for his sister and Etta entered his head. Tales of captivity endured by women and children when they fell into the pirates’ hands crowded into his head. How could he trust his father now? Certainly he must be losing his mind: this was the only charitable way of looking at his conduct. If this were the case, the welfare of Felipa was his duty, and, slowly rising, he tried to wash away traces of tears which might perhaps seem unmanly to those who did not know the reason.

When he entered the room to which he had been sent as a prisoner, the girls at once noticed the expression of his face.

'Carlo, what is the matter?'

'Surely all will be well now,' added Etta. 'We saw the canoe start with the answer. Ah, those robbers will understand we cannot be taken in brave Santa Teresa, whatever they may do.'

'I should think not!' said Catalina. 'Those infidels don't understand that the saints protect us. So you heard the deliberations, Señor Carlo?'

'Yes, well enough; but look, Catalina: suppose these pirates should get the better of us—for they are reported to be very strong—is there any place where you and the girls might hide? My father is so busy giving orders that he has not time to attend to all these matters.'

'No need to prepare for the impossible,' said Catalina; 'José told me that if Santa Teresa were besieged for a year it would be of no use; we have fleet Indians who can pass through the forest, and could bring in food unseen by any horde of pirates. So, Señorito, do not disturb yourself about us.'

'But impossible things, as we call them, do happen, Catalina, and it is best to be prepared. Well, anyhow, I shall go out to fight to-night; for it is then the attack is expected, and then I will win a right to my knighthood.'

'There is the great cupboard in this chamber,' said Catalina, 'into which opens the secret staircase. Few of the men know it, but the Marquis told me of it. That is safe enough. If any steps are heard without we can easily run down the stairs, and a door there leads to the dungeons below. Never fear, Señor Carlo; old Catalina doesn't mean to be taken by men who would think nothing of murdering me unless they wanted a wife.'

'Dear Catalina, you must never marry,' said Felipa, kissing her old nurse, 'at least not a pirate: I could not spare you. But do leave off talking of danger, Carlo, when there is none. You frighten us for nothing. Look how lovely the garden is after last night's rain: the tamarind has spread out all its leaves to show us it is fine again. How I long to go out and have a game this morning!'

'And did you hear that Andreas killed a fer-de-lance snake this morning?' added Etta. 'He says it is bad luck and an evil sign, but I told him it was a good thing to kill those wicked, poisonous creatures.'

Carlo hardly listened to these remarks; he was thinking only of the coming calamity; and though the affection of two girls comforted him he could not join in their laughter. They no longer feared the terrible pirates, and were anxious now to be allowed to go out into the wood. But as the only gate Santa Teresa possessed was closed, with strict orders to let no one in or out, they had to content themselves with sitting at the open window whilst the sounds of soldiers' clashing armour and noisy drill, mingled with loud orders shouted hither and

thither, only increased their excitement.

Then the sun went down on the beautiful island and darkness fell on the exquisite landscape. Carlo dared not leave the room till he knew his father had gone forth with his band of men towards St. Matthew, which was but a little further down the coast, and was not difficult of access by the sea-shore.

As time went on the confusion increased, and no one seemed inclined to go to bed. At last the Marquis collected his men; and though Carlo could not see much from his position, yet as he looked down from the window and saw the torch-light fall on his father's face he would hardly have known him, so changed was he. Carlo knew now that there was no help for it; he must only be thankful that he had heard of the treachery and that he was not himself starting out on this mock expedition as he might otherwise have been doing. This fact surprised the girls much.

'I cannot think why you are not going, Carlo,' said Felipa, very much disappointed at all the fine words of her brother ending in his merely gazing out of the window; 'and is it not strange father has not come to wish us good-bye? Catalina says he told her it was not worth while, as he would be home again so soon. But he might have let you go with him if there is so little danger.'

Etta said nothing, but Carlo saw that she also was much disappointed. Yet, for all this, he dared not betray his father: it was better to be thought a coward himself than to bring blame and discredit on the famous old name of Del Campo.

So the boy walked up and down the room, whilst the girls told each other stories in order to keep awake—so anxious were they to hear the first news of the defeat of the rebels. Then after a time the guns of St. Jerome were heard booming through the night air, and all rushed to the window—to see, however, nothing but the darkness. At the same moment there was a whisper heard through the keyhole, and they recognised the voice of Andreas.

'Señorito Carlo, are you here? Come quickly, in the name of Heaven and Santa Teresa! Do not be afraid; it is I—Andreas. Open the door.'

Carlo rushed to the door and seized the faithful Indian's hand.

'What is it, Andreas? Speak quickly.'

'There must be some treachery, Señor, for a party of pirates are climbing up towards the castle, and the guards below have disappeared from the walls.'

CHAPTER VIII.

A BRAVE DEFENCE.

When Carlo rushed away, an impulse to follow and see what was taking place seized the three whom he left behind. A strange silence had come over the castle. The moon was just rising and throwing a faint light over the forest; but nothing could be seen save the tall palms and the luxurious undergrowth in dark masses against the clear sky.

'Señorita, come here!' cried Catalina, hurrying to another window which looked on the sea side of the castle; and as the two girls hurried after her they beheld the bay below; not silent and calm as usual, but with the pirate boats busily plying backwards and forwards towards the shore lower down.

'What does all this mean, Catalina?' said Felipa, clinging to her nurse. 'Where is my father? And what did Andreas mean by coming to fetch Carlo? What shall we do? Etta, are you frightened?'

Etta was braver than Felipa, but at the same time she understood better the dangers of this attack; and yet she had heard so decidedly, and felt sure Carlo also believed, that Santa Teresa was too well fortified to be taken by assault, that this sudden call from Andreas was a mystery to her.

'I don't understand what can be the matter. Catalina, let me run down to the courtyard: I will be but a few minutes, and I shall find some one there who will tell me. Pedro is always kind to me, and he will tell me all he knows.'

'But the pirates,' cried Felipa—'if they come they will kill you! No, no; stay with us. Come away, Catalina, and let us bolt ourselves into our room.' And the girl tried to drag her nurse away from the window.

But Etta smiled.

'I tell you, Felipa, the pirates cannot come into this place. It would take months to force a passage through the walls, and the gate is too well guarded. I will run down and ask Pedro what Andreas meant.'

Catalina would have liked to go herself, but did not know how to leave Felipa, who was sobbing from fear of she knew not what horrors. Yet poor Felipa, as she crouched near the window with her hand in that of her nurse, could not help admiring the courage of her English playfellow.

'Carlo admires Etta because she is brave,' she said to Catalina; 'she never thinks of danger for herself. I would so gladly not be afraid, but I cannot help it.'

'Never mind about being brave, my darling; that is for men and not for girls. What would the men have to do if we women were as bold as they are themselves? You see, the Señora Etta is English, and the people in her country are not as civilised as we Spanish folk. Dry your beautiful eyes, dearie, and don't be frightened. The noble Marquis will soon be returning, and then we shall find out that he has trapped all these wicked robbers, and that not one remains alive.'

Thus comforting her much-loved young lady, Catalina soon forgot her own fears till quite five minutes had passed away without the reappearance of Etta.

What could the girl be doing? And why was there suddenly such a silence about the place? Catalina would not have been so brave had she known the truth or witnessed the assault that was now taking place at the gate of the outer wall.

When Etta ran down she was surprised to notice how few of the garrison could be seen. The loopholes from which poisoned arrows could be shot were deserted; the entrance to the council-room and the arsenal also remained unguarded. She could make nothing of it, so she had wrapped her dark mantle round her head and shoulders hoping to escape notice; but, to her great astonishment, none of the usual servants seemed to be about. She now hastened to the door that led into the courtyard. It stood open and the soft night air blew in.

'Pedro!' she called softly; but no porter answered. Even the Indian slaves were gone. Etta's curiosity was now fairly awakened. It could not be possible that the castle was deserted, and that she and Felipa were forgotten by every one!

'Carlo!' she cried louder, 'Andreas! Pedro!' No answer, and the girl stepped out into the courtyard and walked a little way down to the second gate. Then sounds indeed reached her ears: the clashing of swords, the loud tones of angry voices, the waving of torches, and the shrill whoops of Indians, mingled with many fierce English oaths.

There was no longer any doubt: the enemy, by some means, which of course Etta could not understand, had forced the passage leading over the ditch to the great gate, and were now between that and the inner courtyard, where, as Etta knew, no one remained to defend the gate of the castle itself. Her first impulse was to rush back and fly to some safer place; but so frightened was she that she felt hardly able to move; and at that moment, gazing at the small mass of struggling beings, she saw Carlo at the head of some dozen Indians barring the way before a far larger number of the enemy. This glance showed her also the form of the English lad; so much slighter and so much fairer of face than any about him that she could not mistake him as the torchlight fell on him.

'Carlo! Carlo!' she cried in her agony. No sound came back in answer but the yells and cries of the two parties; and with the instinct of helping her dear Felipa she at last found strength to turn away from the terrible sight and to fly back to the gate and so up the stairs, and as she ran she called out, 'Shut the gates: they are coming! They will soon overpower our people. Quick, make haste! Pedro, where are you?'

And still repeating these words, Etta dashed into the dwelling-room, looking so excited and pale that there was no longer any doubt that the worst had happened, as she exclaimed, 'We are lost! The castle will be taken! What can we do?'

Nor had brave Etta been mistaken. When Andreas had come to fetch Carlo, the faithful Indian had just discovered that the path known only to Don Estevan

del Campo and a few of those in authority had been betrayed. Before he could do more than collect the few slaves and soldiers left in the castle, and station them at the entrance to the weakest portion of the wall, fetch Carlo as described, and with the mere handful of men then available make a brave stand, the chief gate of the castle was really taken. Andreas little knew that all his valour was useless; but it was otherwise with Carlo, who, as he threw himself into the *mêlée*, was conscious that no bravery could really be of any use. Indeed the attack on this side was but a ruse, for another body of men were quietly making their way to the principal gate of Santa Teresa, and were now being let in by one of the Marquis's officers, whom he had easily persuaded that a desperate encounter with these pirates would only result in their all being taken prisoners, and most likely killed.

It was Andreas who suddenly discovered the treachery, and, not understanding the real meaning of the extraordinary events which were taking place, now shouted to those about him that there was yet time to stop the entrance of those rascals.

In this rush Carlo was accidentally thrown down, and in falling his knee struck against a rocky projection, so that for a few seconds he lost consciousness. When he came to himself he tried hard to struggle to his feet, for he beheld at this moment a boy suddenly spring over the wall and come hastily towards him. Carlo heard the confused noise of the assailants and defenders, who had passed on and left him, so that he now found himself alone with a lad of about his own age, whom he had previously seen, and who was doubtless Henry Morgan's son.

Clenching his teeth, and grasping his sword, he tottered to his feet.

'Rascal! infidel! son of a pirate!' cried poor Carlo, not caring what names he bestowed. 'You may kill me, but I will sell my life dearly. You at least shall not come further. Go and tell your father that Carlo del Campo will not be a party to any treachery.'

Carlo threw himself on the tall fair Englishman, and would have dealt him a blow which would have been serious had not his injured knee proved at this minute so painful that he missed his aim, and once again fell on the ground. In a moment the supposed son of Henry Morgan was kneeling by the brave Spanish lad.

'Hold, sir,' he said, surprised at some English words that had fallen from Carlo, 'you are mistaking me. I am no pirate, and will never draw my sword in such an unlawful business. I am but a poor prisoner, though kindly treated, and my name is Harry Fenn.'

As he said these words Harry stooped down to pick up Carlo's sword, which had rolled away from him as he fell, and gently gave it back to the brave youth, who once more struggled to his feet, still blind with rage and disappointment.

'How can I believe you? That is a false story, some new treachery; no one who is with these robbers can be trusted. Stand to it, fellow, or yield to mercy; for you go no farther!' And, regardless of Harry's explanation, Carlo once again prepared to attack his enemy; but he was made more furious at seeing that his supposed foe was not even trying to defend himself.

'Stand to it, base scoundrel, and draw your sword if you have any spirit at all; or, by St. Teresa, I must fall upon you!'

Still Harry Fenn remained motionless. 'If you will not believe, it is no fault of mine. I have vowed to use no weapon during my captivity—at least in an unlawful cause.'

Carlo dropped his hands, for this speech spoke more than weapons. A true knight could not fall upon an unresisting foe; but it was a deep disappointment to find Harry was no pirate.

'But, indeed, Señor, let me help you back to the castle. Captain Morgan's men are by no means particular, and might unintentionally hurt you, though they have sworn to use no violence nor to fire at any one this night.'

'It is true, then, and you know it?' said Carlo, blushing with shame. 'This attack is all a farce, and our men are even now letting the pirates into the castle—is it not so? Tell me all you know.'

'It was the suggestion of the Governor; but I pray you make haste from hence, or you may repent of it,' said Harry, wishing the young Spaniard would retreat into the castle now, for he certainly was in considerable danger.

'And I am Don Estevan del Campo's son,' murmured the unhappy boy. 'Is it true that you are none of them? If so, I will accept your help; for my knee hurts me much, and I must get back to my sister.'

With some unwillingness Carlo put his hand on Harry Fenn's arm, and in spite of what had just taken place a sudden wave of sympathy seemed to flow between them; each felt that among the crowd of fierce men they seemed to be both of them sadly out of place.

The central gate was now deserted; the pirates and the defenders had both disappeared; so the two lads found no difficulty in entering unperceived by a side door into the castle itself.

'You are witness that I have never surrendered,' repeated Carlo several times, afraid, in spite of Harry's kindness, that a trap was being laid for him.

Harry almost smiled as he answered in the affirmative, adding:

'But how is it you talk English, Señor? Yesterday I could not make myself understood; and had I known you understood my language I would have spoken out.'

'My father wished us to learn it. Here, this way; follow me, sir. I do not know what has happened to the garrison, but I fear I cannot fight with this horrid

pain. Our men have outrun their fears.'

The two now crept silently up a back way, avoiding the entrance-hall, where, from the sounds that rose toward them, it was not difficult to guess that the pirates were intent on refreshing themselves with what good things Santa Teresa could provide, and making up for the privations of the previous day and night by a carousal.

When Carlo limped up to his sister's door, he found it strongly barricaded within, and it was some time before Catalina could be persuaded to open it and admit him. Then her exclamations knew no end.

'Señorito! where have you been? And who is this young serpent?' she added, looking at Harry; but as she spoke in Spanish he did not understand her, though he noticed her look of disgust.

'Hush! Catalina, where is my sister? and Etta? Have you heard no news? Everything is lost, and this place is in the hands of the pirates. This youth was the same one Etta saw. He is a prisoner, he says. If so, he is a fellow-sufferer; and just now he behaved with much courtesy.'

'Come in, then, and let me bar the door once more. Oh, the noise those wretches have been making. It is as if all the demons were walking below. My poor Felipa is well hidden in that cupboard, and I made Etta go there too. Alas, alas, that I should be alive to hear such things! But, anyhow, they must kill me before they touch her. My *cara* Felipa! I believe she will die of fright.'

Harry Fenn stood by during this conversation, much perplexed at all he saw; for he did not understand that the Marquis had not acquainted his son with his treacherous surrender. His surprise was still greater when in another moment Etta, hearing Carlo's voice, appeared out of the dark cupboard where Catalina had insisted Felipa and Etta should hide, when on the return of the latter she had understood that something extraordinary was happening.

'Carlo, tell us—but, oh, who is this? The English lad? Are you Captain Morgan's son? No—it cannot be; for then you would not be here, nor would you look so kind.'

'You were right, Etta; this English lad is a prisoner, and has kindly helped me up here; otherwise I should be still lying under the wall, or perhaps I might now be killed by those wretches.'

Harry Fenn was delighted at finding himself face to face with a country-woman of his own. It seemed almost a miracle to be in a room again—a room which spoke of civilised and refined life, and which contained an English girl; for there was no mistaking her nationality, though she immediately informed him of the fact.

'I knew you were no robber when I saw you come to the castle. I am an English girl, and a prisoner here.'

'Etta, what foolish talk!' said Carlo. 'As long as I am here you are no prisoner.'

'But tell me how you came to be with that dreadful Henry Morgan,' cried Etta, much excited.

By this time Catalina, having gathered that Harry was no enemy, thought that he might be hungry, and brought out some bread from a cupboard; and the poor fellow fell upon it with such evident hunger that Etta's heart was touched, and she continued to talk to Harry.

'Those wicked men have, then, starved you?' she asked, as Carlo, having had his knee bandaged by Catalina, went into the large cupboard and tried to persuade Felipa to come out, for at present there was no visible danger.

'Not more than were all the others; the men all share and share alike; and when we were on the marsh, with the rain falling upon us, we were in such a bad plight that the men began to grumble finely at Captain Morgan; indeed, if a body of Spaniards had appeared at that moment we should never have reached this place. I can tell you Captain Morgan was glad enough to get the Governor's letter; but he laughed in his sleeve when he found his threats had been taken in earnest, for they were but bravado.'

'Oh, hush! don't tell Carlo all this,' said Etta quickly; 'he is so brave and good, and wished to go out this morning against them. But the place must have been betrayed, I think, for all said it could never be taken.'

'Ay, so it was, young mistress; and, now I see it contained such brave people and one of my own countrywomen, I am sorry enough; but before, I was right glad, for we suffered a great deal. Yet I ought to be used to suffering, for all this is nothing to the grief I had when these men kidnapped me from my home. And never a word have I been able to send to my parents that I am alive and well; for they take care I get no chance to speak with any passing ship.'

'But mine were killed,' said Etta, feeling as if she had known Harry a long time. 'It is five years since I have been a captive here. You do not know, I dare say, that this island was in the hands of pirates at that time. There was a Sieur Simon ruling it for the pirate Mansfelt, who was, they said, never happy except at sea. But the Governor of Costa Rica determined to take back Saint Catherine, and when the pirates heard this they sent to ask help of the English Governor of Jamaica, for he was said to sympathise with them. He refused, and pretended to have nothing to say to them; but he hired a merchant ship, as if for honest trade, and fitted it with stores, and put in some of the pirates that found shelter in Jamaica, and gave them and the captain private instructions. My father, who was an honest merchant, never knew of this; and, wishing to take my mother and me to Costa Rica, took passage in this same ship, but on nearing the island the Sieur Simon came aboard and begged the crew to sail into harbour. Yet it was all

a wicked device, for the Spaniards had already possession of the island; so that when we landed we were all seized and taken prisoners. My father and some of the others defended themselves bravely, but they were outnumbered before our eyes, and were killed. Mother and myself were brought to one of Don Estevan del Campo's fortresses, and she died of grief there after some weeks. Then the Marquis said I was to be treated well, for he wished me to become the playfellow to his daughter and son who were coming here shortly, so that I might teach them English. Before her death my mother gave me letters and directions, telling me if ever I could get back to my relations in England I was to do so. But how can I? We are indeed both alike prisoners, and I see no chance of getting away.'

Harry listened to Etta's story with much surprise; it made him see that after all he was not the only English sufferer even in these distant islands, and that others had had a much worse fate—for he had been well treated.

'But they are kind to you?' he asked, glancing at Carlo, who, having persuaded Felipa to come forth from her hiding-place, was sitting with his arm round her near the window and telling her of his meeting with the English youth.

'Kind? Ah, yes. I love Carlo and Felipa dearly, and old Catalina is not harsh; but I am afraid of the Marquis; I can never love him, for he looks upon me as one of his slaves.'

'He must be a false Spaniard, a feeble scoundrel, and no true gentleman,' said Harry decidedly, and then in a few words he told his own story, and how, in spite of being such a favourite with Captain Morgan, he had sometimes much to bear from the rough men. At this moment, however, Carlo jumped up and exclaimed:

'There is my father returning, and, gracious saints, he is a prisoner!'

CHAPTER IX.

IMPRISONED.

Before anything further could be said on this matter Pedro's voice was heard at the door, and when Catalina was assured that he was alone she let him in, being herself very curious to know the ins and outs of the occupation, and, as the Marquis had really returned, what was expected of her and her charges.

'Thank heaven, Pedro, that you have come up! Tell me what all this means, and are we to be roasted and eaten alive by those cannibals, who are, I suppose,

gobbling up all our stores?’

Pedro’s face was doleful in the extreme, and not at all reassuring.

‘In truth, Captain Morgan is our master now; and so I suppose we must make the best we can of the matter. He is very angry at the death of one or two of his men, and says we have broken our engagement. As if one could make engagements with such paltry ragamuffins! It seems we were never meant to resist, but I said it was by your orders, Señorito. You remember that you would insist on taking us out to the walls, though our orders were to do nothing. Anyhow, Captain Morgan wishes you, Señor Carlo, to come and deliver up your sword to him at once. He was going to send some of his drunken fellows to fetch you; but, thinking of the ladies, I interfered, and I said you would prefer to come of your own accord.’

‘Let me come with you, Señorito,’ said Harry Fenn, thinking that he could perhaps soften the Captain’s wrath, which, he had learnt by this time, was not to be despised, especially by a Spaniard, who would find but little favour in the English pirate’s eyes.

Felipa, pale and utterly miserable, tried to dissuade her brother from going down below, but in vain. Carlo did not know the meaning of the word fear.

‘No, no, dear Felipa; that would be the action of a coward. Besides, you might suffer for my refusal. This captain shall see that I am not afraid of his threats.’

‘You will petition Captain Morgan for Carlo, will you not?’ asked Etta, turning towards Harry. ‘How is it that he lets you have your own way?’

‘I know not. He took a fancy for me and calls me his godson, which is a title very little fitting. I often think that if my poor father could see me, and kind Mr. Aylett, they would indeed be astonished; and yet I have tried to do my duty and not forget my God and country in the midst of this godless crew. But trust me, even if I did not like this bold young Spaniard, I would do my best for your sake, young Mistress Allison. You should have seen how he scorned to budge a step.’

Etta smiled at these words, and then said impulsively, ‘Call me Etta, and I will call you Harry Fenn. Seeing you is almost as if I were at home among my relations, who, my mother used to say, would love me dearly and would not let me want.’

But there was no time now for more words, even though the young people seemed to have much to say to each other. Carlo followed Pedro and Harry, feeling altogether angry and ashamed of his position. He was, too, a little jealous of Etta’s evident happiness at talking to one from her own country; and besides, he could not bear to feel that he was himself virtually a prisoner in his own house; and yet, thought he, ‘I have never delivered up my sword, and I have never owned

myself defeated.' As for his father, he could not bear to think of him as a traitor to his king and country.

When they entered the hall Carlo was dismayed by a sight such as he had never expected to see in Santa Teresa.

Some long wooden planks had been laid on trestles and placed in two rows down the hall, and round them sat some forty or fifty of Captain Morgan's chief men eating and drinking voraciously. A dozen or more of the negro slaves waited on them, filling up their goblets when empty—a duty which was by no means light or infrequent. At a smaller table at the upper end of the hall Captain Henry Morgan was also enjoying what he considered a well-earned breakfast; for daylight was beginning to flood the hall, showing that the long night of anxiety was over. In the sky beautiful clouds tinged with every conceivable shade of crimson and gold were making lovely backgrounds for the tall palm-trees and the other forest giants; but of all this beauty the soldiers and the buccaneers thought nothing. Henry Morgan was anxious, now that he was in possession of the island, to secure it permanently for future need, and, as soon as he could, to send on some of his men in search of still more booty, the thirst for gold in these pirates being quite unquenchable. After a moment's pause Carlo walked proudly up to the top table, bent on showing no fear; yet what made the deepest impression upon him was, not the sight of the much-dreaded sea-robber, but that of his own father seated opposite to the foe, and being treated apparently, not as a prisoner, but as a friend, by the man whom Carlo hated as being both a buccaneer and an Englishman.

The poor Marquis, however, could not be said to look happy; he carefully turned away from Morgan, and now and then rose hastily from his chair and paced nervously up and down the small platform, muttering audibly, 'I did it for the best. There has been no massacre of the people. Who will dare to blame me? How could I do otherwise? Why has Don Francisco left me, and where is my son?'

'Marry! here comes the culprit!' cried Captain Morgan, seeing Carlo approaching. 'Señor Governor, I suppose this young sprig is your son, and the one who led the assault before sunrise? The young scoundrel has a puissant sword and spiteful ire.'

'My son knew nothing of our plans,' said the poor Marquis, who in spite of his own conduct could not help feeling proud of his boy.

'Then, i'fecks, you should have told him. Some one is answerable for the death of two of my men and the wounds of several more.'

'Here, young sirrah! What's your name, and what do you mean by having gone out to prevent the entrance of my skirmishing party, when they held a pass from the Governor himself? Speak out, silly coxcomb, and tell me who set your

thoughts agog in this manner:

'I knew nothing of the pass,' said Carlo haughtily, 'and I was bound to fight in the defence of the castle. We give no quarter to our foes.'

'Marry! proud as a strutting peacock, eh? Ah, well, we'll soon teach you better. How now, Harry—what hast thou been about? Thou shouldst have taught this young pate more wisdom. I'll have no jesting from such a stripling.'

Harry did not answer, thinking silence the wisest course. The curious fancy which Captain Morgan had taken for the kidnapped lad was apparently without rhyme or reason; for Harry, though respectful enough, had never yet been made to act against his will and his conscience; and when some of the men would have liked to use brute force, and shake what they called the young fool's stubborn will out of him, Captain Morgan always interfered; he would not have the lad touched, he said, and whoever did it would have to answer personally to him.

Carlo, the Spaniard, however, touched no chord of sympathy in the Captain's breast. He heartily despised the Governor, who had been such a weak tool in his hands, and was rather glad to punish him through his son, as he had given a sort of promise that his person would be safe from insults.

'Ignorance is a very convenient excuse, young Señor. By my faith, you are answerable for the death of two of my men, and should by rights be hanged on one of your own bananas; but, considering your youth, I will merely imprison you in your own castle. Deliver up your sword to me, sirrah! and, marry, you may thank me for dealing so leniently with you; 'tis more than you deserve.'

Henry Morgan spoke fluent Spanish, having had to mix much with the various traders of the West Indies. Harry Fenn, who could not well understand the language, though he could see the angry frown on the Captain's face, looked from the latter to Carlo, wondering what was being said. Then he suddenly saw the young Spaniard angrily lift his head and clasp his right hand upon the hilt of his sword as he exclaimed:

'I did but my duty, Señor Captain, and I will never deliver my sword to any man, least of all to such rascals as you are.'

'Carlo, it is best to obey; pray do not anger the Captain,' called out his father anxiously. 'Silly boy! what can you do against all these men? If you persist you must abide by the consequences.'

At these words Carlo hung his head, but he did not answer, nor did he look at all as if he meant to give way; so that now Harry Fenn clearly understood what was taking place, and secretly much admired the Spanish boy; but he knew only too well that in the end he would have to yield. As well try to bend a full-grown oak as turn the iron will of Henry Morgan.

'And what good will that toy blade do for you?' asked the pirate captain, laughing scornfully; and when he laughed he was more to be dreaded than when

he swore. 'It is no tried steel, young jackanapes, but a somewhat spick-and-span new plaything.'

'I demand a free pass for myself, for my father, and the women in this house,' said Carlo, not daunted, but flushing with anger; 'for it is a shame to remain under the same roof with such as you.'

'A shame! Come, enough of thy vapouring and huffing! We'll see whose shame it will be. Here, Cross, Simon, Watkins: seize that young scorpion and fling him into the dungeons here; for I guess there are some down below in which brave Englishmen have before now groaned away their lives. "A tooth for a tooth" is no bad saying, and in the dark thou mayest learn that "haste makes waste."

'Prithee, Captain,' said Harry, rushing between Carlo and the advancing men, 'spare this young Spaniard: he was as brave as a lion under the walls, and bravery ought to find favour with you—he rallied a mere handful of men when there was no hope for him.'

'Pshaw, Harry! away, boy, and mind thine own business. I hear there are girls here, and that one is an English prisoner or slave: go and tell them to come here—that is work more befitting thee—and leave this boy alone.'

[image]

CARLO BEFORE CAPTAIN MORGAN.

In a moment Carlo was seized by the three strong, lusty men; his sword was wrenched from him; and with two long Spanish scarves his arms were bound tightly behind him, and in this helpless state he was dragged from the hall; whilst the Marquis, rising to his feet, protested in vain against the outrage to his son. The truth was that Captain Morgan wished to make an example of some one, and Carlo, being the Governor's son, would satisfy any murmurs his men might be inclined to raise at the death of their comrades.

All was now noise and confusion, for the men began loudly to make all kinds of requests to the Captain; and, seeing nothing would be got out of them in the way of going to seek for cattle and provisions in the island till they had finished their feast, Captain Morgan (who was a very abstemious man himself) left the hall, begging the Marquis somewhat roughly to show him over the place and to give him all the keys of the stores. Harry Fenn was also commanded to be of the company, which request he was glad enough to comply with, so as to get away from the sight of the carouse and the sound of the rude jokes and laughter.

In the meanwhile Carlo, struggling bravely to the last against his fate, and

angry and indignant at his treatment, was carried down to the dungeon below, old Pedro being forced to show the way. Presently, after passing through dark passages, the porter opened the door of a cell-like chamber where no light was visible, and which looked most unfit for a living being, much less for the delicately nurtured Carlo.

'This is the only dungeon I know of,' grumbled Pedro; 'and many a pirate has made acquaintance with it,' he added in a low voice. 'Would that I could lock up many more!'

'I fancy this will be good enough,' said Simon in a French accent. 'Here, fellow, give me the key and let me lock it myself; there's no treachery these Spaniards are not equal to. Bum! that will do; the silly boy is safe enough.'

'Take it, then,' growled Pedro, 'it locks well enough,' but as he delivered up the key he thought with a smile on his face, 'but there's sometimes more doors than one even in a dungeon.'

CHAPTER X.

A FELLOW-COUNTRYMAN.

The Indian slaves, who had been scattered like thistle-down in a wind during this memorable night, now began to creep back to their various stations and occupations at Santa Teresa; and from them poor Catalina learnt, with more or less exaggeration, all that had taken place during the memorable night, and that it was the Marquis himself who had really betrayed them into the enemy's hands.

The faithful servant would not abuse her master; but, taking Felipa's head in her arms, she sobbed over her as if this shower of tears would make matters better; at the same time pouring out all her information, which was no comfort to the poor girl. Etta meanwhile stood by, pale and calm, quickly trying to form some plan which would comfort gentle Felipa.

But when all at once the bad news reached them that Carlo had been thrown into a dungeon, and that the pirates had the keys, and, further, that Captain Morgan was on his way to pay the young ladies a visit, Etta could not help feeling afraid, though she made up her mind that she would not show it. She felt very proud of Carlo, and was somewhat comforted by the idea that kind Harry Fenn would help him if he possibly could.

Etta possessed one of those natures which troubles only strengthen. Her

captivity, kind though it had proved for her, had not made her forget her religion and her country; yet now she was anxious to do her utmost to return gentle, timid Felipa's love; so she did her best to cheer her with hopeful words, and not to give way herself to fear.

'Do not be afraid, Felipa darling. Captain Morgan cannot eat us, you know, and he will not dare to do us any bodily harm, for your father, the Marquis, is still a free man. Besides, the pirates want food, Pedro says, and when they have that they will most likely go away. Why could we not send Andreas to warn your uncle of this assault? He is a good man, and would send us help.'

'Well, Señorita, that is a good idea, which never entered my head,' cried Catalina; 'but where, in the name of all the saints, shall we find Andreas? The Indians are terribly afraid of the pirates, and are trying to hide in the woods; for I have heard they were very cruel to them the last time they were here.'

'You know, Felipa, that Carlo has taught me the peculiar whistle which will bring Andreas to the foot of the south window,' said Etta. 'If he is still in the neighbourhood he will hear it, and he would take his canoe to the mainland and warn your uncle, the Governor of Chagres—I am sure he would.'

'But how could he leave his own castle?' answered Felipa. 'Dear Etta, you are so hopeful and clever! If this could really come to pass! Poor father would be glad, I am sure; for he must already be sorry all these horrid men are in our hall. Yet he did it for the best.'

This talk was now interrupted by the tread of footsteps without. The girls had not been to bed, and were still in the sitting-room. Felipa turned pale, and tremblingly clung to Catalina till she recognised her father's voice in the passage, though the tones were sadly changed.

The sun this morning shone gloriously in upon the frightened group as the unhappy Marquis and Captain Morgan entered. Felipa at once ran up to her father and put her hand into his, asking in this mute way for his protection; but Etta, who was never at her ease with the Spanish Governor, stood alone by the window. Yet, in spite of her inward fears, she could not help feeling some curiosity at the sight of the dreaded pirate about whom she had heard so much.

After all, the buccaneer was not as dreadful as she had expected; and, even if his appearance were somewhat strange, yet Etta felt she was in the presence of one of her own countrymen; and her fears were further dispelled by the sight of her new friend, Harry Fenn, close behind the Captain. As for Catalina, she turned her face to the wall and audibly muttered her prayers, or perhaps they were curses, on the intruder.

'This, Captain, is my daughter,' said the Marquis, speaking in a very nervous manner, 'and this other maiden is the English girl I mentioned. Her father was an English merchant, and was killed here in fair fight; she will tell you she

has been very kindly treated.'

'Thou canst speak thine own tongue, I hope?' said Captain Morgan; 'if so, tell me thy name, little countrywoman. I trust thou hast not altogether forgotten the speech of merrie England.'

'My name is Henrietta Allison, and my mother told me our family was from Kent; but oh, Sir Captain, will you release Carlo? Do not take his words amiss, for he is as brave as any Englishman, and I should be loth that my countrymen did him any harm.' Etta spoke with vehemence; her love for Carlo made her bold, and she altogether forgot her fears.

Captain Morgan frowned a little as he said, 'Marry! An overbold English girl, I see. That young ragamuffin has only got his deserts, for it always goes ill with a son who does not follow his father's footsteps. But I like a wench that is fearless. Speak up, girl, and tell me if thou hast any other boon to ask.'

'If you will not grant me this one, I will have no other,' replied Etta, her flashing eyes saying far more than mere words.

'Marry! That is showing a fine spirit! Nay, nay, Mistress Henrietta Allison, keep your angry looks for those who will be distressed by them. Eh, Harry, hast made friends with your countrywoman? Stay here, boy, and learn the courtly manners of the Spaniards, which, by my troth, our rough fellows sadly lack. Now, please you, Señor, we will finish our inspection of the castle; for as soon as my men have become rational creatures again we must proceed to business. I fear I must disarm all the inhabitants, and for mere form's sake I shall need to examine a few prisoners. I must find, moreover, several bold spirits who will faithfully show me the way to Panama; for I've sworn to take that city, and "St. Catherine" shall serve as the war-cry of Morgan's men. Adieu, fair maids; and do not distress yourselves about your companion; a few days on bread and water will kill no lusty knight who has been routed in battle.'

So saying, he led the way out, and intimated with a wave of the hand that the Marquis was to be his guide. Don Estevan del Campo staggered out, feeling now, at last, that he had indeed made a mistake. Rather would he have perished sword in hand than have heard that the inhabitants were to be made prisoners, and examined, most likely, under torture. His peace had, indeed, been bought dearly!

'Do not be unhappy about your brother,' said Harry kindly, approaching Felipa; 'he will be safe enough so long as the Captain is within this place, and so long, too, as he bears his captivity patiently. That is Captain Morgan's way; he cannot bear to be thwarted; yet I have known him do kind deeds when he was in the humour for it.'

'But I have a plan, bold Harry Fenn,' said Etta, now all eagerness to carry out her ideas, 'only—may we trust you? You will not betray us.'

'You forget what I have told you. I take no part in the affairs of the buccaneers; I do not betray their secrets, because that would not be honourable, but far less would I betray yours. I work enough for them—work that pays for my victuals; but I will not help in their robberies.'

'Forgive me, Harry,' said Etta frankly. 'We are afraid of every one now; yet we heard truly how you defended Carlo. Felipa, where is the parchment? You must write to your uncle at once, and let the writing be very small, for Andreas must carry it in his mouth; he says that is the only safe hiding-place.'

Felipa sat down to write a few words to her uncle Don Alvarez, Governor of Chagres Castle; whilst Catalina, who could not write at all, looked on, giving her advice freely. Etta in the meanwhile told Harry of her plan, but she did not notice the start he gave as she mentioned that Don Alvarez was Governor of the castle of La Chagres, and a noble and brave gentleman who had sometimes paid them a visit at Santa Teresa.

When the note was at last written hopeful Etta went softly out of the room to the end of a long passage. Opening a little window, she imitated the peculiar whistle which Carlo had taught her, and which was his signal between Andreas and himself. Harry had accompanied her, and he seemed as anxious as she was about the arrival of the faithful Indian.

'Did the Señorita Felipa,' he asked, 'say in what distress you were, and what was the reason of your needing help?'

'Nay; she said merely, "We are in great sorrow: come at once," and then something more about her poor father,' said Etta; and Harry could not help admiring the golden hair and sunny face of his new friend.

But though Etta repeated her whistle no one appeared for a long time, but just as she was giving up in despair all hope of seeing the Indian, she noticed Andreas below creeping towards the verandah which he was accustomed to climb in order to get within hearing of Carlo. Now, however, he merely shook his head and whistled softly a few notes which meant 'Come here at sunset'; and with this she was obliged to be contented, knowing that only real danger would keep him away.

'I fancy he is watched,' said Harry; 'to-night he had better escape, if he is wise.' And then, very sorrowfully, the girl led the way back to the sitting-room.

The girls dared not step out of their own chamber all the morning—indeed Catalina kept good guard over them, so that it was some comfort to listen to Harry Fenn's adventures and to hear what he liked best to talk of—the account of his home life. Felipa could not quite understand how he could be so clever, being neither a noble's son nor a young priest; but Etta had English ideas, imbibed from her parents, and her love of England made her listen eagerly to Harry's talk of the old church on the hill and of the learned and kind Mr. Aylett, who had taught

him so much and whom she hoped to see some day. And, further, as misfortune draws hearts together, he told Etta of that last day at home, and how he had made the effort of renouncing his roving wishes, and yet how he had been forced to cross the ocean and see strange new sights in spite of himself.

'I have had it often on my conscience that God was punishing me for my many discontented thoughts,' said the boy; 'and yet I think Mr. Aylett would not put it so. He must have told my parents that I was willing to stay.'

'No, no; he could not blame you,' said Etta, clasping her hands, 'for then you would have also to say that God is punishing me for having been often in a passion when I was but ten years old. We must always be friends now, Harry, for our stories are much alike; but some day you will get back home, and you will tell your parents all you went through and of all your adventures, and then you will remember me and send some good merchant to take me away from St. Catherine to my uncle's house in Kent. I will show you the letters I have some time.'

'If an English man-of-war was to touch here, then I would run away,' said Harry. 'I have never given my word not to escape.'

'And did you really always say your prayers?' said Etta under her breath, who looked upon Harry as a very saintly hero. 'For sometimes I have forgotten them when nobody reminded me; and you must have found it very difficult.'

'Nay, but without them I think I should have despaired entirely.'

Catalina now broke in upon their talk by saying, 'Come, young Englishman, if you are as friendly as you pretend, why can you not get my poor Carlo out of that dungeon? He will die there, for I am sure those ruffians will give him no food.'

'I will do my best,' said Harry, 'and anyhow I will bring you news later in the day; and I will go now and see if I can do aught with the Captain for him.'

When he was gone, Felipa and Etta fell fast asleep on a low couch, being quite wearied out with the events of the long night and morning, and so for a little while they forgot their troubles.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SECRET PASSAGE.

Etta's courage came back with new energy after her long rest; the presence of

Harry Fenn in the castle seemed to lessen the dangers which now evidently surrounded the little party; and, at all events, so long as he was here they would not be left in uncertainty. But it was nearly sunset before any one came to break their solitude in the sitting-room. At last there was a sound.

'Hish! Open: it is Harry Fenn. Have no fears.'

Etta ran to the door and let him in. He had a basket in his hands full of fruit, and also some bread, on which Catalina seized with joy.

'I knew you must be hungry,' said Harry, 'so I took these when no one was looking. All the slaves are working with unusual activity. In truth, the Captain has enough to do, and the Marquis has been sent to San Salvador to make the garrison deliver up all the guns that are there. It is sad to see him so cast down.'

'But what other news is there? Can we soon go out of this room? It is so cool under the trees, whilst here we are so hot, and everything is miserable,' said poor Felipa, who felt the burden of her life greater than she could bear now her father was away and Carlo in prison, and she herself was not far removed from being a prisoner.

'I fancy, Señorita, that in a few days Captain Morgan will have decided something. He found great difficulty to-day in preventing his men scattering themselves after booty. All the main forts are in his hands, and he is busy ordering the removal of guns and ammunition to the fleet; and those who will show him hidden treasure get a title to his favour. You can see some of the ships from the windows of this castle. As soon as he can finish this work, I expect he will set sail. He does say he will not leave a musket in the island; but I fancy some of the negroes have already hidden away powder and muskets, for the men are inclined to handle them too roughly.'

'They may take all the guns they like,' said Catalina impatiently, 'if they will release the Señorito Carlo to me. I wish I could hang up these villains on our tall groogroos!'

'Unfortunately the man who has the key of the Señorito's dungeon has gone away to the other island,' said Harry, 'but as I passed by the gate just now an old man asked me if I would tell the nurse Catalina that the young Señor was not so fast locked but that she could get at him if she so wished. I know not what he meant, but I thanked him for his good offices.'

At this Catalina clapped her hands, saying that Pedro was more cunning than he seemed to be, and that Carlo need not now starve; but no one understood her.

'It is close on sunset,' said Harry to Etta, 'and if you are going to keep your appointment with the Indian, I would like to come with you. I suppose you are sure he is to be trusted, for some of these Indians are none too brave, our men say, and fly like crows when they smell powder.'

'Andreas! Yes, indeed, he loves Carlo as his own son. They often have gone hunting together.'

So the two returned softly to the place of meeting at the window above the verandah, and, after waiting till the sun had sunk and darkness had suddenly come on, they heard the sound of soft whistling, and in another moment Andreas had swung himself over the balcony and stood by their side.

Etta seized his hand.

'Good Andreas, do you know all our misfortunes? Señor Carlo is still in the dungeon, the Marquis has gone to deliver up some guns, and if it were not for this kind friend we should be almost forsaken.'

Andreas made a low salutation, but, all the same, eyed Harry rather suspiciously.

'Do not be afraid,' continued Etta; 'he is a prisoner as we are, and will help us. Look, Andreas, could you manage to escape and take this note of the Señorita Felipa to her uncle at the Castle of Chagres? He would bring us help if he knew how badly we wanted it.'

Andreas shook his head.

'It is impossible, I fear. I am only at liberty because I can be useful with the cattle and the horses in the compound.'

'But, good Andreas, you cannot know how important it is that this Spanish gentleman should know that Captain Morgan has taken St. Catherine,' said Harry quickly. 'If you cannot go, could you find some one else? Surely we have had enough horrors here and elsewhere,' he added, half to himself.

'The blacks cannot be trusted, and none of my tribe would care to go. However, give it me, Señora; if I cannot go no one shall take the writing from me.' And with this Etta had to be satisfied; but she added in English:

'If Andreas says no, it means no; for he is the cleverest and bravest Indian there is in all the island.'

'When do you think the pirates will go, Andreas?' she asked anxiously.

'The Captain is asking for men who know the roads on the mainland. I believe they intend to attack Panama; and yet that is a big rich city, and is not badly defended, so that I can hardly believe that such is really their intention.'

After this, Andreas said he must not stay longer, as he was obliged to go back to the compound, but that he would come the next day at sundown to the same place, if in the meanwhile he were unable to escape from the vigilance of his new masters in order to go to the mainland, where, some short distance down the Chagres River, stood the castle of that name, strongly garrisoned by Spanish soldiers.

As Harry and Etta returned towards the sitting-room the former promised he would come back early the next morning and bring what food he could find,

only begging that the Señorita and Etta would not dream of showing themselves below stairs; for indeed the scenes that went on—the drinking, swearing, and quarrelling—were no fit sight for them—'or, indeed, for any Christian man,' added Harry. 'They will soon fall to and begin to cross their cudgels, fancying they are full of wit and valour; though, indeed, there are many who have only joined them because misfortunes have come upon them in the old country, and they fancy this wild life is better than starving. Some, too, were trained to fight in the late wars, and say that life is naught without a sword and a war-cry; yet I know that many of them disapprove of the cruel deeds they see.'

'But you would escape if you could?' asked Etta.

'Yes, indeed; but Captain Morgan knows that, and I feel sure I am often watched. Good-night, Mistress Etta. I will do my best to free you out of this distress.'

Etta found on her return that everything looked more cheerful, and indeed Felipa ran towards her friend and began kissing her as she laughed and cried alternately.

'What is the matter? what has happened?' said Etta; for Catalina looked just as happy, and was praising all the saints in the calendar.

'Catalina is so clever and so good! Fancy! she has seen Carlo, and, look, he has shared our supper!'

'Where is he? have they freed him?'

'No, no—hush!—but it was good Pedro's doing; they made him show them the way to the dungeons, and he got him locked up in the cell that has another door into it, and we can get at it from here. You know that nasty dirty little staircase which we were always afraid of? Well, that leads to his cell. In former times, Catalina says, they used to go down from here and try to get the secrets out of the prisoners by making them false promises. That is why there are two doors in it.'

'And have you seen him? Oh, Catalina, let me go down at once and speak to dear Carlo! He will know now we are going to send a message to Don Alvarez, for Andreas will try hard to get away.'

'No, no, Señorita, you must not go now. I crept down like a snake, and found my poor boy crouched in a corner quite faint for want of food. How he started up when I pushed back the sliding panel! and, in truth, he was ready to fight me, fancying I was a pirate come to murder him. And when he saw it was only old Catalina he nearly cried; though he laughed, too, afterwards. He knew I could not see the tears, mind you, in that dark hole. Well, he ate the bread and fruit in a very short time, and asked no end of questions, poor boy, and sent an especial message to you to tell you he was not so badly off now he could hear news of us. It was as good as any feast, he said.'

'But, Catalina, why did you not bring him here? We could hide him, I am sure we could; and if not, he could escape by the balcony.'

'I suggested it to him, but he was wiser. "My jailors may come at any moment," he said, "and then, seeing me gone, they would soon search and discover the door, and no one can tell what they might then do." Ah, he is a brave youth; it is a pity his father is not like him.'

It was indeed a great comfort to feel that their Carlo was so near to them, and at all events would not die of starvation, as there was before much chance of his doing if left to the tender mercies of his captors, who were now beginning to recover from their carousal, and were being sent to all parts of the two islands with orders to drive the harmless inhabitants in to the various fortresses as if they had been cattle, and to treat all who resisted the appropriation of their goods as if they were rebels.

It was decided that Carlo could not be visited again till a late hour the next morning, for fear of any one being discovered in the cell. Etta, as more agile than Catalina, was then to visit the dungeon; and, much comforted, the three this evening knelt down to pray together that God would deliver them from their sad plight and take care of their own dear Carlo and the Marquis.

Felipa was very fond of her father in spite of being a little afraid of him; he had always been indulgent to her, and she fretted at seeing nothing of him. The truth was, that the Governor preferred even looking after the betrayed fortresses to seeing the sorrow of his children; and he was much afraid Felipa would reproach him for having allowed Carlo to be imprisoned.

As the girls would not leave the sitting-room, through which alone they could get at Carlo, Catalina spread some mattresses on the floor for them; and this evening they slept soundly in spite of their many misfortunes.

They were up at sunrise, and were all impatience for the first tidings which Harry had promised to bring them; but when at last they heard his voice, and let him in, he was not in a very cheerful mood.

'When is Captain Morgan going away?' asked Etta, whose sweet face and golden hair made Harry hunger all the more for his home, in order that he might send or fetch her. 'Make haste and tell us good news. I have a lovely plan for saving you from these people, Harry Fenn, but I dare not tell it yet I would dearly love to hear their hue and cry after you. How they would boggle at finding you gone!'

'You need not make plans for me, Mistress Etta: the Captain has even just now told me that he wishes me to go aboard one of his ships. He knows I will not fight, but he would fain make me act spy on the others. But see, this is all I could find for you, Catalina. Here are some yams and bananas and bread. I wanted to bring you a cooked fowl, but one of the men was angry at what he called my

huge appetite. They think that as I will not do all their work I must not eat the good things, and that I am not worth my provender, as they put it.'

'But when shall you go?' asked Felipa, who looked so much more cheerful this morning that Harry could not help noticing it.

'No, no: you must not go!' said Etta, seizing his hand. 'Stay with us, and we will send you back to England. The Señora Felipa will ask her father, and when the pirates are gone—'

'Thank you for your kind good offices; but your plan is impossible, for Captain Morgan does not mean to leave Santa Teresa just yet; he is sending out four ships and a boat to try how he gets on in those parts.'

'Where?'

'That I durst not say, Señora; it was only by accident that I overheard it; but I know that, in the future, the Captain's mind is set upon taking the great town of Panama.'

'He will never do that,' said Felipa, tossing her head. 'There is a strong garrison there, and His Catholic Majesty would never forgive them if they allowed it to be taken by such needy gallants as your crew.'

'That is what I think too, Señora. However, I dare say our ships will come back from this lesser expedition somewhat humbled and crestfallen. At present their pride knows no bounds. But, dear ladies, I am sorry to say that I am the bringer of evil news, which it goes against me to tell; but it is best to know the worst. I heard Captain Morgan say that the Señorito Carlo was to be released this morning and to be taken on this expedition, because—'

'Oh, how dreadful! Carlo to go with all those wicked men! Nay, I know he will never consent,' cried Felipa.

'But in truth he will be less likely to get harm than in those damp dungeons below. I reminded the Captain that the Señor had had no food, and that men would cry shame on himself if the Señor were to come to harm.'

'Thank you, Sir Harry, for your kind intentions,' said Felipa in her somewhat quaint English, 'but indeed I had rather my brother were in the dungeon than out at sea with such knaves as these buccaneers. Cannot you obtain this boon from your captain for us; for if my brother goes what shall we do?'

Harry would not tell her he had no power; so, promising to do his best, he hurried away, not daring to stay longer.

CHAPTER XII.

A NEW EXPEDITION.

The hours wore away very, very slowly for poor Carlo, who in his damp dark cell reflected with bitter shame on the departed glory of his name. Moreover, it was hard to bear this terrible confinement; and now and then the thought would pass through his mind that he had been a fool for his pains, for his resistance had done no good to any one, and had put him into a very luckless place and a miserable condition. But Catalina's visit and the discovery of the secret door, though it opened only from the outside of the cell into the narrow secret passage, took away all the feeling of loneliness, which is almost unbearable to the young. Now all was different. Upstairs and not far from him there were those who cared for him; and, to say the truth, the food Catalina had brought very much contributed to his more cheerful spirits. When first imprisoned there had been no time to do more than thrust the boy into the cell, so he was free to walk the two steps which were all that the width of the place allowed; but it was a comfort to feel with his fingers for the slight marks of the secret door, and to place his ear against it, listening intently for coming footsteps.

This morning, however, it was in the outside passage that he first heard sounds; and presently the key creaked in the lock, the bolts were drawn back, and a rough voice called out with a seasoning of oaths:

'Here, young cub, take this loaf; it's none of the newest, but good enough for young teeth; and here's water to wash it down with; for, ay, marry, it's all you'll get till to-night, when the Captain has ordered your release. Maybe by then you'll have learnt to cudgel less and show less paltry spite.'

Carlo's heart beat fast, for the very idea of once more seeing the sun and enjoying the lovely sights and sounds of the tropical world made him happy. No, he did not now regret his conduct: he had vindicated his honour, and the price was not too great. He longed to know more, but of course he would not ask this fellow for any news, so he received his communication in silence. In consequence of this he was favoured with another volley of opprobrious titles, which he bore with patience, as beneath the notice of a nobly born Spaniard.

When this visit was over, Carlo set himself again to listen for more welcome footsteps; but it was only after an hour had elapsed that he was rewarded by hearing, not Catalina's heavy tread, but a gentle well-known footfall. It was Etta, who after some difficulty managed to slide back the secret door; and, peering into the darkness without at first seeing anything, she exclaimed:

'Carlo, are you there? Oh, how dreadful! Here, dear Carlo, take this bread, and a fresh banana; for you must be very hungry. How glad I am that you will not be here much longer! And yet—'

'How do you know, Etta? Was it Harry Fenn that told you? Will they give me back my sword? and where is my father?'

'We know hardly anything; for though of course we are not in this horrid hole, yet we are as much prisoners as you are, my poor Carlo; and if it were not for Harry Fenn we should have had to go down to the hall amongst those rough men and beg for bread. Even Catalina dare not do that, for she cannot abide their rude jestings.'

'Never mind: when I am released I shall teach those ruffians manners and see that you are not neglected,' said Carlo, still a little jealous of the doings of this new Harry.

'But, Carlo, did they not tell you? You are to be put aboard one of the pirate ships and to show them the way somewhere; and indeed you must put a good face on the matter for fear they should handle you roughly.'

Carlo was struck dumb at this news; but at last he burst forth with—

'The rascals! What! do they think they are going to use me as a guide to some other unfortunate Spanish settlement? That they never shall. They may tear my limbs, but for such knaves—'

'Hush, hush, Carlo! What if they heard you! But Harry Fenn is to go too. He knows nothing of your father or of what has happened to him; and, alack! poor Felipa, who was so glad and happy yesterday, is now all-sorrowful again. Dear Carlo, when you are aboard try and bear their raillery and stuff your ears, and— But I dare not stay longer, Catalina is so frightened lest I should be discovered here, or for fear we should receive a visit from the Captain upstairs, and he would assuredly ask what had become of me; so good-bye, dear Carlo! Do not be rash; for, in truth, they may put you on the ship, but they cannot make you speak, and you do not know the roads of the mainland, so you can easily baffle these boors. Ah, now, I was forgetting to tell you that Felipa wanted to come with me, but Catalina would not let her. She sent you all her true love.'

So these two took leave, and Etta, drawing back the tiny door and replacing the bolts, ran lightly upstairs, having put Catalina in a great fright; for hardly had the door of the dark cupboard out of which the turret stairs descended been shut when voices were heard close to the door of the dwelling-room. The old woman was much excited as she exclaimed—

'St. Teresa save us! Etta mi! What heart-palpitations you have given me! Quick, child! lie down on the couch and hide all the cobwebs and dust which are on your petticoat.'

Etta did so, trying to conceal her smiles; and Catalina threw a lace shawl over her, Spanish fashion; so that when Captain Henry Morgan entered, followed by a gentle-looking Frenchman, only the most natural sight in the world met their eyes.

'Marry! see you, Sieur Maintenon, here is the dovecot I mentioned; but the dovelets are not so young but that they can coo. Prithee here, my English maid, and tell me anything thou canst of the mainland. Was thy merchant father wont to trade there? If so, he must often have landed at Panama, where rich stuffs are much *à la mode* and prized.'

Etta was forced to get up; but Catalina, pretending to help her, privately shook as much dirt as she could from her petticoat.

'No, Sir Captain, my father was an honest merchant who traded among the English isles, Jamaica chiefly, and took trips to England, but he never meddled with the Spanish settlements.'

'Was it so? My experience is that merchants are glad to trudge wherever they can get gold coins. But you, Señorita, you have sometimes left this island? Speak plainly, for I like not capricious or saucy maidens,' said the Frenchman in soft Spanish tones to Felipa.

'Never, Señor, except to go a visit to my uncle, the noble Don Alvarez, Governor of the Castle of St. Lawrence, which some call the Castle of Chagres because of the river of that name; and I wish heartily that I could let him know now of our distress.'

'Marry! pretty dove, do not have the doleful dumps on that score, for such a message will not be difficult to deliver,' laughed Captain Morgan; 'the little Señorita can give it to that valiant warrior her brother, for I purpose despatching four of my ships there this very evening.'

Felipa and Catalina lifted up their heads in horror, and the former burst into tears as she exclaimed, 'You will go to Chagres and attack the great Don Alvarez! That cannot be!'

'Why not? Before the whole cheese is taken one must taste a little bit of it and see if it is good. From Chagres we can easily cross the narrow neck of land, but we want good guides to traverse that marshy region. Know you any such?'

'I will send and warn my uncle,' said Felipa proudly, drying her tears; 'he is better armed than we were here, and he will receive you in a manner you will not like—that I can well foreknow.'

Captain Morgan nodded to his companion.

'So said I, pretty maid. Mark you, Maintenon, I will tell Captain Brodely to keep the ships well together; I hear from that vile caitiff Espada that the mouth of the river is dangerous, and that there are several gunboats stationed there.'

'And if it were not,' put in Felipa incautiously, 'the castle is on the top of the mountain and can never be taken. My uncle Don Alvarez will not be deceived by your tricks as was my father, and your fair promises will be laughed to scorn by him, for he will fight to the death.'

'Thank you, pretty Señorita, for your advice. I will not forget to tell my

men what kind of brave gentlemen they will have to meet; an we are worsted we must yield on honourable terms. But, doubtless, your brother will tell us more. I'faith, Maintenon, I must see that the ships are well manned and victualled: it does not do to trust any one but oneself when there is much risk in an enterprise, and, for all we know, a mortal crisis and some mangling of Christian bones.'

So saying, the Captain moved away, and smiled as he noticed old Catalina in her corner busily muttering her usual imprecations against him. When not thwarted Henry Morgan was an agreeable man with much sense of humour; and it was partly this that had enabled him to keep his heterogeneous horde together, though quarrels were frequent enough, and led, as he said, to bangs and knocks sufficient to harden any softer fists.

There was much indignation and many exclamations of despair from the girls and their old nurse when they were once more alone, which were only calmed when Felipa indignantly remarked:

'My uncle Don Alvarez will never be conquered by such people, and dear Carlo will see him and tell him, when he has routed these knaves, to come to our help. If only I could see my brother!'

But it was not thought prudent to descend again after the narrow escape Etta had had, for they could not tell at what hour Carlo might be released.

'May the good God take care of my dear boy!' sighed poor Catalina, much depressed. She was feeling that her responsibilities were almost too great, and she heartily wished the Marquis would come back and take care of his children. Happily, till now Felipa had not fretted too much, though the poor girl was beginning to show signs of fatigue and anxiety. She was far more delicate than sturdy English Etta, whose spirits soon reasserted themselves and made her inclined to forget the dangers that still existed.

In the meanwhile Carlo waited impatiently in his cell for the time when he should hear the steps of a pirate coming to release him; for now, having thought the question out, he had come to the conclusion that he had best take the matter quietly. Not being a prisoner on parole, he was free to escape, and perhaps he should soon find some opportunity of doing so. Once free, he believed that the faithful Andreas could hide him in the woods till such time as peace was restored. He had leisure now to make many reflections as to the future; but at last he heard footsteps in the passage outside. His heart beat fast, though he tried to appear cool. He could not guess the time of day, but he felt sure it was not far off sunset, when at last his door was hastily opened and a man told him roughly to get up and follow him. Carlo did so. He was a little stiff, and almost blinded by the light; but it seemed like a new life to be breathing once more the fresh air, and to feel the warm glow of the sunshine through his chilled veins. At the end of the passage he found several other men awaiting him; but they did not pinion him

as before—an insult Carlo would have found it difficult to forgive.

'Quick, young Señor, this way; we have no time to waste. We want no idle vermin among our crew.'

It was fortunate for Carlo that Etta had prepared him for this new bondage, or he might have refused to follow the buccaneers out of Santa Teresa. As it was, however, he would not obey quite silently or without protest.

'Where are you conducting me?' he asked, 'I demand to be taken to my father.'

'Very likely, sirrah; but those are not our orders. Marry! it's best to ask no questions when one is Captain Morgan's prisoner, else some inquisitive knaves have learnt what it means "to swing like a skipper."'

Carlo thought this advice wise, and followed it.

Presently he saw that the men were joined by a fellow he knew well, Espada, who had evidently turned traitor. Carlo had seen him last at the Platform, and he was horrified to hear him say he was prepared to guide the men by a narrow path which led down the face of the steep cliff, and which they could not have found unassisted. It was by no means a pleasant descent, but it saved a few miles of walking, and, once at the bottom, they found a canoe awaiting them. With a heavy heart Carlo saw the massive walls of Santa Teresa disappearing. After a short row the boat he was in was moored alongside one of the pirate ships stationed just outside the bay, and he was bidden to scramble up a very rude rope ladder on to the deck of the ship, which, he found, was called 'The Falcon.'

'Is Captain Brodely on board?' asked the escort, 'for here is the son of that craven-hearted Governor. By my faith! a valuable cargo, I take it; for he's to serve as guide, and to be hostage for the Marquis's good conduct in the future. Now then, young sir, on with you this way. And best budge quickly; for there's to be no tricks here, remember, or it will be the worse for you.'

Poor Carlo! his Spanish pride inwardly rebelled; but, true to his resolution, he replied nothing to all these taunts. The Captain was too busy to attend to him, so he was presently locked up in a small cabin where the spirits stolen from Santa Teresa were stored; still he could see the dancing waves through the tiny port-hole, and, compared to the dungeon he had just left, this place was indeed like a palace, though the only pieces of furniture were barrels of wine and spirit-kegs, in which the Dutch carried on a brisk trade, and which therefore received the name of Hollands.

When darkness fell over the beautiful shore the noise on board in no way diminished, and such a shouting and holloaing was heard that it was easy to see the pirates were in high spirits, and thought themselves invincible and able to do as they liked.

After a time Carlo fell asleep, and was awakened only by feeling himself gently shaken. He started up, and saw by the help of the moonlight the kind face of Harry Fenn bending over him.

'You here! Thank God!' exclaimed Carlo. 'At all events these wretches will not murder me without some one knowing of it and reporting the crime!'

Harry laughed at Carlo's somewhat moody ideas.

'Oh, Señor, in truth you are safe enough now we have started, and I am bidden to ask you to come and sup in the Captain's own cabin. He is under strict orders to treat you well when once we are out at sea. And, look you, Señor: these men have not been told that you can understand English, so prithee keep the secret. They all come from the bigger island, and were not at Santa Teresa. Later on we may find it convenient to understand each other in English whispers. At present, remember, I only know very few Spanish words.'

Carlo nodded, and with new hope followed the English boy into the Captain's cabin.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ESCAPE.

Captain Morgan had done wisely in thinking that it was quite necessary for him to have some base of operations on the mainland before crossing the narrow neck of land which separated him from the coveted prize, the city of Panama. It was for this reason that the expedition under Captain Brodely was sent out, whilst he detained the rest of his ships at safe anchor at St. Catherine, and also kept his men in good temper by letting them do as they pleased and ransack the two fair Spanish islands of this name.

Captain Brodely was a daring seaman, who had seen before now the inside of Spanish prisons, and knew the ground round about Panama pretty accurately; but the Castle of Chagres was on the opposite side of the isthmus, and the river Chagres, which flowed at the foot of the hill on which stood the castle, was difficult to navigate, and great care would therefore be needed to steer the ships into safe anchorage. The Captain had been told that the Marquis's son knew well the castle and its surroundings; but when Harry Fenn entered his cabin accompanied by Carlo, the sturdy rover looked with scorn on the slight stripling whom Captain Morgan had sent him for guide. As hostage he might be all very well,

but for aught else the Englishman preferred trusting his own good sense to the doubtful information abstracted from an unwilling prisoner whose Spanish blood prevented him, in the eyes of Captain Brodely at least, from having any regard for truth.

Carlo found himself, therefore, treated with silent contempt rather than with severity by his new jailor, and as the 'Falcon' bounded over the water he could not help feeling happier than in his dungeon, wondering much how it was that he had appreciated liberty so little until now.

After the first interview he received no special orders, nor was he expected to do anything; so, wishing to be alone, he retired for the night under a bale of goods stolen from one of the fortresses in St. Catherine. Harry Fenn, however, soon joined him, and the two spent the rest of the night by no means unpleasantly under this shelter, which had the merit of being out of the way of the crew. The next morning land was dimly in sight, and they expected to strike it in the afternoon; so before this time the Captain had several confabulations with his men. They knew that their ships were certain to be seen, so that it was hopeless to attempt to creep up in the dark unperceived, as their own safety required them to use the daylight.

Chagres, as has been said, was built on a high hill close to the river; it was surrounded by strong palisades buttressed with earth, and a ditch thirty feet deep defended its near approach. It had but one entry, and that reached by a drawbridge over the said ditch. Four bastions looked landward and two seaward. On the north side ran the river, and on the south the hill was too steep for any invader to climb. At the foot of the mountain was another fort with eight guns commanding the river, and two other batteries were placed a little lower down. This, then, was the well-fortified place which the pirates were now determined to possess themselves of; and no wonder that Carlo spoke rather scornfully to Harry of the expedition as an impossible and rash dream.

'My uncle, Don Alvarez, is as wise and brave a man as can be found in all the dominions of the King of Spain,' he whispered to his companion, when the two were left alone, unnoticed by the excited sailors.

'I have seen enough of these men, Señorito, to make me disbelieve in nothing. They will leap down headlong into danger, and get up unhurt. But I see they are not making straight for the mouth of the river; doubtless we shall land a little way off, so as to avoid the fire from the fort.'

'If I could but warn my uncle!' said Carlo earnestly. 'Look you, Master Harry Fenn, I will give you a handsome reward if--'

Harry tossed back his fair hair even as a young colt who is galloping before the wind, as he answered:

'You forget, Señor, that though I may be among thieves, yet I am an honest

Englishman, and I take no reward for doing what I can. I am no knave that gripes after a reward.'

Carlo saw that he had insulted the boy who had saved his life, and with his usual impetuous generosity he apologised fully.

'Indeed, indeed, I meant no harm. I am sorely troubled; but you at least will forgive me. This luckless affair has made me foolish.'

Harry was easily pacified, and he himself at once suggested a plan by which Carlo might accomplish his purpose.

'Look now, Señor Carlo: when our ships come to anchor, they will put more than half the men ashore in order to carry the castle by assault, and they will not trouble themselves much about us, I see. If we could escape then, and go faster than the attacking party, we might do some good in warning Don Alvarez.'

'Yes, that is indeed a first-rate idea, and that also reminds me that, close by the landing at the foot of the castle, there is a small steep staircase cut out of the solid rock. I have often climbed up by it for quickness when I have been staying with my uncle and was late for supper. If we could somehow get there, trust me to distance them. What think you of this possibility?'

Harry's smile showed that he appreciated the idea, so they were soon deep in ways and means; for they could not help entering into the spirit of the attack, now that they were planning a counter-expedition of their own. Very soon there was more than enough excitement, however. Their ships had been discovered, and the pirates seeing the enemy's guns begin to play upon them, Captain Brodely clearly understood it was useless attempting to enter the river, so the ships bore down on a small port about three miles from Chagres, and when the sun went down they lay at anchor. There was to be no rest for any one that night. All was bustle and confusion, some of the crew declaring they would land, some that they would find it easy to run the gauntlet of the forts; and among all this discord the Captain had more than enough to do to keep the peace, and some show of authority.

'Now, Señor, here's our time,' said Harry, with eagerness, for some of his fresh ardour and adventurous spirit was returning now that he could lawfully indulge it. 'We can take a small boat from our masters; or if not, perhaps we can swim to shore from here and walk along the coast, if that is possible in the darkness.'

'Yes, for the tide is low; but the moon will soon be up, and then trust me for the rest. But how shall we baffle the men?'

'The men are too busy to notice us. I can let myself down by a rope. Or wait—I will hold the rope for you, and when you are in the boat, which is moored below, I will let myself down. But cut the rope as soon as you are in, for I can swim out to you.'

'But the sharks—are you not afraid of them?' asked Carlo, who knew that these dreaded enemies had always to be taken into account.

'They are less likely to be about at this time,' said Harry, cheerfully; 'but of course I must chance them. "Nothing venture, nothing have," is an English proverb which the buccaneers certainly act upon.'

In truth, Harry's plan was very cleverly thought out. The pirates, aware that no enemy would dare to come and attack them after dark, had let down their small boats and canoes, and were busily preparing everything for an early start.

Carlo now nimbly scrambled down, helped by Harry's steady hand, and safely descended into a canoe which was tied to the ship, and which was ordinarily used for running up narrow creeks in the islands. Then he crouched down and waited breathlessly for Harry to follow; but, to his horror, he suddenly heard voices above, and distinctly caught Harry's words, evidently meant for him to hear—

'I shall stay here as long as I choose: don't wait for me. Off with you: your business brooks no delay.'

A gruff voice answered:

'Marry! but you'll come with me too, young Pug-robin; the Captain says there's a good deal to do in stowing away the provision for to-morrow, and idle hands are not wanted here. Those that won't work can filch no booty.'

Then came the sound of retreating footsteps, and Carlo knew that all was up as far as Harry was concerned; so, cutting the rope, and not caring much whether he were discovered or not, so desperate had he become, he took the oars, and as silently as possible he shot off into the darkness, going, as far as he was able to judge, straight for the shore.

No one, however, seemed to have discovered his escape, for he heard no hue and cry raised, nor sound of pursuers; and this fact, after a time, raised his spirits. Happily, his expeditions with Andreas had made him a skilful oarsman, and when the moon rose he was able to see that he had got well forward and was out of sight of the pirates, having turned round a projecting cliff, and being now well in sight of the river's mouth.

If only Harry had been with him Carlo would have thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. He was so sure that, once in Chagres Castle, he should be safe and free, that he was all eagerness to push on.

'I shall save my uncle, and be ready to fight for him,' thought he. 'Ah, if only my father had not been so deluded, perhaps Chagres would not now have to defend itself against this fierce horde.'

With these thoughts mingled ideas of the praise he should receive, and also sad remembrances of the desolation of his own home, and of the terrible story which he should have to tell his uncle; but he had immense faith in Don

Alvarez, and longed for his advice and kind sympathy. As he neared the shore he saw that great excitement prevailed there, the authorities fancying he was a pirate ambassador come to parley; for the arrival of the ships was known, and a strict look-out was kept. A boat full of soldiers was immediately dispatched, and was soon alongside of him; and the astonishment was great when the men saw, on close inspection, that the boat contained only a young fellow rowing himself to shore. At last Carlo, by dint of showing he had nothing with him but food, and that he was in reality only the son of Don Estevan del Campo, was allowed to land. Then, fearful of some ruse, the soldiers surrounded him, and took him before the officer who was now on guard at the lower fort. Fortunately, this latter had once seen Carlo, and then all were intensely eager to hear the news. After hastily telling the bare facts, Carlo hastened up the rocky stairs, accompanied by a soldier, who took the precaution of bringing a safe-conduct, signed by the superior officer, for the edification of the porter; otherwise there might have been some difficulty in entering the castle, so watchful and so suspicious had every one become on hearing of the approach of the dreaded pirates; for the name of Henry Morgan was sufficient to cause almost a panic in a Spanish garrison.

The surprise and pleasure of Don Alvarez and his gentle wife, Doña Elena, can easily be imagined when they saw their nephew, and heard of his marvellous escape from the pirates' ship; but the outline only of the events which had taken place at St. Catherine could be now discussed, Don Alvarez being so busy and eager to do everything in his power to repulse the enemy.

'From what you say, Carlo,' said Don Alvarez, 'the buccaneers cannot be here till the afternoon, for the roads hither from the bay are almost impassable since the rain. That will give us some few hours before sunset to rout them. I doubt much if there will be any left. For my part, I call it a most impudent assault; but I shall use every precaution, and not fall into the error of my poor brother-in-law; for, in truth, to parley with such fellows is to disgrace the Spanish flag.'

Carlo retired to rest, kindly tended by his aunt, who rubbed sweet ointments into his blistered hands and provided him with clean linen and a new doublet of sturdy buff; for, in truth, Carlo was hardly recognisable after all he had gone through, and his clothes were much torn and soiled.

'God has indeed taken care of you, my brave Carlo; you have the true Alvarez blood in your veins. Your uncle will not forget your brave conduct; and directly we are delivered from these men, he will go over to St. Catherine with sufficient force to restore order and to give back the island to its proper masters. My heart grieves sore for my poor little Felipa.'

'They will indeed be glad to see him, and you too, Aunt Elena; but Felipa and the English Etta have been civilly treated. Only, it seems to me that these pirates think that so long as they have enough to eat it does not matter if others

starve. If it had not been for Harry Fenn—him I told you of—the girls would have fared badly enough. But I am as sleepy as a porpoise. Do not forget to wake me early, and you will see how I will fight these jailors of mine, and pay them back their cudgelling with interest.’

CHAPTER XIV. DEFENCE TILL DEATH.

It was two o’clock before the look-out from the castle discerned the approach of the pirates, and then all was activity. Carlo, having no fears, and being, besides, well rested and fed, was all eagerness for the first encounter. But Doña Elena had asked him to accompany her into the church built within the palisade; and there, kneeling down, both begged for a blessing on the Spanish arms. Carlo thought too of his own desolate home, and this rather calmed his spirits. He wondered much what had become of Harry Fenn, and whether he had been left behind or forced to march to the attack. On the face of it, nothing could have been more foolhardy than this expedition; and so thought the pirates themselves as they at last, after a dreadful journey through mire and mud, came in sight of the strongly fortified castle. Many a stout heart wished at that moment that the owner thereof had not been quite so clamorous in insisting on being chosen as one of the storming party; but no one dared to put these thoughts into words, for to turn tail now and receive the gibes and scorn of those they had left behind was not to be thought of for a moment. They were now in an open space at the foot of Chagres. The enemy at once opened fire upon them with more or less effect, and to pause at that moment was only to get into greater danger, so, without waiting for rest, they daringly began to ascend the hill in order, if possible, to get close up to the walls. But though there was no lack of pluck, the danger was too great, the task impossible; and so they reluctantly beat a retreat, followed by shouts of joy and derision from the walls of the castle, and many uncomplimentary titles, ‘English dogs’ and ‘Enemies of God and our King’ being the mildest.

Within the castle precincts, Don Alvarez was here, there, and everywhere; and though Carlo was not allowed to go into the most dangerous places for fear of some stray shot or arrow, he was, however, ready for every opening which promised a source of honour. He loaded muskets, carried ammunition, dashed water over the heated gun-barrels, and made himself very useful.

'They are repulsed!' rang through the castle as the men so long on watch now bethought themselves of their supper; and the women, coming out of the church, where they had been placed for safety, were soon busy serving the heroes. Carlo's bright eyes were sparkling with eagerness; he felt that he was serving under a brave, honourable man who would die rather than give in, and that he was wiping out his own disgrace.

But after sunset it appeared evident that the dauntless spirits of the buccaneers were not yet crushed, and that they meant to try again. The small army advanced in a compact square, the foremost line carrying fire-balls to throw at the palisades. Up they dashed, heedless of shots and arrows, which had fatal effect in thinning the ranks; but at first the assailants were quite impotent to effect any harm. The walls were well manned, and it was difficult to get near enough to throw in the fire-balls.

Again there was a thought of retreat, when a curious accident caused the fight to be no longer advantageous only on one side. One of the pirates was wounded with an arrow, which, striking him in the back, pierced his body to the other side. With Spartan fortitude the man pulled it out, and, taking a little cotton, he wound it round the arrow, and, putting it in his musket, shot it back into the castle. This caused one of the smaller houses within the precincts to catch fire, which, being thatched with palm-leaves, easily ignited; and so eager was the fight that this was not at once perceived, till suddenly the flame shot upwards, sending a dull, lurid glow over the combatants.

Unfortunately, the house was not far from the powder-magazine, and a smoking leaf was carried by the night wind towards this spot. In a few moments more both the besieged and besiegers paused in their work, for with a noise of terrific explosion the powder-magazine blew up, scattering destruction within the walls, and, what was even worse, shattering a large portion of the bank which protected the palisade.

At this moment Carlo, who had been engaged in reloading a number of muskets, saw a sight which made him turn sick with fear. The fire was gaining ground; the flames, like hungry furies, appeared to leap from stake to stake of the strong palisade, and, further loosening the earth round the breaches made by the explosion, allowed great masses of earth to topple over into the ditch.

'Put out the fire! fetch water! hoist the bucket from the well!' shouted Don Alvarez, frantically rushing from post to post. 'Keep up your spirits, my men; don't fall back; hurl the first pirate who scales the ditch headlong down the cliff!'

These and many like orders were passed on; but from below came a desperate cheer from the pirates, who saw how the fire had done the hardest part of the work for them, and with renewed courage dashed once more forward.

It was, indeed, a terrible sight; the fire that raged round the palisade was awful in its effects. The Spanish soldiers on one side struggled bravely to stand to their posts; while the pirates, still more determined, crawled along over the scorching earth, or literally ran the gauntlet of the fire, in order to pass into the enclosure; and a shout of triumph here and there told plainly where they had succeeded.

On his side, Don Alvarez worked wonders. He never flinched from his duty, and seemed not to notice any personal danger; but when daylight came the situation looked most depressing. Yet nothing could make him give the order to forsake the various posts where the soldiers were stationed.

Carlo saw now that most likely the pirates would conquer, and he could have cried with shame and vexation. What should he say after all his boasting? But one look at his uncle's stern, noble face made him toil on at his work without pausing to think, till at last he was aware of an unusual disturbance on the opposite side of the castle, a deafening shout, and a furious firing. At this moment Don Alvarez reappeared at his side.

'Carlo, here boy, quick: there is not a moment to spare. Take this note, climb down by the rock stairs, and deliver it safely to Don Meliros, the officer at the entrance fort—him you saw yesterday. If we are undone, don't let him waste any more precious lives. It is my duty to hold out till death, but his to save his garrison. Do you hear, boy? And, if you see him again, bid good-bye to your father. Tell him—nay, nothing more. But listen, Carlo: there is much danger in carrying this message, my boy; but do it fearlessly: it may prevent greater misfortunes for thee at least.'

Carlo did not hesitate a moment.

'Trust me, uncle: I will be as quick as possible, and come back to your side. Where shall I find you?'

'In the Corps du Garde, boy. Good heavens! the men on the north are giving way; that is our only strong point. Quick, boy: don't linger a moment!'

Don Alvarez hurried away, and Carlo ran straight for the church, which still remained untouched by the fire, and where the women and children were huddled together repeating a Litany aloud, not at all realising how great was their danger. Carlo knew that behind the church there was a piece of wall which he could scale, and which was not yet guarded by the pirates, all of whom were now concentrating their forces on the opposite side. From this spot Carlo could climb round the parapet, and reach the rocky stairs with his precious missive.

Being over-eager, however, Carlo found his task more difficult than he had expected; in his case haste made waste, for twice he fell back, and twice, being undaunted, he tried again. He heard a deafening shout behind him; alas! Carlo knew it was not the Spanish war-cry, and at last, in desperation, he made a final

effort to lower himself to a ledge below without losing his balance, which would have caused him to be hurled down the face of the cliff; then, clinging like a goat, he crept along till he reached the stairs.

At this moment, when, feeling that he had already wasted much precious time, he was about to hurry down, a familiar voice close behind called him by name.

'Señor Carlo, wait a moment. How I have looked for you!' And then Harry Fenn, with greater skill than Carlo deemed possible, scrambled down from a point above him, and having joined him whispered anxiously, seizing him by the arm—

'Now, Señor, don't waste a moment: it is your only chance of safety. They know you have been fighting, and the castle and all the ammunition are now in the hands of the pirates.'

Carlo said nothing till both had reached the bottom; then, showing Harry his letter, he said his uncle had bade him deliver it. Before reaching the fort, however, they both saw that any message was now useless, for the Spaniards were already scrambling for the boats in order to fly up the river into the interior.

'Then I must return to my uncle, Harry,' said Carlo. 'I promised to go to the Corps du Garde after I had given up my letter; but do not wait for me, for now is your chance of escape.'

'He does not want you now, Señor Carlo: he died at his post as a brave soldier should. I will tell you about it presently, for now we have not a moment to waste: if you are found, or indeed if I am found helping you, we shall both be shot without more ado, for the men are in wild excitement.'

Carlo was speechless. The whole events of the last twelve hours seemed too terrible to believe, and he followed Harry in total silence. The latter, having now reached the bank of the river, was looking eagerly about for a boat.

'Where can we go if you find a boat?' said Carlo at last very sadly. 'It would be better for me to stay and die with my uncle.'

'No; indeed, I am sure he meant you to be saved by his sending you down here; he must have known when he did so that all was lost, and the letter to the officer was an excuse to induce you to leave him.'

'But my Aunt Elena—what will become of her? Alack! Heaven is altogether against us!'

'Do not distress yourself about her: she is of too great importance to come to any harm; they will make her pay a heavy ransom—and, anyhow, they will treat her well till Captain Morgan comes. Look, Señor, there is a small boat with one Indian in it. Have you any gold about you? We might perhaps bribe him.'

But Carlo was penniless; only, being able to make himself understood, he began trying to strike a bargain for the canoe, which appeared now their only chance of safety.

The fort was quite evacuated, and so terrified were the Spaniards now escaping up the river, that, in spite of signals from Carlo, not one would return. So, after some delay, during which Harry became every minute more impatient, knowing how great the danger was, the boys squeezed themselves into the small canoe, and, crouching down, bade the Indian paddle out to sea.

For a long time Carlo lay there too much distressed to speak; but happily Harry had all his senses about him, and had seized a pair of small oars left behind by the fugitives. Very soon he noticed that they had drifted too near the pirate ships, and that they were discovered, for Harry's keen eyes at once noticed a slight stir on board.

'Señor Carlo, get up and row: we must make the best of our way towards St. Catherine, if we cannot get up greater speed than this we may be lost.' And Carlo, thinking of his father and sister and his home, at last roused himself and rowed with a will.

'But what is the use of our getting back to St. Catherine?' he said; 'Captain Morgan will not be more lenient to me than his men would have been.'

'He will come off at once on hearing of this victory, I am sure, for he will want his share of the spoil. My hope is that we may escape him in that way.'

'But he will never forgive you for helping me,' said poor Carlo, feeling that he had brought misfortune on the noble English boy, who cared as much as he did himself for freedom.

'That is of no consequence—I can risk that; indeed, if he would, he would never dare forgive me now; his men would not let him. Ah, Señor, what is the matter? The sun is too powerful; and indeed you have gone through enough to make you feel ill.'

'Nay, I will not give way,' said Carlo; but he felt so sick and giddy, that in a few moments he had to give up his oar and lie down in the boat; whilst Harry, seeing now that all danger from the pirate boats was over, intimated to the Indian that they must make the best of their way to St. Catherine.

Happily the Indian had some bananas and oranges on board which he had been bringing down to the fort for sale, when the general exodus of the Spaniards had prevented him landing. This was the only food they had to depend upon, and the distance was great for such a small craft. But necessity knows no impossibility, and now Harry felt, for the moment at least, that he was really free; though he would, on landing, probably fall again into the hands of his enemies; and if so, then he knew what he must expect—a death which would most likely be accompanied by torture.

'Mr. Aylett would say I had done well,' was his consolation, and Etta Allison would, perhaps, through his means, also be able to get her freedom. So, humming one of the old hymns he had sung as a choir-boy at home, he took courage and

determined to reach St. Catherine or die in the attempt. 'Anyhow, Señor Carlo will be no worse off in dying of hunger than in dying through torture. They would have been sure to imagine he knew where Don Alvarez hid his treasure. I am free, free, and the air seems fresher, and the sea smells sweeter; so, God helping me, I will save him and myself.'

Whilst these events were taking place at Chagres the inhabitants of Santa Teresa were by no means happy. Deprived of even the slight protection of Harry Fenn, the girls and Catalina found themselves in no enviable position. After the departure of the expedition, Captain Morgan determined to settle as far as possible the affairs of the island, so that directly he should hear of the success or failure of the enterprise against Chagres Castle he should be free to go about other business. If the attack failed he must again unite his fleet—for the greater number of ships were in the bay—and take counsel with his chief officers; but if it succeeded, then all hands and all heads would be needed for the attack on Panama, which was, in truth, the height of their ambition. For these reasons Captain Morgan still made Santa Teresa his headquarters, but was full of occupation elsewhere; and, to make the poor Don Estevan del Campo's task harder, he required his daily attendance upon him. The Captain was bent on demolishing all the strong castles of St. Catherine, meaning to leave only Santa Teresa standing for his own future use. He thus made Don Estevan assist at this wholesale destruction, treating him outwardly with consideration, but implying that the Spaniard was himself glad to help in the destruction of the forts it had been his duty to look after. The Marquis suffered much more torment than if he had died as a soldier, and every day he became more gloomy, more miserable, and so curious in his behaviour that many said he must be losing his mind, and shunned him accordingly. He was, in fact, tormented with terrible regrets, and these were ten-fold increased when he heard that his son had been sent with the expedition against his brother-in-law. To make things worse, Captain Morgan had forbidden the Marquis to enter Santa Teresa, saying that it would be too severe a tax on the loyalty of the Indians and the negroes, who, for convenience' sake, were kept in their old places; but in truth it was to make the Marquis feel he was in reality now simply a prisoner and nothing more. So he lodged at St. Jerome, and was narrowly watched, for fear he should take it into his head to escape; and this did not add to his comfort or his peace of mind.

Felipa was thus left to the care of old Catalina, and Captain Morgan troubled himself very little about them, meaning in the near future to make the Marquis ransom his own child from supposed captivity.

Though glad enough to be left alone, the trio were yet much puzzled as to how they were to get enough daily food. Andreas no longer came to the balcony in answer to Etta's soft whistling, so they concluded that he must have either

escaped or been killed. The guards placed below were all rough men of various nationalities whom Catalina dared not ask for food; and she and her charges began to understand that they were as much prisoners as if they had been in the dungeons below. Catalina had been able to secrete a small quantity of Indian corn and to bake some cakes with it; but now this was finished, what was to be done?

One day, when all the food was gone, Etta, creeping out into the passage once more to see if Andreas would come or answer her whistling, heard the loud tones of Captain Morgan giving some order. Forgetting Catalina's strict injunctions not to go below, forgetting everything but that Felipa was crying from hunger, and that she herself was only restrained by her English pride from doing the same, she ran down as quickly as she could to the hall where some twenty men were tramping about bringing in the evening meal, and Captain Morgan was listening to a messenger who had just entered.

Etta was quite reckless now, even though the men raised a shout at her appearance, crying out, 'Here comes the little English wench,' and one said: 'Ay, but she's got bonnie golden hair and looks ready for a gambol.' But the girl took no heed, and, running up to Captain Morgan, insisted this time on being heard.

'Captain Morgan, prithee, will you let us starve up there? We are all so very, very hungry! It is cruel of you; and meseems it is very unlike an Englishman to starve his prisoners.'

The Captain received this burst of eloquence with loud laughter; and, turning to the messenger, said:

'Marry! good Smith, do you hear the maid? She says it is not right that any one should starve in this place; and, by my faith, when you bring me such good news I think she is right. We will give a feast to-day to every soul in the castle. But in truth, bold maid, I bade that lame fellow see after your provender, and now, methinks, he has gone to Chagres and forgotten all about you. Here, Mings, send up a royal feast to the fair ladies, and a few bottles of good wine besides to drink our health in. And mind you, little cinder witch, to tell your Spanish friends that it is all in honour of the taking of Chagres. By the way, Smith, what has become of my godson and of the young Spaniard?'

Etta stood speechless as she heard the terrible news. Where was Carlo, and what would he do?

'By my troth, Captain, I know only that neither of them has been seen since the taking of the castle; so either they were killed in the skirmish or they have hidden themselves somewhere.'

Captain Morgan frowned.

'Brodely will have to answer for the safety of both lads. If they have escaped we shall soon catch them, and then— And how many men did we lose? I would

such valiant fellows were cudgel-proof.

'A hundred bodies were counted before I left; and as to the wounded, that will add another seventy; but we have taken much rich stuff, and ammunition enough to serve for our next expedition, not to mention Don Alvarez's lady, whose ransom will be a fortune.'

'That will be my affair,' said the Captain grandly. 'Will they send the prisoners here at once?'

Etta waited to hear no more; but though her expedition had procured them a dinner such as they had not enjoyed for a long time, yet they could not help shedding many tears over it. Their grand hopes as to Don Alvarez were crushed; and, worse still, what had become of Carlo? Not a ray of hope seemed now left to them.

CHAPTER XV. IN THE WOODS.

But as when the night is darkest the dawn is near at hand, so the sorrowful prisoners were not left altogether without comfort for long, even though this comfort was in itself a sad one. One evening, three days after Etta had heard the news in the hall, Felipa lay wearily on the couch beside the open window, vainly longing to get out and breathe the pure air in what had once been her lovely garden, but which was now sadly trampled over.

The poor girl looked much changed, and it was all Catalina and Etta could do to keep her from spending most of her time in weeping silently. She would not touch her guitar, and seemed to be fretting her life away. These three days had also made a great difference in her appearance. She kept constantly asking where Carlo was, what could have become of him; and patient Etta, with ready invention, tried to find answers for her friend which might calm her for a little while. As to Catalina, she could only moan and bewail their evil fortune, and wish every bad thing she could imagine to overtake the pirates.

'If I could but go out,' sighed Felipa, 'I could find Carlo. I am sure he must be hidden away in the forest. But come quickly, Etta: see, who is coming in; some of the soldiers? Yes, yes; they are Spanish soldiers, and they are certainly coming to save us.'

'Hush, dear Felipa; don't you see that they are themselves guarded? no,

these must be the prisoners from Chagres, and—oh, yes—here are some women and— Surely—yes, it is Doña Elena!

Felipa clapped her hands for joy, causing the lady to look up; and then the sight of her aunt's sad face made the girl suddenly draw back. In truth it was Doña Elena; but how changed she was! The face that looked out from beneath her black veil was hardly recognisable.

In spite of this, Felipa was all excitement to know if her aunt would be allowed to come up to see them. Was she going to be left here, or what?

These questions were soon answered, for in a few minutes Doña Elena was escorted to the sitting-room, and Felipa was soon sobbing on the motherly breast of her aunt, who, sad as she was herself, was shocked at the change in her little niece, whom she had last seen a merry, blooming girl running races with Etta and Carlo down the lovely green slopes of the tropical garden.

'My poor darling! Ah, what sad troubles we have all been through! I can hardly believe it even now; but my dear husband died like a brave soldier. He was so noble, so true! Alas that such as he should be sacrificed! But as to our poor Carlo, I cannot find out what has become of him, though I have asked every one I came near. That terrible Captain has named such a price for my ransom that I must write to Spain for the money. My poor brother! When last did you see your father, Felipa? He has not been here, I am told; but they say he is at St. Jerome.'

'You will stay with us, will you not, dear Aunt Elena? At least they will leave us this one comfort of being together. But where is Carlo? If only we could find out, I should be less unhappy. It is quite true that our father has not come here for days.'

Doña Elena now told the party all she knew of Carlo and of his brave escape from the pirate boats in order to give his uncle warning. So that even though their talk was not cheerful the presence of the elder lady was a great comfort to the girls, and also to Catalina, who, good and faithful as she was, could not think out many difficult problems.

That evening they had a last visit from Captain Morgan. He had finished his work of destruction, or had seen it well in train, and was now going off in great haste to Chagres to see for himself the treasures found there.

'Now, Madam,' he said in Spanish to Doña Elena, 'you will stay here and await my return. I have named the sum that will give you your liberty, but till every piece of eight is paid you must consider yourself a prisoner. I am taking your brother Don Estevan del Campo and many of the people here away with me—for change of air,' he added, laughing, 'but he too will get his liberty when his ransom has been paid. As for his son, I hear now he escaped as no gentleman ought to do, and so—'

'Carlo never gave his word,' said Etta, indignantly; 'he told us he felt free to escape if he could.'

'Well, well, you are over-bold, mistress, and it cannot be hunger now that forces you to plain-speaking. Prithee, courageous elf, have they brought you enough to eat since your foraging expedition?'

Etta proudly muttered, 'Yes, Sir Captain, I was but defending the absent.' And evidently Captain Morgan admired her spirit, for he laughed all the more, as if she had said something very witty.

'Marry, that may be; but mark you, if you know where the boy is hiding, tell him that every avenue of the castle will be watched during my absence, and none will enter or go forth from this island without the knowledge of my trusty men. My boy, young Harry Fenn, has disappeared, and yet I treated the lad as kindly as if he had been my own son; and, in faith, when they are found they will be taught to make less free use of their young legs. I beg to take my leave of you, ladies, and I have left orders for a good supply of food to be brought; but it were best to keep indoors, as I cannot answer for accidents. Some of my men are but foolish rangers, and know nothing of good manners beyond such as Dame Nature taught 'em.'

'But prithee, Sir Captain, let me say good-bye to my father,' cried Felipa; and Doña Elena joined in the petition, adding rather bitterly—

'My poor brother will long ago have found how wrong he was to trust you, bold Captain, and if you are taking him prisoner, at least let him bid farewell to his sister and his child.'

The Captain had no time, however, to waste on farewells; he declared this boon was impossible to grant, as the Marquis had already been rowed out to the ship; but he assured the ladies that he hoped soon to be back, and that then they should hear great news. With this he went away as hastily as he had come, and the only comfort that could be extracted from this visit was the pleasure of seeing the Captain hurry forth from the great gate of Santa Teresa.

Catalina's muttered farewell did not seem like blessings; but, though the chief was gone, there were yet many jailors left behind. The guards were doubled without, although so few were now left within the walls, every man that could be spared having been taken off to join the great and long-planned expedition to Panama. The Captain had considered that a score of men would be well able to guard two women and two girls. He was, however, more vexed than he cared to show at the disappearance of Carlo and Harry, and meant to make Captain Brodely pay dearly for his carelessness; even such a powerful man as the great buccaneer was not without his share of troubles, for it was only by keeping his men constantly employed in plunder or adventure that he could prevent mutiny and discontent.

The sitting-room and the other rooms on the same floor were left to the ladies, the prisoners having been all taken elsewhere; so that Etta, utterly tired of the confinement of the two rooms, often crept out to the window above the balcony, where she could catch a sight of the bay, and from whence she saw the departure of the fleet. Every time she went she softly whistled the Indian notes, especially just before sundown, hoping to see Andreas.

To-day, just as the last sound died away among the great rose bushes, Etta fancied she heard a very faint echo of her last note. She paused, straining her ears, then repeated the air again. There was the same echo. Surely it was, it must be, Andreas! She determined to return after sunset, but till then she would not mention her ideas, for fear of having been mistaken.

Catalina was happier now that she was allowed the wherewithal to cook her meals, and she was never weary of trying to concoct some new dish out of the ordinary fare provided, in order to tempt poor Felipa, whose appetite was failing, though she had revived much since her aunt's arrival.

Etta had been right. Soon after darkness had fallen, suddenly, on the lovely landscape, she heard the faint rustle of leaves below, and Andreas crept on to the balcony, looking somewhat like a brown snake.

'Señorita, Heaven be praised that you have come! I wanted to tell you the news. The noble Señor Carlo is here in St. Catherine—he and the young Englishman who came with the pirates.'

Etta hardly stifled a cry of joy.

'Where are they? Quick, tell me, Andreas! But do they know the castle is watched, and that they will be taken if they are found?'

'Yes, yes, but the Señor Carlo cannot come—in fact he is ill, very ill, Señorita; he has the fever. But we will cure him; the white man does not know the medicines the Indians use for the fever—these never fail.'

'But how did they come here?'

'I know not much of the story, for the English Señor cannot talk much Spanish, but they came by night; there was an Indian with them, or they would have been seen, but the Indians can see in the dark.'

'How glad I am, dear Andreas! Do you want food, and where have you been all this time? I have been here so often hoping you would come.'

'The English captain sent me to fetch horses and cattle. He watched me so that I could not come; but now they forget to keep watch. I will come again to-morrow, Señorita, at sunset. If the noble Señor Carlo gets better quickly, well; if not, then he must come into the castle.'

'That would be impossible, Andreas,' said Etta; but Andreas smiled as he disappeared into the darkness.

'But what is the use?' said Felipa, when she heard the wonderful news of

her brother's return. 'Carlo will die if he has only an Indian to nurse him; and if he gets well Captain Morgan will come and take him prisoner.'

'That is not trusting the good God, Felipa darling,' said the noble Doña Elena. 'He will save our dear Carlo if he sees fit. Since my great trouble I have learnt more than ever to be resigned, and also to trust Him. Let us get a little bundle of linen ready, Catalina, to send it to Carlo by Andreas. Wherever they are, poor fellows, they will need that; and then let us hope for the best; we can do no more for them.'

The next evening Doña Elena accompanied Etta to the balcony; and when Andreas understood whom she was he explained that Carlo was better, but still very ill, and that the English Señorito was very anxious to get him removed to the castle, for they were in the thickest part of the forest, in a deserted Indian hut, and they had not enough good things for the sick Carlo.

'If you could hide him I could bring him here to-morrow, noble lady: the guards watch the wrong places, and now that the whip is not visible the dogs keep but bad guard.'

'We must chance it,' said Doña Elena, decidedly; 'my poor Carlo must not die. We are never visited, except twice a day—certainly never after sunset, for the soldiers are afraid of this half-deserted house. They fancy it is haunted.'

The two then went back to tell Catalina and Felipa the joyful news that Carlo was better and would come to them to be nursed. Then they discussed plans, and at last settled that they would put some blankets in the cupboard and only bring him out when the visits of the soldiers and the negroes were over.

'If we must soon be separated, at least let us enjoy each other's company as long as possible,' said the brave Spanish lady; and Felipa looked up brightly and smiled more happily than she had done since her imprisonment.

CHAPTER XVI.

WAITING FOR LUCK.

Without Andreas Carlo never could have been carried safely into Santa Teresa; but the faithful Indian was wonderfully clever in warding off detection. The dogs had a harmless powder given to them, which stupefied them for the time being, and, the night being very dark, with Harry's help Carlo was lifted bodily on to the balcony and then carried to the ladies' room. Here kind, tender hands were

ready with as many alleviations as were at their disposal.

The soldiers were busy drinking and gambling below in the hall, and never imagined what was going on above, the evening visit of inspection having been paid. Carlo seemed to recognise his friends as Harry and Andreas laid him gently on the mattress, for he smiled and began to say something; but the effort caused him to become light-headed again, and Catalina and Doña Elena made every one leave the patient to their nursing. Etta had a great deal to say to Harry; she wanted to hear how he had been able to save Carlo from the clutches of the pirates, and how they had managed to land.

'I can hardly understand myself how it was,' said Harry, simply. 'We nearly died of thirst, and had it not been for the Indian we could never have reached this place alive. Señor Carlo was often light-headed, and fancied he was still at Chagres, trying to repulse the attack, and I could only make the Indian understand me by signs. It was not easy to tell him that we must not land by daylight, and that our enemies would pounce upon us if they caught us, but that we had friends if only we could reach them. Luckily we did manage it, and the first person who discovered us was this faithful Andreas, and after that you should have heard how the two Indians did discuss us! We have hidden the canoe and the Indian, for I was obliged to defer the promised reward till we had seen you, Señorita.'

'My father hid a great deal of treasure in the woods,' said Felipa, 'so we can easily pay the Indian. Andreas knows the hiding-place, for my father recognised how trustworthy he is.' Felipa soon explained to Andreas how much of the money he was to get; only, great precautions must be taken so as not to be seen or followed by the dogs, which the English pirates would most likely set on the track if they had the least suspicion of hidden treasure.

'But you, Harry, what can you do?' asked Etta, who did indeed feel proud of her countryman, for she guessed that, though he made light of his adventures, he had gone through much suffering for the sake of a stranger.

'I mean to hide in these woods till I get a chance of escaping; after what has happened I can never go back to Captain Morgan. Andreas is so grateful for what I have been able to do for the Señor Carlo that he says I may stay in the hut. If a ship were to touch here, I would work my passage back to Europe; but that *if* is doubtful, Mistress Etta.'

'But you will take me too if the Captain will let me come on board?' asked Etta. 'Now Felipa has her aunt she would let me go back to my own country, for the pirates have taken the Marquis, and so I need not ask him. In England, I shall never again be in dire terror of my life.'

Harry did not like to explain to the eager girl that there was but little probability of his being able to take her on board. The idea was so delightful to Etta that she hardly knew how to contain her joy.

'And you will see your home again, and your father and mother; and you will ask them to let me stay with them till I hear from my uncle. Mr. Aylett will write for me—I seem to know him already from all you have said of him.'

Harry took a small prayer-book from his pocket.

'Look, Mistress Etta: this book has often reminded me of my dear master; I have had it with me all the time. I happened to have it with me on the evening when I was taken prisoner—I was to learn the Gospel for the next Sunday to repeat to Mr. Aylett. I little thought then how precious the book would appear to me. Do you ever read the Psalms of David and the Gospels, Mistress Etta?'

Etta shook her head.

'On Sundays I go to church with Felipa; I once told the Padre I was no Papist, but he said I had better pray to God with Felipa, and that in time I should be shown the right way. Then I cannot read English very easily, for we have no English books here, only I read the precious letters left me by my mother, till I know them all by heart. In truth I will never be a Papist, nor forget that I am English.'

Etta turned over the leaves of Harry's book with great care and admiration, whilst he read over the collect to her which began 'Lord of all power and might,' which Etta, much delighted, said she could remember.

'Without this I should sometimes have forgotten when Sunday came round,' added Harry, smiling; 'for Captain Morgan's men made but little difference between week-days or the Lord's Day, save now and then they had extra rations and more spirits. Good-night, Mistress Etta. I see Andreas wishes me to go with him, but I will come again to unloose my tongue, as my speech will be limited in the woods, and mayhap I shall turn into a wild man such as our sailors speak of; but Andreas says he will teach me how to shoot with poisonous arrows.'

From this time there was much less dulness up in the dwelling-room at Santa Teresa, and if they might have gone out, the girls would not have been very unhappy, except as to Carlo's state of health. For many days he hovered between life and death, and Etta had to act as sentinel, being most quick at hearing the distant steps of the soldier who brought them their daily portion of food. There was no more starvation now, the point being to keep the prisoners in good health; for death would have deprived their jailors of the much-expected ransoms.

How eagerly every morning the little party inquired for news, which the soldier was not loth to give! Captain Morgan was on his way to Panama; he had twelve hundred men with him; they had scarce victuals, and had sent back a boat to St. Catherine for more maize and Indian corn; the men were only allowed one pipe of tobacco; the Captain was determined to take the town, but he was in sore straits about victuals; they must conquer or starve; and so on.

The little party hoped much that the pirates never would reach Panama,

and that other misfortunes might befall them; only, not knowing if the Marquis were with them, it was difficult to wish they might all die of hunger.

In the evening Harry would come and amuse Carlo, for as the days passed slowly on the boy gradually began to mend. He would tell him of his hunting with Andreas, and how sometimes they had near escapes of being discovered; but that the men left behind had enough to do to guard the few fortresses remaining, and thought, besides, more about watching the bays for possible enemies than of hunting the forest. One day the Doña Elena herself asked Harry to tell her all he knew of her brave husband's last hours, and he recounted simply what he had seen. Carlo was sitting up, propped with pillows, looking pale, but far different from what he had been a fortnight before; and he joined in the request, saying:

'When I last saw my dear uncle he was just starting to help some twenty men who were defending an important post.'

'Yes, and that was where I saw him,' added Harry. 'I was bent on gaining an entrance into the castle, so that I might, if possible, save you and your uncle. I had tried to pass over some portions of burning wall, for I had seen the pirates rush through, regardless of the danger; but though I tried twice, the flames drove me back each time; so, at last, climbing along the side of the mountain, I caught sight of the men making a dash for this special breach. I could not help admiring their pluck, though the cause was bad enough. I came up just as they carried the position, in spite of the fierce resistance they met. Following them through the breach, I saw that this last effort would most likely end in the capture of the castle; for I noticed several Spanish soldiers throw themselves over the parapet rather than fall into the pirates' hands alive. They would not ask for quarter—indeed, it would not have been granted. Just then I met a fellow who was badly wounded, and I asked him if he knew whether the Governor were taken, or what had become of him. This man told me Don Alvarez had retired to the Corps-du-Garde, and was defending it like a lion. So, never thinking of danger, I hastened in the direction to which he pointed, and beheld a scene I shall never forget. Don Alvarez was standing at the head of a flight of steps, and round him and below him were some thirty men. The pirates had double the number of men, and saw it was only a question of time, and that a short one. I was looking everywhere for you, Señor Carlo, and, not seeing you, I was just going to hurry away, when I heard a sharp report, and then a yell of anger; and, looking back, I saw the noble Don Alvarez fall forward, struck through the heart with a musket-shot. I knew that I had not then a moment to lose; and, meeting a fugitive Spaniard, I asked him to tell me where the young nephew of the Governor had last been seen, for I was none of the enemy. He hardly believed me; but pointed to some spot behind the church; and the rest you know, Señor Carlo.'

'If it had not been for you, Harry Fenn, I must have been caught at last, or

else died of that fever. I wish my uncle had lived to hear of it and to reward you, but when my—' Poor Carlo paused; he, could not appeal to his father, for all that history was one he could not bear to think about; so he added, 'When I am a man I will give you whatever you like to ask of me.'

'There is nothing to thank me for,' said Harry, laughing; 'in running away with you I was but doing what I had planned for a long time. You see, I promised Mistress Etta to help her back to her own country; and to do that I must e'en get back first myself.'

'And you, Aunt Elena,' said Felipa, 'shall you really have to pay the large ransom? It does seem hard to be deprived of one's home and then have to pay the wicked men who have made one unhappy and miserable.'

'We must not complain, Felipa, for nothing would be allowed to happen unless God saw that it was for our good. If I could have seen my poor brother I should have taken counsel with him; but I must resign myself to a long captivity till the money can come from Spain.'

'Then why should you not go and fetch it yourself, noble lady?' said Harry. 'If I were you, I would not stay here longer than I could help; for if Captain Morgan were killed the pirates might choose another captain who would not treat you as civilly as he does.'

'But there is little chance of one of our ships being able to come into port here,' said Carlo. 'Andreas told me that the bays were very closely watched.'

'What I most fear is the return of the victorious pirates,' said Harry, thoughtfully. 'If we hear news of the taking of the city of Panama, I think we must try and escape, or at all events get to some Spanish settlement whence they will send us on.'

So they talked and planned, but could do nothing at present except wait patiently, Harry promising to keep a sharp look-out for any ship flying the Spanish colours, adding:

'I fancy the Captain will certainly take the rich city if it is at all possible, and after seeing the attack on Chagres I can believe these bold men capable of taking even a large place, especially when driven to great straits by hunger. I was by when the Captain made all his men sign the articles of common agreement between them, and in that they bound themselves to obey him and to do their utmost to carry out all his plans.'

'The selfish robbers!' cried Catalina, indignantly. 'Heard you anything else of importance, young Englishman?'

'But very little,' answered Harry, rubbing his forehead and trying to recall what had passed on the pirate vessel. 'Every captain was to have the share of eight men; the surgeon, besides his pay, was to have two hundred pieces of eight for his chest of medicaments, and other officers in some such-like proportion.'

But I remember that for the loss of both legs in battle the unfortunate buccaneer was to receive fifteen hundred pieces of eight, and he was to get still more for the loss of both hands.'

'All these ravages should be put an end to by the sovereigns who own these people. All nations of Europe have joined in it; and it is high time it were stopped,' said Doña Elena Alvarez. 'But now, kind Harry, it is time you went away, for Carlo is tired and must go to bed.'

'It is so dark to-night that I wonder how you will find your way to the hut,' said Etta.

'I have been making a store of candles from the Bois-de-Chandel. Andreas showed me how the Indians prepare it. Truly, how my parents would laugh to see me in an Indian hut! But I have to be careful of shading my light, for Andreas says we must not trust the negroes, and they often wander at night when the fancy seizes them.'

With this Harry slipped away; and Etta went with him so as to close the window and secure it when he had let himself down from the balcony.

CHAPTER XVII. DISCOVERED.

At last, after what seemed to him a long, weary time, Carlo began to feel stronger, so that the difficulty to conceal him became much greater, the high-spirited boy finding confinement quite unbearable. His aunt and Catalina now suffered much anxiety on account of his rashness, and as contact with danger soon makes people forget it Carlo would often slip out even before sunset and go off to the woods to find Harry. He used to get over at the old spot, which was not now guarded, and then, following the Indian trail, he and Harry managed to amuse themselves in the woods. True, he would slip back again, looking more rosy and more cheerful; but Catalina was always saying that some day the rash boy would repent of his want of prudence. As it was, if it had not been for the vigilance of Andreas even the lazy guards must have had their suspicions aroused. One day Andreas arrived at the Indian hut just as the two, who were now fast friends, were preparing their arrows to go hunting for pigeons, which Carlo took home to Catalina to cook so as to make a change in their bill of fare.

'There you are, Andreas! You are just in time to go with us,' exclaimed

Carlo.

'No, Señor, I must be back at the compound in half an hour; but I have just heard much news, and I came to tell you. The Frenchman Simon has just landed, and brings tidings from Chagres, where men have arrived telling of the taking of Panama. The Frenchman has brought several officers with him who were wounded, but are now better; and I fear these guards will have their eyes opened wider than the men now in charge.'

'Have they really taken Panama?' exclaimed Harry and Carlo; and the latter added, 'That is indeed a feat I had not expected—though you did, Harry. But did you hear any particulars, Andreas?'

'They are very full of all sorts of stories, but I fancy they are not all true—how in one place they boiled leathern bags to eat and were at death's door for want of food. After ten days of incredible hardships they came in sight of the city, and there they engaged in very severe fighting. But the terror of their name did more for them than even their valour, for they were but a handful compared with the Spaniards.'

'But what of the poor city?' said Harry, when Carlo had translated the news to him.

'The city was set fire to, which must have been a great and sad sight. I was once there—when Padre Pietro took me as a boy—and I saw the great merchants' houses, those belonging to the Genoese being the finest; and as for the convents and the private dwellings, the churches—ah, they could not be numbered.'

'But the pirates will have enough gold and to spare,' said Carlo; 'perhaps they will now let my father go free.'

'The thirst for gold seems never satisfied,' answered Harry, 'and the worst is when they divide the spoil; there is a great deal of quarrelling over it, and I have seen them fight to the death over a few pieces of eight.'

'The Frenchman Simon declares that they have taken a great deal of gold and many slaves, and that when the Captain has settled everything he will return here and make it so strong that no enemy will ever be able to retake it. The orders are that the work is to begin at once, and that the ladies are to be taken great care of, as he will settle the final ransom when he comes back. That makes me tremble for your safety, Señorito; it would, perhaps, be more prudent to hide in the secret passage.'

'Then I may as well be taken by the pirates, Andreas. I was stifled before in that odious hole. No, no; let me keep my liberty as long as I can. I promise I will keep a sharp look-out for this Simon. Now let us have a little fun; we try so hard to shoot the arrows as you do, Andreas, but we have had as yet but poor success.'

'The Señorito was not born an Indian,' said Andreas, a little sadly. 'Before

the white man came all these forests were our hunting-grounds; but there came good as well as evil with the strangers.' Then after a pause he added:

'If you will follow me I can show you a spot that few know how to reach.'

The boys were only too glad to comply, and Andreas took out of a hiding-place in the hut a curious blow-pipe, which was a reed from ten to eleven feet in length.

'You will take my bow, Señor, and we shall see who will shoot the farthest.'

Harry examined this new kind of weapon with great curiosity. There was no appearance of knot or joint in it; only the end which was to be applied to the mouth was tied round with small silk grass cord. The arrows which Andreas next produced for his blow-pipe were nine or ten inches long, made out of the leaf of a palm-tree, and as sharp as a needle.

'An inch of the pointed end is poisoned, whilst the opposite end is burned to make it hard,' said Andreas, exhibiting these beautifully made arrows; 'and this white stuff is the wild cotton. See, this quiver will hold five hundred such. Now come, but you must tread softly as a cat.'

He led through an intricate path in the midst of the dense forest. Harry would never have expected to find any human being able to thread through such a tangled mass; but Carlo knew what were the powers of Andreas in this respect. Then suddenly the Indian stopped; he looked up into the tall branches above him, and, putting his blow-pipe to his mouth, he collected his breath for the fatal puff. Two feet from the end of the tube two teeth of the acouri were fastened, and these served Andreas for a sight. As Andreas lifted the pipe the boys waited in breathless silence; then, suddenly and swiftly, the arrow flew unerringly upwards. Had it missed? Harry thought so at first; but no: there was a flutter, and then a pajui, an excellent game-bird, came falling heavily to the ground.

'Capital!' cried Harry; 'I don't believe I could do that.' He was going to pick up the bird, but Andreas stopped him, and Carlo cried out:

'Take care, Harry. Andreas will know how to handle the bird; you might touch the poisoned point. This wourali is such a strange thing, though it does not hurt the flesh of the bird in the least.'

Andreas smiled to see Harry's astonishment, and, handing him the blow-pipe, told him to try what he could do, as he himself had to return to the compound; but, as can be easily imagined, Harry's breath was not equal to sending an arrow three hundred feet into the air; he would require many years of practice before he could rival the Indian's dexterity.

After much excitement the two returned to the hut, Carlo thinking it safer to stay some time in the wood after nightfall to make sure the coast would be clear before his return to Santa Teresa.

By the light of their one candle the young Spaniard usually gave Harry

lessons in Spanish out of a book he had brought from the castle; and Harry, having heard a great deal of that tongue spoken by the pirates, was an apt pupil. After the lesson they fell to talking about the chances Harry had of finding an English ship, and Carlo a Spanish one. Certainly the effort ought to be made before the chance of Captain Morgan's return; but how was it to be done? For Andreas' canoe was too slight to trust on the sea, and was, moreover, much in need of repair. This evening after their discussion Carlo added:

'I have been talking to Andreas about the caves which lie on the bigger island; but how are we to get the girls and my aunt to them, not to mention dear old Catalina, whom we could not leave behind? The bridge is well guarded, and we have no boat to go by water; besides, we should be sure to be taken by one of the pirate ships. Whichever way I look, escape seems impossible. Then, too, the thought of my father makes me sad; he has suffered so much that I cannot feel angry with him now as I did at first.'

'Never say die, Señor; that is English advice, and it serves the purpose of making one feel ashamed of giving way to despair. I know there is little chance for any of us, and yet I do go on hoping still. God has allowed me to escape so far, and I mean to keep up a brave heart. At night I dream of my home, and actually the other evening I woke up telling my father about the capture of Chagres Castle. I was deeply disappointed to find myself alone in this hut, I assure you. But prithee, Señor Carlo, it is time you returned; the Señora will be anxious about you, and will fancy you are in danger of new horrors.'

Carlo agreed, though he was sorry to leave Harry in such uncomfortable quarters; but the latter answered, laughing:

'I am hardy by nature, and I have learnt now to be able to sleep on any bed, even Mother Earth's hardest mattress; and besides, Señor Carlo, I feel more secure here than if I were in your gruesome hole in the castle. Give my duty to my countrywoman, and tell her I am carving her a whistle to wear at her girdle when she is once more free to flit hither and thither at her pleasure.'

Carlo made his way very cautiously out of the forest for fear of meeting any stray dogs that might be prowling round. But all was quiet and silent as he crept up to the breach, which the pirates had never yet taken the trouble to repair. Whether Andreas' warnings had made him more nervous, or whether he were trying to be more watchful, he could not tell; but as he approached the verandah he fancied he heard a slight noise among the bushes. He paused, and the sound ceased; then he made a few steps forward, and, hearing nothing more, he cautiously climbed up the verandah and swung himself as usual over the low balcony. The window was left open, and before closing it he looked down into the bushes. Once again he fancied he heard a soft stir, but the darkness prevented him seeing anything more than a slight waving motion among the great rose-bushes.

In the sitting-room everything looked as usual. Felipa was bending over some embroidery as if she were still the little mistress of Santa Teresa, and Etta's face looked flushed with excitement as she fixed her blue eyes intently on a palm-leaf basket she was weaving, which work Andreas had taught her long ago.

'Carlo, look!' she cried. 'I have had a mishap with two baskets, but this one shall succeed. How have you fared to-day, and did Harry Fenn have good sport?'

'Andreas gave him a lesson on the blow-pipe, and I can tell you your Englishman opened his eyes wide. But what of the Frenchman, Señora? Have you seen him?'

'No; but we heard a bustle in the hall, and the soldier who came this evening said we should have a visitor to-morrow.'

'Has Harry Fenn heard of any ship in our neighbourhood?' said Doña Elena, anxiously. 'Catalina says this Frenchman has a bad name, and that she fears you will be discovered if they set a stronger guard; so do be careful, my poor Carlo.'

Carlo thought of the noise he had heard in the bushes, and wondered if he had already been seen and betrayed; but he deemed it wiser not to mention this.

'One thing I swear,' he said suddenly: 'they shall not separate us again. Felipa, say you will follow where I lead, little sister. If we must die, let us at least die together.'

'Indeed I will, Carlo, for I am weary of being a prisoner,' she answered with a sigh; and Doña Elena, looking up, saw a strange look of pain and sadness pass over the girl's face.

Suddenly Etta sprang from the low couch on which she was sitting and put her finger on her lips.

'Carlo! Carlo!' she whispered, 'hide quickly! Catalina, help him—I hear steps. Make haste, prithe, make haste!'

Carlo listened, but heard nothing, only Etta's hand pushed him towards the cupboard door, and to please her he retreated. Poor much-tried Doña Elena turned pale, whilst Felipa drew near to her; for now all of them heard distinctly the steps. In two more minutes, after an impatient knock, the expected Frenchman entered, and his quick glances took in the party as he made a profound bow, and said:

'Good! the Señora and the Doña Elena Alvarez, the nurse and the English girl—that was as the Captain said. Good-evening, ladies. I suppose you have not heard that the young Señor Carlo has returned to the island, and that he is now secreted in the wood?'

'My nephew is not likely to keep in the woods when we are here,' said Doña Elena, with great presence of mind.

'That may or may not be; but Captain Morgan is coming back in a few days,

Madame, and he sent word that you would all be ransomed or sold as slaves. The young Señor was especially to be well cared for if he landed here. And I fancy I have heard something of such an event.' Then he added: 'Perhaps that old Spanish woman could tell something about him if we were to ask her questions below.'

Doña Elena rose to her full height.

'You must first kill me before you touch our faithful Catalina. Leave my presence, Monsieur.'

'Well, well, don't be angry, Doña Elena: to-morrow is time enough. As for to-night, we will have a hunt with the dogs in the forest and see for ourselves. Good-night, ladies.'

CHAPTER XVIII. HUNTING A FUGITIVE.

When Carlo was gone Harry went on with his lesson; and then, feeling somewhat weary after his expedition, he prepared his bed, which preparation consisted merely in fastening up an Indian hammock that Andreas had made for him. And as he did so he could not help thinking of his comfortable bed at home, and of the love which had been his from childhood till the day he was kidnapped. The thought of his parents was always a very sorrowful one to Harry. Ah, if only he could escape! and then, once in England, he would hunt up Etta Allison's uncle and make him send for his niece. But the 'if' was not likely to be fulfilled.

Next, Harry cooked his supper, and this was also a very simple affair; he lit a tiny fire in a space within the hut between a few bricks, and allowed the smoke to find its way out by a small hole at the side of the hut. After baking his maize cake he quickly extinguished his fire, as smoke was a real element of danger even in this thick forest.

As he now ate his very modest meal, thinking over the plenteous fare in the home-farm, he could not help dwelling on the thought of bright-eyed Etta.

'She has the sweetest face I ever clapt eyes on,' he thought, 'and her hair is like golden light on a thistle-down. How my mother would be made glad with her sweet speecheries! Nay, but when I get back—if God wills I ever do get back—then I will e'en come here again and fetch her away, if so be her uncle will not do it. In truth I will; and then I will ask her to be my wife, and she will be the

comforting of the old people, for she has such brave, sweet, winning ways, and has far more courage than the pretty Spanish girl, who could be turned about whichever way the wind blew, and has, besides, no pretty witcheries.'

Harry, having thus settled his own future, took out his little prayer-book and read a gospel, thinking as he did so of Mr. Aylett, and wondering, as he had done many and many a time, what his friend had thought when he had heard of his disappearance. Now and then he half feared whether he had fancied that he had gone willingly with the freebooters; and this idea troubled him; but at other times he put it away as impossible.

Harry was about to kneel down to say his prayers—which worship seemed only natural in the midst of this beautiful forest with the spreading palms, and the Bois Chataigne opening its petals in the darkness and the many other forest giants—when suddenly he heard Andreas' very faint whistle, although in the deep silence of solitude he had not noticed his approach—indeed nothing around him but well-known sounds, such as distant notes of a few birds.

Harry started up, and would have called out, but remembered caution, so that he even put out his light before he opened the door. He was glad enough now that Carlo's lessons helped him to understand Andreas' meaning, if not quite all his words.

'Quick, Señor, and quiet; this place is no longer safe: they are going to beat through the forest with the dogs to-night. They fancy you are the Señorito; but, thank God, he is safe, at least for to-night. Follow quickly, but first take everything away from the hut.'

With quick dexterity the Indian unswung the hammock and rolled up in it the few properties that were in the hut; then, placing this on his head, he led the way forward, plunging yet deeper into the wood. Harry followed as best he could, enduring patiently many a scratch from sharp prickles and thorns, and many a bruise and tumble. 'Wait a moment, Señor,' said Andreas after a time; 'I will put this bundle in this stream and drag it down some way; the dogs will then lose the scent. Give me your hand: we must wade up this streamlet. Ah, Señor, it is a cruel sport, hunting the human being with fierce dogs. In the old days the Spaniards hunted down the poor Indians—when I was a boy I have seen them—and now the white men hunt each other.' Then, with a low chuckle, Andreas added, 'I have made the dogs stupid with my powder; they will be very slow; but I dared not stupefy them altogether for fear of discovery. Now, Señor here is your hiding-place; I know you can climb. This big trunk would shelter many men, but it is a secret few know of. The Indians made the retreat long ago, and many a poor hunted being has found safety here.'

Harry did as he was bid, and with a good deal of help, which he would have despised had it been light, he found himself half-way up a great trunk, now

hollow in parts, and showing that decay had set its hand there. When they had reached this position Andreas crept through a tiny aperture, and the two found themselves in a small room in the huge hollow tree. The hand of man had made a floor and roofed it in, so that there was a hollow tree above and a hollow tree below. It was so beautifully contrived that when the door was opened it could be fastened from within and leave no mark of its being a door on the outside, whilst a hole in the ceiling would let in air and a small amount of light. Andreas smiled at Harry's exclamations of surprise and admiration.

'The Señor will be safe here if the dogs do not pick up the scent again; if they do, see, here is a bow and arrow and some big stones. Don't let any one climb up, but do not open the door unless you are sure you are discovered; they will look up the hollow tree but will see nothing.'

Andreas did not wait to be thanked, and, with another warning not to open the door, he slipped down, and was soon purposely making a false scent to another hiding-place known to some of the Indians who might be employed by the pirates to scour the forest for Carlo.

Andreas crept back to the castle an hour later, just as the party organised by Sieur Simon was about to start, and, pretending he was awakened by the noise, he crept out of his hut near the compound and offered to join the party. His services would most likely have been accepted had not a negro told the Frenchman that Andreas was very fond of the young Señor and that he would be of no use.

Simon, always on the look-out for treachery, told Andreas to go back to his compound, and that when Captain Morgan returned it would then be seen if the Indian knew anything of the runaway Carlo.

It was an awful procession which Andreas watched issuing out of the gate of Santa Teresa. The dusky forms of the negroes with their black woolly heads, their thick lips grinning at the idea of an exciting chase, holding in the fierce baying dogs with long leashes, and accompanying by blows their unearthly howling, and behind these again some ruffianly-looking pirates taking their orders from the slight, crafty-looking Frenchman.

Then at last all was ready, and with another long howl of cruel eagerness both men and dogs rushed down the steep mountain-side.

Faithful Andreas had still some work to do; he knew how anxious Doña Elena would be, and that in truth even Carlo was in great danger. The Indian sat by his hut for some time, thinking of some plan of escape, knowing well that Captain Henry Morgan, once back, would make short work of any fugitives hidden in the woods. Not arriving at any satisfactory solution, Andreas climbed up to the balcony, and, unfastening the window, he stole softly to the door of the ladies' room.

As he had expected, there was still a light burning. The ladies had been too

much afraid of what was going to happen to have the heart to go to bed; besides, their presence in the chamber guarded Carlo's hiding-place. Suppose the dogs should trace him to the castle and into their very presence? The idea made them shudder. Carlo was still crouching on the top step of the secret staircase, and was not at all enjoying the situation, when Etta recognised Andreas' whistle and opened the door carefully to him.

'What news, Andreas?' she said. 'Oh, it was dreadful! We heard the dogs baying; it made our blood run cold. Make haste and tell us all you know.'

'But the Señor Carlo is safe?'

'Yes, yes; but Harry Fenn—oh, will they find him?' exclaimed Etta, almost crying.

'I hope not, Señorita; but there is much danger for all of you. If the noble Doña Alvarez will allow me, I will take counsel with the Señor for a few moments at least.'

'Are you sure that dreadful Frenchman will not come back, Andreas? He made us tremble, for he looked so evil.'

'At all events, not till the dogs return. As for the English Señor, he is safely hidden, if there can be any place safe from those beasts. Had he been in the hut, they would have had him in a very short time.'

Carlo had now been let out by Catalina, and he and Andreas were soon deep in a quick, low-toned conversation. The danger for himself and Harry was great; most likely the pirates would not spare their lives after all that had happened; and still no ship was yet in sight.

'I know but one way, Señor Carlo: there is a small desert island which is out of the track of the ships, and if we could steal a boat I could take you and the Señor Harry to it. If we could prepare everything we might start to-morrow at sunset. I will take care to keep back enough dried meat from the store and take a skin of water.'

'But, Andreas, on your return you would be found out; and how could I leave my aunt and sister?'

'The ladies will be safe if the ransoms can be paid; and as for myself, Andreas is cleverer than the Englishmen.' A sweet smile parted the faithful Indian's lips, and Carlo, who had often experienced this same boasted cleverness, believed him. 'And when Andreas returns he will look after the ladies; but for yourself, Señorito, there is great danger. They are bent upon finding you, and Coca the negro saw you, and betrayed you to the Frenchman for a sum of money.'

This plan seemed the only one that could suggest itself to the two bold spirits. Harry Fenn's retreat could not long be kept a secret, as he must have food taken to him, and every visit to the tree of refuge made the discovery either by dogs or men more probable. What Andreas did not reveal, however, to Carlo

was that for him this expedition was almost sure to lead to harm. His absence was certain to be discovered or betrayed, even though he meant to arrange during his absence for the well-being of the cattle under his charge; and if discovered Andreas knew that his life would be taken. He had faced the question, and had accepted the danger, for his love for Carlo was stronger than any fear of death.

Carlo explained what had been decided upon, and though Felipa and Catalina both cried at the idea of the separation, Doña Elena saw that this plan was the only one which gave her nephew a chance of safety.

'Ah, Andreas, God will reward you,' she said, taking the Indian's hand in hers; 'for we poor captives can but give you thanks.'

Etta, who had been listening to all this, now added anxiously:

'But, dear Carlo, suppose Andreas does not return, how can we ever find you or Harry?'

'I will tell you, Señora,' said Andreas. 'You are right to ask, for the island has no name for the white men, and I never myself knew of a ship that stopped there. Give me some paper.'

Taking the parchment-like pith, which was all the prisoners could procure to write on, Andreas roughly marked out with a thorn the position of the island with regard to its distance from St. Catherine, making clever indications to show where dangerous rocks were to be found, and on which side the island could be approached.

'Keep that by you, Señorita, and if you can get away in a big ship, the Captain will understand where to find the Señor Carlo.' He then made his Indian salutation and departed, saying he had much to do before the next sunset, and that if all were well he would come and fetch the Señor Carlo the next evening; but, till then, he advised great care, for fear of discovery.

It was, indeed, a very anxious day the family spent, but also a busy one. Felipa made a little needle-book for her brother; Etta plaited him a basket; and Catalina did up two blankets in as small a bundle as was possible: whilst Doña Elena unsewed some gold pieces she had secreted about her, and made a belt for Carlo, in which she hid this money, in case they sighted a ship and needed provisions or passage-money. Then, lastly, when the soldier's visit was over, and they had heard from him that the dog-hunt had not been successful, for the animals had lost the scent: but they meant to go again when the moon rose, being sure the young rascal was hidden somewhere in the woods, for a negro had seen him with his own eyes—then at last Carlo came out of his dismal hiding-place, and all together the prisoners earnestly prayed for a safe journey, and that God would save them out of the hands of their enemies. Felipa cried much as she kissed her brother, feeling sure she would never see him again; and Etta sent messages to Harry, saying he was not to forget her if he went home to England,

and to tell her uncle of her; and, lastly, Catalina invoked every blessing which every saint could give on her dear foster-child. Then came Andreas' call; he had done wonders, having procured a boat, which he had hidden in a creek right at the foot of Santa Teresa, and where Harry now was awaiting them, hardly daring to move for fear of making the slightest noise and so attracting the guards. And thus once more, the friends were scattered.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN A LONELY SPOT.

The dark night happily favoured them; and what was also in their favour was the fact that Sieur Simon's boat lay at anchor, and his hoys had been plying backwards and forwards all the afternoon, making the men on guard pay but little attention to the gentle plash of the oars as Andreas and Harry sent the long boat shooting off into the bay. One thought distressed the faithful Andreas: he had done his best to lay in a store of food, but he knew it was a very inadequate provision if the boys were to be left long in the desert island.

No one spoke for some time; then, when they had safely passed the ship, and were well out to sea, they had plenty to say to each other. Harry told how he had heard the baying of the dogs from his hiding-place; how they had come nearer and nearer, and he had felt a strange horror, which nothing else had ever given him before, at the idea of being torn in pieces by those blood-thirsty animals; then how the sounds had told him the dogs were close at hand, the shouting and yelling negroes urging them on, and the pirates mingling oaths with these cries as they were entangled in the scrub or the mangrove branches. Yes, and at last they had come close by, up to the foot of the tree, and had paused there as the baying dogs rushed round and round undecided, till one of them had evidently scented out the trail made by Andreas, and the negroes had hunted the dogs forward. Harry's face as he told the story still bore traces of the terrible ordeal he had passed through during those few moments of intense suspense.

'I fancied before that I was brave, but I only know that when I heard those evil beasts I had no more courage left in me than a zany at a village fair; and when they had passed by, I lay on the floor of my hiding-place as if I were already dead. I have never before been in such dire terror of my life; but in truth such barbarous ways are not honest warfare.'

'Yet I saw my father hunted down by wild dogs,' said Andreas, on whom this fact had made a lasting impression; and Carlo looked grave, for he knew well enough that his people it was who had perpetrated such cruelties on the gentle Indians, and that Spain would ever have to bear the shame of the first cruelties in the New World—cruelties which other nations had not been slow to adopt; till the black plague-spot had spread all over the fair lands and the newly discovered islands.

All night they rowed hard, and when daylight came, and with it all the glory of the tropical sunrise, St. Catherine was no longer in sight; and unless any other knew the secret of the desert island and betrayed the knowledge to Sieur Simon, they were saved. Each in his own heart thanked God.

Harry's face began to recover its more cheerful expression: he was not leaving his loved ones as was Carlo; but was this journey bringing him much nearer his own home?

'When shall we sight this place?' asked Carlo wearily, when the sun beating down on their heads reminded him that he was now not nearly as strong as before his illness; 'and what do you call it, Andreas? It seems as if we were going to a land of nowhere.'

'It has no name known to the white men, Señor; but my father, who took me there when I was a boy, always called it by an Indian name which meant "Queen of the Water," because of the one tall Jagua palm-tree which stands high and solitary on it, and can be seen from a long distance.'

'Then we are already in sight,' said Harry suddenly. 'Look, Andreas, there, right ahead! You have come straight as an arrow.'

This welcome news gave them fresh courage, and on they sped. Nearer and nearer they came; they could now discern the wild scrub bordering the sand on which the surf painted a long line of white foam; they could see the motion of the leaves as the soft breeze disturbed the luxuriant undergrowth; but suddenly Andreas, standing up, dropped his oar from sheer surprise.

'Queen of the Water is not a desert island now!' he said. 'Look, Señor!'

The boys also gazed now at the shore; and there, sure enough, on a small rock that jutted out into the sea, they saw a weird-looking figure walking slowly up and down, and waving long thin arms as if to warn off the intruders. The man, who hardly looked human even from this distance, appeared to be intent only on this one action; and so strange did it seem, that the three looked at each other with the same question expressed on their faces, and this was, 'Shall we

land?’

[Illustration: ”*SHALL WE LAND?*” (missing from book)]

’If there is one man there may be more,’ said Carlo, in despair; ’but I can row no more. We may as well be killed here as go on to another island and die by the way.’

’He is no Indian, but a white man,’ remarked Andreas, again scanning the rock; ’his beard is long, and his hair too. He either wishes us ill, or wishes to warn us from some danger; and yet I never heard of any one living here. This is indeed a misfortune.’

’Well, we must risk it,’ said Harry, seeing Carlo was looking terribly white and done up; ’and I think if we run the boat in here, at our right hand, that old fellow will not come up with us till we are well landed, for he will have nigh upon a mile to walk. If I’m not right, you may call me an ass for my pains, Carlo.’

Andreas approved, and presently they were obliged to keep all their wits sharp in order to enter the semicircular harbour, for there was some danger in getting the boat through the tumbling surf. But the Indian was too well accustomed to landing a boat to come to grief, and very soon the three stood on firm land; and after dragging up the boat out of reach of the waves, they looked anxiously around their new home. Near them, above the low cliff, was a clearing made by nature, where grew bananas, cacao, and bois-immortel, among which could also be seen a few orange-trees and Avocado pears; so that there was no fear of dying of thirst. But what interested them most was the strange weird figure, who, instead of following them, still kept on the same rock, and still waved his arms as if warding off some visible enemy. Andreas gazed a few minutes in silence; then all at once his eyes lighted up.

’It is no enemy: it must be a poor man whom the pirates have brought here. That is their fashion. I have heard them speak of it. They land some one who has offended them, and leave him to die alone; though often they will give him a musket and a little powder.’

’Then I should say that poor man is mad,’ said Harry. ’If so, he may be more dangerous than a pirate. But look, Andreas; if the pirates have been once they may come again.’

’No, not for many a long day; they must have sighted this desert island by chance, and landed this poor man here, knowing it was uninhabited.’

'Well, I will go and see what I can make of him,' said Harry, 'whilst you get a rest, Carlo; for you must not be ill here, and Andreas will begin unloading the boat.'

'Take care, Harry,' cried Carlo; 'nay, wait: I will come with you—I can't bear you to run the risk alone.'

'I have been through so many perilous scrapes that one more or less makes but little difference. Still, come along, Señorito, we may perhaps make the poor man forget his troubles.'

So the two walked slowly along the shore till they came within a few yards of the weird figure; and Harry, wishing to attract his attention, called out to him and asked him what he did there. Then the figure paused, and gazed at the newcomers as if they were an unfamiliar sight, and began muttering through his long grey beard Spanish words of no meaning.

'Señor Carlo, this poor fellow is a Spaniard; but I see no sign of a musket. Speak to him, and ask him where he sleeps, and why he is here.'

Carlo began very courteously to inquire how the stranger had reached the island, as no boat was in sight; but suddenly he stopped short in his sentence, and clung wildly to Harry.

'Harry, Harry Fenn, look again, that man is—can you not see? It is my father; and yet I hardly knew him. See the ring on his finger?' Harry would certainly not have recognised the Marquis, whom he had seen but little of; but in his astonishment he called out his name.

'The Señor Estevan del Campo! Surely it cannot be! Gracious Heaven!'

'Yes, yes,' said the poor man, 'that is my name. Who called me? Yes, yes, Estevan del Campo!'

'Oh, sir, here is your son,' said Harry; and then Carlo, summoning up his courage, rushed toward his poor father and knelt by his side.

'Father, father, do you not know me? I am Carlo, your son. Forgive me if I ever spoke harshly, father.'

'Carlo my son? No, no, I have no son, no country. Don't let any one come here to find out my hiding-place; I warn them off. The pirates left me here; that was the kindest thing they did for me. I have no name, no titles. Don't tell any one where I am. What do they call it?—marooning—they marooned me, left me to die alone. It was their kindness; I bear them no grudge for doing that. No name, no country!'

'No, no,' cried Carlo; 'we will take care of you, father; you shall not die alone.' And turning his arm round the poor thin arm of his father, Carlo dragged him forward; and Harry, following behind, wiped away a few tears from his eyes; for it was indeed a sight to have touched the hardest heart. But evidently the poor Marquis was out of his mind and had not much longer to live.

The sound of human voices seemed to soothe him after a time; and when they reached the shade of the grove where Andreas had set out some food for the travellers, he was no longer muttering his few sentences. The surprise of the Indian can easily be imagined, and the poor fellow's pity for his old master was quite touching to witness, even though he had never received much kindness at his hands. Little by little the Marquis began to take in dimly that Carlo was with him, and to accept the services of Andreas as he waited on him; but though not actually starved, he had taken but little trouble to collect food, and the horror of loneliness and shame at his past treason seemed to have done the work of years. Carlo, who had all along been feeling a grudge against his father, could now forgive and forget everything.

'Oh, Andreas, how fortunate it was that you brought us here! Stay with us now, and do not go back to St. Catherine: I am so much afraid that your absence will be discovered, and then— Do stay, and let us share our misfortunes and our luck.'

It was a great temptation to Andreas, and for a few moments he brooded in silence over the proposal; but he had learnt Christianity in a way not understood by many Christians. He considered that if he stayed he would certainly save himself, but if he returned he might help to save the poor ladies, who had now no protectors; and Andreas knew that the word of a pirate was but a poor thing to trust in. He believed that he could help them, and anyhow he could give them the knowledge that Carlo was safe and that the Marquis was found. What did his life matter? Had not the Padre told him these words: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' and to the poor Indian the words were simple and powerful, and to be, if needs were, carried out literally. It took him but a few moments to make up his mind.

'Andreas must go back,' he said, smiling, now his decision was made; 'for the Señora and the Señorita will want to know the good news, and they may want also to come to the Queen of the Water. Andreas loves Señor Carlo dearly, but he will go away first and then come again.'

So towards evening, several hours before the sun set, Andreas was escorted to the boat, while the boys helped to push it off from the shore, and the Marquis stood by once more as if he were giving orders, though he merely said, 'Tell them, Andreas, that I did it for the best. The rascals deceived me. Tell them that,

Andreas, and don't let my little Felipa think badly of me.'

CHAPTER XX

SAVED.

Captain Morgan had sent word from Jamaica, whither he had gone after the taking of Panama, that he might be expected in a few days at St. Catherine, as he was going to fortify it against any future attack of the Spaniards. The Captain had taken the lion's share of the booty, and, finding the loud murmurs of the men to be more than disagreeable, he set sail one evening and left the fleet to do as it thought best. Still, he was anxious to get back to St. Catherine to conclude his ransoms, and Sieur Simon had been instructed to watch closely that none of the prisoners escaped. What was, then, Simon's rage at finding that not only Carlo, but that young viper, as he called him, Harry Fenn, had escaped in the night, and that Andreas the Indian had carried out the whole plan. Unfortunately, the negro whom Andreas had trusted had turned informer, fearing when the Indian came back he might suffer punishment.

The negro only escaped instant hanging by promising to betray Andreas on his return, and the better to secure this he was to meet him and tell him nothing had been discovered. 'As to the hiding-place of the vipers,' said Simon, 'a little of the rack will make the Indian disclose it; for if Captain Morgan comes and finds out the truth he may make me answerable.' To vent his wrath on some one, Simon marched up into the presence of the ladies and told them all he knew, and his future intentions. He forbade them ever to leave the two rooms set apart for them, placed guards in the corridor, and one below the window to which Carlo and Harry had obtained access. There seemed no hope now left them of escape, and they could only wait most anxiously for any scrap of news which might leak out through the very ill-tempered guards Simon had placed near them. Etta alone would not give in to low spirits: she felt sure that Andreas would return and would let them know; and as she could not go and watch by the window in the corridor as formerly, she kept a good lookout from the sitting-room verandah. She was indeed the sunshine of the party; for Felipa had drooped again now that Carlo was gone, and Doña Elena was hardly equal to more exertion and disappointment. Catalina would speak of the good old time when she had first come to the island, and when Felipa had been treated as became her rank. She

even began to turn against Etta, as being of the same race as the hated Morgan. But Etta would not despair nor give up hope; and so it happened that one day at sundown she heard Andreas' soft whistle below.

'Felipa, dear Felipa, listen: that is Andreas! There! Did I not say he would come back? It is so dark that I cannot see him. What shall we do, Doña Elena? for the good man will not understand he must not come up here.'

They all crept on to the balcony now and listened intently, but the sound died away; and just as they were beginning again to despair there was a knock at the door and the negro Coca entered, bowing very humbly before them as he presented a letter to Doña Elena.

'Andreas is not able to come himself, lady, but he sends letter, and wants answer.'

Doña Elena opened the parchment quickly; but Etta, who was looking on, said hurriedly:

'How did the guards let you pass if they will not allow Andreas to have speech with us?'

'I was very cunning, Señorita: I said that I had great news to give the Señora.'

Etta, still puzzled, listened to the words of the note, which Doña Elena translated into French so that the negro should not understand.

'The Señor Carlo and the Señor Harry are safe. They have found the noble father. I cannot see you yet. God protect you!

'ANDREAS.'

'Andreas waits for answer,' said the negro.

'Do not send one, Doña Elena,' cried Etta quickly, in spite of herself suspecting some plot; for what answer should Andreas require? He could hear for himself that they were safe, but Felipa said pettishly:

'Nay but, dear aunt, send him word that he must get us delivered from this prison; I am weary of being shut up.'

Doña Elena, thinking of no harm, yielded; and soon the negro retired, grinning as he again bowed low.

'I never can like those black creatures,' said Catalina, turning up her nose in disgust. 'Indians are all very well; but negroes—no, no, Señora, you should never trust a negro.'

'Nonsense, Catalina! My dear husband said it was because we treated the negroes so badly that they were sometimes treacherous. Alas! we Spaniards have

much to answer for in that respect.'

Catalina was not convinced, and kept on muttering that Andreas might be trusted because his colour was brown, but that black was the colour of the Evil One. Could she have seen what was going on below she might, perhaps, have made even the enlightened Señora agree with her. The negro had taken the note straight to the Sieur Simon, and in a few minutes more Andreas was seized and dragged into his presence, and confronted with it. The Indian saw that the negro had betrayed his trust, and, setting his teeth tight together, he stood before his enemy silent and brave.

'Tell me, dog of an Indian, where thou hast been, and where thou hast hidden those young whelps,' said Simon, angrily. But Andreas was not going to tell him.

'As well answer, for I know everything; the negro has told me; and if thou ownest thy fault I will forgive thee,' said Simon. But Andreas felt sure this was a trap: no one knew the retreat of Señor Carlo—no one at least at St. Catherine.

'Come, my men, here is a dumb dog: see if a little torture will worm out the secret.'

We must draw the veil over the horrible torments which noble Andreas endured. It was a cruel age, but the desperate men who had broken loose from their country, their religion, and their laws outdid all the cruelties of the age, and fancied because the poor defenceless Indians could not now revenge themselves they were fair game. When nature could bear no more, and the half-dead man was thrown into a dungeon, not a word having been extracted from him, Sieur Simon was rather sorry he had ordered the torturers to go on to such a length, for now it was doubtful if he could ever get any information from him, and he had been told that Andreas knew many valuable secrets which would now most likely die with him.

That night the pirates had a long carousal, because they knew that next day Captain Morgan was expected back, and when he came the good things generally disappeared; so Sieur Simon suddenly bethought himself that most likely there must be treasure hidden away somewhere or other in Santa Teresa. He dared not touch Doña Elena or Felipa—they were able to pay rich ransoms; but his mind turned at once to Etta, the English girl, who was, of course, merely a slave of the Marquis. Yes, she might know, and if—well, if—anything happened to her, no one would care much, and certainly no one would inquire, except Captain Morgan, who had said the English girl was to be cared for; but he would not grieve much about any one who could not bring him in any money.

'Go up, Nat Salt,' he said to an Englishman 'and fetch down that English wench. I would wager a goblet of wine that she knows where the old Marquis kept his treasures.'

'By'r laykin,' said Nat Salt, 'that little cinder witch was rather a favourite with the Captain. It'll not be safe to meddle with her over-much.'

'Nay, I will but make her feel the rope trick round her wrist, and I'll pledge you a flagon of red wine we shall then know all she does.'

'There'll be naught more, then, Sieur Simon, or I would rather not meddle in it; the Captain now and then loses his temper over a mighty small affair.'

'My word as a brother,' said Simon, using the term by which pirates called each other when they were in a good temper.

Nat knew that even Simon would not break his oath, but he said the morning would be more convenient for Etta's examination; so that the poor girl fell asleep without dreaming what was in store for her the next day.

Once again Etta was to go down into the great hall, where now only Sieur Simon was sitting, and she was to be tried in a far harder way even than by hunger. When the man called Nat Salt came to fetch her, Felipa seemed to guess that something was the matter, for she clung to her friend, crying out:

'Don't take Etta away. Catalina, Aunt Elena, don't let the wicked man take her. Why is she to go?'

'Prithee, young madam, don't take it to heart; this English girl is but wanted to answer a few questions.' But Etta, though pale, would not show any fear even while her heart sank within her.

'I will follow you an you touch me not,' she said, raising her fair head loftily.

'In truth I'll not touch thee, young one,' said Nat Salt, who had a curiously soft heart, considering what he had seen and done. 'Come then, it will not be ten minutes' work. But mind! don't go acting the dumb dog before that Frenchman; I'fecks, he's as hard as a millstone on man, woman, or child—Morgan's an angel to him.'

As they passed out the two soldiers guarding the door stared hard at the girl, who walked by Nat's side as if she were a princess.

'There's a bit of sunshine in the wench's hair,' said one of them, 'but it will go hard with her if she is to get into the hands of the dragon.'

Poor Etta! it was to go hard with her.

'Come, child, make haste and tell me what I ask, and then you can go back to your friends,' said Simon. 'Where did the Marquis hide his gold before Morgan landed? He must surely have been busy over that work.'

Etta lifted her pretty head, and gazed at the Frenchman with indignant blue eyes.

'As if I should tell the secrets of the Marquis to you!' she said quickly.

'Ah! so you are not going to tell—for of course you know?' and he laughed softly.

'English girls don't tell tales,' said Etta.

'Well, we'll see. Come, Nat, where's the rope? A little pressure on the wrists acts to the tongue like oil to rusty hinges.'

Etta saw the rope, and some of her courage forsook her. She tried to run past Nat, but with one stride he caught her, and, twisting the rope round both her wrists in a peculiar fashion, he began pulling the noose tight, then tighter. Etta shut her eyes and thought of Carlo and of Harry. She knew the Marquis had hidden some of the gold in an old well, under the flags of the inner courtyard, but she did not mean to tell. God helping her, she would not be a traitor.

'Now,' said Simon, 'draw it tight, Nat, and see if that won't make her speak. Where is the gold, girl? Quick, and you shall be released. One, two—where? Pull tighter, Nat.'

Etta, in spite of herself, uttered a scream, shrill and piercing, which made Simon laugh.

'I thought the bird would pipe to some tune. Come, Nat, a little tighter. Where is the gold?'

'It is not mine: how can I tell? I won't! no, I won't! It's Carlo's money if his father is dead. Oh!' She struggled to get away, but this only increased her agony.

'One, two, three; it will hurt more yet if you don't speak.'

'Come, tell Sieur Simon, wench. You'll not see the Marquis till Martinmas, if then, so you needn't be afraid of him.'

Another pull, another sharp agony, and Etta felt that she could bear no more, when suddenly there was a rush into the hall of some half-dozen men, all shouting and tumbling over each other, and looking scared out of their lives.

Nat immediately let go Etta in sheer astonishment, whilst Simon seized hold of the foremost man and asked him roughly what was the matter.

'T'faith, Captain, you may well ask; there's not a minute to spare. There's a great man-of-war flying the English colours bearing down on us and on the two ships in the bay, which have but some half-dozen men in them.'

'Where's the powder?' cried another; 'the look-out man must have deserted. Gramercy! let's get out of this gruesome hole, for the walls have never been rebuilt, and we handful of men can't hold it.'

'Then we'll put you idle fellows to stop the breach,' cried Simon, angrily. 'Here, Nat, haste and warn the rest of the garrison. We must get down to the beach and prevent their landing. The forts are useless, and that coxcomb Morgan dropped the guns into the sea before he left.'

In another moment all was confusion, and the men had scattered hither and thither. Etta had suddenly recovered her presence of mind as soon as her great pain had ceased; in a moment she understood the situation. She now ran as quickly as she could up another passage towards the sitting-room. On the way

she met the two guards, who, having just heard the news, were running helter-skelter over each other to get down to the courtyard and join their companions.

'There's a man-o'-war bearing down on us! Marry! there'll not be a man Jack of us left alive!'

Etta found that the confusion had spread everywhere; for as she rushed into the dwelling-room no one prevented her.

'Catalina! Felipa! free me; prithee cut this dreadful rope. There's an English man-of-war in sight; and if only it will put in we are saved.'

'My poor child!' said Doña Elena, with tears in her eyes; for, the rope being cut, the deep red gashes round Etta's wrists told plainly what she had suffered. But Etta was now too much excited to feel any pain. She knew that immediate action was necessary; if only she could find Andreas perhaps he would put off to the ship in his canoe. But where was he? She went to the balcony, as no one was guarding it now, and whistled the Indian's tune; but there was no answer.

Catalina and Doña Elena, on their side, went to the window that commanded the bay; and there, sure enough, could be seen the big man-of-war slowly approaching, and so great was the panic among the pirates, who were only expecting Captain Morgan, that there was a furious rush for the boats; believing, as they did, that the Marquis was on board, and that on his landing not one of them would be spared.

In the meanwhile Santa Teresa was almost deserted, except by the slaves; and to one of these Etta addressed herself as to where she could find Andreas, and was led to the black-hole, where the poor fellow lay only just conscious.

'Andreas! dear Andreas!' sobbed Etta. 'Those cruel men—what have they done to you? But we are saved now. Catalina shall come and nurse you. Say you are not suffering! Lack-a-day!'

Old Pedro, who had managed successfully to trim his sails, now ran up, exclaiming:

'Thank God! thank God! Señora, the pirates are running off as if a thousand devils were at their heels. They say the Marquis is on board the man-of-war, but I know not; anyhow, let's secure our own gates. Ah! poor Andreas had better have told all he knew; I did, and managed to keep a whole skin.'

'Then, Pedro, take a boat and go and tell the Captain that he must come and take us away, and that I know where Señor Carlo and the English lad are hidden. Andreas, look up; tell me, are you in pain?'

But before Catalina or any one else could come, Andreas smiled happily, tried to speak; then, with a gentle sigh, he died. He had understood that those he had died for were saved, and that reward was enough for him.

Before long St. Catherine was rid of the pirates, for the man-of-war had brought with it, not Don Estevan del Campo, but the new Governor of Jamaica,

who came to dispossess the former Governor who had abetted the pirates; for King Charles of England was now sending strict orders that no buccaneer was to be allowed to set forth from Jamaica to commit any hostility upon the Spanish nation or any of the people of these islands, and on his way to Jamaica the new Governor wished to sweep clean of its pirates the little island of St. Catherine.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BAG OF GOLD.

The Pitsea Manor Farm was a dull place enough now, even though the beautiful sunshine made Nature look at her best on this September afternoon; but Mr. Fenn and his wife seemed to have no longer any heart left for joy, and they had settled that there was to be no harvest-home on the farm, for ever since the disappearance of their son the worthy couple could do nothing but mourn. They had indeed gone through terrible sorrow, and their only comfort had been the long talks Mr. Aylett had had with them, and his firm belief that Harry had not run away, as the lad said he had once thought of doing, but that he had in truth been kidnapped.

Mr. Aylett, being the brother of a rich squire, had powerful friends, and he had done all in his power to find out news of Harry; but in those days news travelled but slowly; and though much was guessed, the truth had never been exactly ascertained.

At this moment Mr. Aylett was seen by the worthy Fenns to be walking towards the farm, and very soon he was sitting by the sad-looking yeoman in the great farm-hall, beginning as usual to talk of Harry.

'I've told the men I'll have naught to do with a harvest-home,' said Mr. Fenn, decidedly. 'I'll give them money for the feast, and they may go and dance their round reels on the green; but, now my poor boy is dead, I care not for sounds of music, and joy does but make me dizzy.'

'And yet the Bible tells us to "rejoice always," good neighbour,' said Mr. Aylett. 'Is it right to deprive others of joy when God has taken ours from us? Is not this somewhat selfish grief, and displeasing to God?'

'It is my whim, Mr. Aylett. I cannot feel like Job, for when I see the lads a-merrymaking I think of my poor Harry's goodly countenance, and my heart seems like to break.'

'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away,' said Mrs. Fenn gently—'so I tell Mr. Fenn; but such an ado I have to be a-comforting him that sometimes I forget my own sore grief. It's a wonder I ever lived through that time; and now when I sit in a quiet coigne I fancy I'm another woman and in truth not Harry's mother. At this harvest-time I think of the new doublet I had always ready for him, and how handsome he looked. Lack-a-day!'

'Tut, tut, woman!' said her husband, who liked to think his grief was the greatest, 'the lad was more to me than to thee. You know how he would follow me about when he could but just toddle. Ay, ay, Mr. Aylett, you too know what he was like. It was a sight to see him riding about the farm; and now there's no one of my name as will inherit this place. And as for my cousin who has an eye to the place, i' faith he's but a poor creature—ay, a paltry ass.'

'The Lord can bring back your boy,' said the clergyman, with a quiet assurance that appeared to be galling to the yeoman.

'I said naught to the contrary, Mr. Aylett; but there's a sight of things that the Lord could do as never happen in this world; and my boy's dead—I know it; and meseems, in truth, it's folly thinking on it longer.'

'Tis much lacking in faith, good Mr. Fenn, that you are. For my part, I believe Harry will come home, and—' But here the keener-witted mother started up and called out:

'Mr. Aylett's heard news of Harry! Speak out, sir, or this old heart will break; for my head feels dizzy. Speak out, sir, for God's sake!' And Mr. Aylett now saw that he had sufficiently prepared the old people for the joy that he had to tell them, and, standing up reverently, he said:

'Ay, ay, good friends, God's name be praised! Harry is safe and sound, and has a long and wonderful story to tell you.'

'But where is he—oh, my boy! my boy! You're not deceiving me, Mr. Aylett, else God have mercy on you!'

'God forbid! Harry is in my house—brought here by a Captain Carew himself; and with him is come an English maid who was a fellow-prisoner in the West Indies. But I must tell no tales, and I bade him follow me anon—and, ay, look you, there he is, so I'll leave you to hear his own story, and go back to the maid, to whom my wife has taken a huge fancy already, for there is as much sunlight in her eyes as there is gold in our autumn corn; and, indeed, hers is as strange a history as you could find even in tales of our Chaucer.'

We must leave Harry to tell his own wonderful adventures, but Etta had already recounted to Mr. and Mrs. Aylett how Captain Carew had been kindness itself to the prisoners of Santa Teresa when he landed at St. Catherine, and how he had taken all the party on board, and, after landing the new Governor at Jamaica, had gone to the island where Carlo and Harry Fenn had been left, helped to

find it by the rude chart which Andreas had drawn. It can be easily understood how happy was the meeting, and how Doña Elena landed to see her brother's grave, and heard how he had died in Carlo's arms. Then, last, Captain Carew had taken them all on board again, and had landed the Spaniards in Spain, and Etta had been comforted at the loss of Felipa by Carlo's saying that she must come some day as an honoured guest to his home; that when he was a man he would travel to England, as he meant to be a Spanish Ambassador at the Court of King Charles. Then how excited she had been when she first beheld the shores of England, and knew that she was indeed no longer a prisoner, but a free English girl. Captain Carew, having relations of his own near South Benfleet, had himself taken the young people to Mr. Aylett, as Harry, now thoughtful beyond his years, knew that his sudden reappearance at home might cause too great a shock to his parents; besides, he thought Mr. Aylett could best judge what was to be done about finding Etta Allison's relations.

You can all imagine the joy of the homecoming; but I must add that there was a grand harvest-home that year at Pitsea Manor Farm, and such joy as never had been. What made it seem so wonderful to Harry was that Etta was there, dressed in a pretty gown of white *sémé*; and that he led off the country dance with her; and that her sweet, brave face made the whole hall appear merry; for, as Mrs. Fenn said, 'all could see Etta was dancing a very Barley Bree o' mirth.'

Her uncle had been found, and had come over to see her; but, being an old bachelor, he was glad enough to pay a yearly sum to Mrs. Aylett, and to let her stay with that excellent lady; saying he should leave her all his money, and stipulating that she was to pay him yearly visits. No wonder Etta was happy as she danced with Harry, or told stories of the past.

Will you like to hear something more, and can you guess that when Harry Fenn married, his bride was Etta Allison? And Carlo del Campo was, in truth, present, as he had really joined the Embassy—though he was not yet Ambassador—but he said at the wedding that he owed his success to Etta, who had taught him English. Poor Felipa died just before Carlo's journey. She had never recovered the effects of all the hardships and sorrows she had gone through; but before her death she sent some of her jewels to her dear Etta, and begged her not to forget her; which, as Etta's heart was big, she was not likely to do. You can imagine what talks they all had together; and perhaps the most wonderful piece of news that Harry told Don Carlo was that Captain Henry Morgan had now turned over a new leaf, and that the King had knighted him, and made him Governor of Jamaica; and that, wonderful to relate, he was now called Sir Henry Morgan, a brave and loyal

gentleman. Truly it was a case of 'set a thief to catch a thief,' for the pirates were now no longer tolerated in Jamaica; and Sir Henry was said to be vastly clever at hunting them down.

Some years later, when there were happy children running about the old Pitsea farmhouse, there came a mysterious visitor to Benfleet. He gave no name, but wished to see Harry Fenn, who was now the owner of the farm; and when he was gone, Harry called his pretty wife Etta, who was all curiosity to know what the visitor wanted; and then he showed her a large bag, full of gold pieces—such a sum and such a glittering mass as Etta and Harry had never seen all at once before in their lives; and on a piece of parchment was written:

'For my godson Harry Fenn: a marriage portion for him and the little witch, albeit they were so ungrateful and unmindful of their well-wisher, Sir Henry Morgan.'

The gold pieces were of every nationality, and from every recognised mint; and some of them looked as if they had been kept many years in secret hiding-places known only to Sir Henry Morgan.

'This money,' said Harry, 'is, if I mistake not, gold that was stolen in Sir Henry Morgan's raids. What think you, sweetheart? I like not the colour of it; and these adventures brought me but one gold coin of true ring in it, and that was my own wee wife.'

'For shame, Harry,' laughed Etta, 'to liken me to gold, which the Bible calls the root of all evil! But why not give it to Mr. Aylett for the poor on Canvey Island? Thou knowest, dear Harry, that there are many in need there, round about the little Church of St. Catherine; and if it goes to the service of that church it will remind us of all our troubles on the other St. Catherine; and remind us, too, not to forget to be grateful to God for our past deliverance.'

'A right good thought, sweetheart! And what say you to putting up a stained glass window of St. Catherine herself? And beside the wheel we will place a cord in her hand, which will be in memory of the cruel knot of which you still bear the marks.'

'For shame, Harry! Nay, I was no saint. Why, if Captain Carew had not come in the nick of time, I should, perhaps, have told everything I knew. There, put up the gold pieces in their bag—I cannot abide the sight of them; but Mr. Aylett will say, I am sure, that God can, and He will, sanctify even stolen treasure.'

And so out of evil they brought forth good, as all can do who set their minds to it. But that evening, when Mr. Aylett, with much surprise, received the gold, he asked Harry, laughingly, if he were of the same mind as of old, and if he would still like to wander forth.

'If Etta would come too, I would not mind seeing those beautiful lands again,' he said. 'But, what with mother and the children, I know right well she

will not travel again for many a long year.'

'Prithee, then, go alone, Harry, an it please you,' said his wife; and as Harry shook his head in a very determined fashion, Etta Fenn fell a-laughing softly, knowing well that her husband would never leave her for all the gold of the West Indies.

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