The Madman & The Pirate

By R. M. Ballantyne

The Madman and the Pirate

Chapter One

A beautiful island lying like a gem on the breast of the great Pacific—a coral reef surrounding, and a calm lagoon within, on the glass-like surface of which rests a most piratical-looking schooner.

Such is the scene to which we invite our reader’s attention for a little while.

At the time of which we write it was an eminently peaceful scene. So still was the atmosphere, so unruffled the water, that the island and the piratical-looking schooner seemed to float in the centre of a duplex world, where every cloudlet in the blue above had its exact counterpart in the blue below. No sounds were heard save the dull roar of the breaker that fell, at long regular intervals, on the seaward side of the reef, and no motion was visible except the back-fin of a shark as it cut a line occasionally on the sea, or the stately sweep of an albatross, as it passed above the schooner’s masts and cast a look of solemn inquiry upon her deck.

But that schooner was not a pirate. She was an honest trader—at least so it was said—though what she traded in we have no more notion than the albatross which gazed at her with such inquisitive sagacity. Her decks were not particularly clean, her sails by no means snow-white. She had, indeed, four goodly-sized carronades, but these were not an extraordinary part of a peaceful trader’s armament in those regions, where man was, and still is, unusually savage. The familiar Union Jack hung at her peak, and some of her men were

sedate-looking Englishmen, though others were Lascars and Malays, of the cut-throat type, of whom any wickedness might be expected when occasion served.

The crew seemed to have been overcome by the same somnolent influence that had subdued Nature, for they all lay about the deck sleeping or dozing in various sprawling attitudes, with the exception of the captain and the mate.

The former was a huge, rugged man of forbidding aspect, and obviously savage temper. The latter—well, it is not easy to say what were his chief characteristics, so firmly did he control the features of a fine countenance in which the tiger-like blue eyes alone seemed untamable. He was not much above the middle height; but his compact frame was wiry and full of youthful force.

“Lower away the dinghy,” said the captain, gruffly, to the mate, “and let one of these lazy lubbers get into her with a box of figs. Get into her yourself? I may want you.”

The mate replied with a stern “Ay, ay, sir,” and rose from the gun-carriage on which he had been seated, while the captain went below.

In a few minutes the latter reappeared, and soon the little boat with its three occupants was skimming over the lagoon towards the land.

On that land a strange and interesting work was going on at the time. It was no less than the erection of a church by men who had never before placed one stone upon another—at least with a view to house-building.

The tribe to which these builders belonged had at first received their missionary with yells of execration, had torn the garments from his back, had kicked him into the sea and would infallibly have drowned him if the boat from which he landed had not returned in haste and rescued him. Fortunately, that missionary was well accustomed to a state of nudity, being himself a South Sea islander. He was also used to a pretty rough life, besides being young and strong. He therefore soon recovered from the treatment he had received, and, not many weeks afterwards, determined to make another attempt to land on the island of Ratinga—as our coral-gem on the ocean’s breast was named.

For Waroonga’s heart had been opened by the Holy Spirit to receive Jesus Christ, and the consequent flame of love to the souls of his countrymen burned too brightly to be quenched by a first failure. The desire to possess the little box of clothes and trifles with which he had landed on Ratinga had been the cause, he thought, of the savages attacking him; so he resolved to divest

himself totally of this world's goods and go to his brethren with nothing but the Word of God in his hand. He did so. The mission-boat once again conveyed him from headquarters to the scene of his former discomfiture, and, when close to the beach, where the natives awaited the landing of the party with warlike demonstrations, he slipped out of his clothes into the water and swam ashore—the Bible, in the native tongue, being tied carefully on the top of his head to keep it dry.

Surprise at this mode of proceeding caused the natives to receive him with less violence than before. Their curiosity led them to listen to what he had to say. Then a chief named Tomeo took him by the shoulders, placed his nose against that of Waroonga and rubbed it. This being equivalent to a friendly shake of the hand, the missionary signalled to his friends in the boat to go away, which they accordingly did, and left their courageous brother to his fate.

It is not our purpose to recount the whole history of this good man's enterprise. Let it suffice to say that the natives of Ratinga turned round, childlike—and they were little more than grown up children—swallowed all he had to say and did all he bid them do—or nearly all, for of course there were a few self-willed characters among them who objected at first to the wholesale changes that Waroonga introduced in their manners and customs. In the course of a few months they formally embraced Christianity, burned their idols, and solemnly promised that if any more unfortunate ships or boats chanced to be wrecked on their shores they would refrain from eating the mariners. Thus much accomplished, Waroonga, in the joy of his heart, launched a canoe, and with some of his converts went off to headquarters to fetch his wife. He fetched her, and she fetched a fat little brown female baby along with her. Missionaries to the Southern seas, as is well known, endeavour to impress on converts the propriety, not to say decency, of a moderate amount of clothing. Mrs Waroonga—who had been named Betsy—was therefore presented to the astonished natives of Ratinga in a short calico gown of sunflower pattern with a flounce at the bottom, a bright yellow neckerchief, and a coal-scuttle bonnet, which quivered somewhat in consequence of being too large and of slender build. Decency and propriety not being recognised, apparently, among infants, the brown baby—who had been named Zariffa at baptism—landed in what may be styled Adamite costume.

Then Waroonga built himself a bamboo house, and set up a school. Soon after that he induced a half Italian, half Spanish sailor, named Antonio Zeppa, who had been bred in England, to settle with his wife and son on the island, and take charge of the school.

For this post Zeppa and his wife were well qualified, both having received an education beyond that usually given to persons in their rank of life. Besides

this, Antonio Zeppa had a gigantic frame, a genial disposition, and a spirit of humility, or rather childlike simplicity, which went far to ingratiate him with the savages.

After several years' residence in this field of labour, Waroonga conceived the grand idea of building a house of God. It was to be built of coral-rock, cemented together with coral-lime!

Now, it was while the good people of Ratinga were in the first fervour of this new enterprise, that the dinghy with its three occupants approached their shore.

At that particular point of time the walls of the new church had begun to rise above the foundations, for the chief, Tomeo, had entered into the matter with intense enthusiasm, and as Tomeo was supreme chief, every one else felt bound to follow his example and work hard; but, to do them justice, they required no stimulant; the whole community entered into it with inexpressible glee.

Zeppa taught them everything, because no one else knew anything, except of course Waroonga, who, however, was not much in advance of his native congregation save in spiritual matters. Zeppa showed them how to burn lime out of the coral-rock, and they gazed with open-eyed—and open-mouthed wonder at the process. Then the great chief Tomeo gave the word to burn lime, and Buttchee, the chief second in command, backed him up by kicking the native nearest to his foot and echoing the order, "Go, burn lime!" The entire population began to burn lime forthwith, and would have gone on burning lime enough to have built a South Sea pyramid equal to Cheops, if they had not been checked and their blazing energies turned into stone-hewing and dressing, and other channels.

Thus the work went on merrily, and so engrossed were they with it that they did not at first observe the arrival of the visitors. Of course they were aware of the schooner's presence, and had been off to her the previous day, before she had furled her sails, to offer fruits and vegetables; but it was some time before they discovered that three strangers had landed and were gazing at them while they toiled.

Zeppa had a black servant, a negro, whom he had induced to follow him. This man took a prominent oversight of the works. He was by nature a cook, but church-building occupied his leisure moments, and he prided himself upon being not only cleverer, but considerably blacker, than the islanders.

"Now you keep out ob de road, leetil Za." This was addressed to Zariffa, who, by that time, could not only toddle but trowel, besides being able to swim like

a duck. “Take care, missy Za, dat clumsy feller wid the big stone—let him fall, and—oh!”

The negro gave vent to a yell, for the accident he feared actually occurred. The clumsy native let a huge piece of coral-rock fall from his shoulder, which just missed crushing the brown little girl. It dropped on a mass of soft lime, which flew up in all directions, making Zariffa piebald at once, and, what was more serious, sending a lump straight into Tomeo’s face. This was too much for the great man. He seized the culprit by the neck, and thrust his brown visage down upon the lime, from which he arose white, leaving a beautiful cast of his features behind him.

Tomeo was pacified at once. He burst into a loud laugh, while the guilty man slunk humbly away, not, however, without receiving a salute from Buttchee’s active foot in passing.

At this moment Zeppa came up, holding his son Orlando, a well-grown lad of fourteen, by the hand. He at once observed the captain of the schooner, and, going forward, shook hands with him and the mate. He had made their acquaintance the day before, when the vessel anchored in the lagoon.

“I have come to say good-bye, Mr Zeppa. We have finished taking in fresh water sooner than I had expected, and will be ready to sail with the evening breeze.”

“Indeed? I regret this for various reasons” replied Zeppa, in a soft musical voice, that one scarcely expected to issue from such a capacious chest. There was about the man an air of gentle urbanity and tenderness which might have induced a stranger to suppose him effeminate, had not his manly looks and commanding stature rendered the idea absurd. “In the first place,” he continued, “my wife and I had hoped to show you some hospitality. You know we seldom have visitors to this out-of-the-way island. Then we wanted your advice with regard to the building of our church, which, you see, is progressing rapidly; and last, but not least, I wished to ask a favour, which it will be impossible to grant if you sail to-night.”

“Perhaps not impossible,” said Captain Daniel, whose gruff nature was irresistibly mellowed by the sweet spirit of the giant who addressed him. “What d’ye want me to do?”

“I meant to ask a passage in your vessel for my son and myself to the island of Otava. It is not far off, and you said yesterday that you intend to pass close to it. You see, I am something of a trader, as well as a missionary-schoolmaster; but if you sail to-night I have not time to get ready.”

“If that’s all your difficulty,” returned the captain, “I’ll delay till to-morrow night. A day won’t make much difference—will it, Mr Rosco?” he said, turning to the mate.

“You know best” replied the mate somewhat sharply, “I don’t command the schooner.”

The captain looked at the officer with an angry frown, and then, turning quickly to Zeppa, said—

“Well, if that time will do, it is settled. You and your son may go with me. And, see here, I’ve brought a box of figs for your wife, since you won’t take anything for the help you gave me this morning.”

“You shall present it yourself,” said Zeppa, with a pleased smile.

“Hi! Ebony,” hailing the negro, “tell Marie to come here. She is in the palm-grove.”

Ebony found his mistress and delivered his message.

Madame Zeppa was a pretty little fair woman, of French extraction. She had been a lady’s-maid, and, having been born and brought up chiefly in England, spoke English fluently, though with a slightly foreign accent derived from her mother.

“Missis,” said the negro, in a low voice, and with a mysterious look, as he followed her out of the palm-grove, “massa him wants to go wid schooner. Don’ let him go.”

“Why not, Ebony?”

“Kase I no likes him.”

“You don’t like the schooner?”

“No, de cappin ob de skooner. Hims bad man for certin. Please don’ let massa go.”

“You know I never give master his orders,” returned madame, with a light laugh.

“Better if you did, now an’ den,” muttered the negro, in a tone, however, which rendered the advice not very distinct.

The fair little woman received the box of figs graciously; the captain and mate were invited to the abode of Zeppa, where they met the native missionary, and

soon after returned to their vessel to make preparations for departure.

“Marie,” said Zeppa that night as they, with their boy, sat down to rest after the labours of the day, “I expect to be away about three weeks. With anything of a wind the schooner will land us on Otava in two or three days. Business won’t detain me long, and a large canoe, well manned, will bring Orlando and me back to you in a week or so. It is the first time I shall have left you for so long since our wedding. You won’t be anxious, little woman?”

“I would not be anxious if I were sure you went with good people,” returned Marie, with a slightly troubled look; “but are you sure of the captain?”

“I am sure of nobody except you, Marie,” returned her husband, with a smile that contained a dash of amusement in it.

“And me, father,” said Orlando, assuming an injured look.

“Well, Orley, I can’t say that I am quite sure of you, you rascal,” returned his father playfully. “That spice of mischief in your composition shakes me at times. However, we will leave that question to another time. Meanwhile, what makes you doubt the captain, Marie?”

“Ebony seems to doubt him; and I have great faith in Ebony’s judgment.”

“So have I; but he is not infallible. We should never get on in life if we gave way to groundless fears, dear wife. Besides, have we not the promise, ‘Lo, I am with you alway?’”

On the following afternoon a fresh breeze sprang up and the piratical-looking schooner, bowing gracefully before it, sailed across the now ruffled lagoon and stood out to sea, while Marie with the missionary and his wife, and a crowd of natives, stood at the end of the coral wharf, waving farewell to Zeppa and his son as long as their figures could be distinguished. After that, they continued to gaze at the diminishing vessel until it melted like a little speck at the meeting-place of sea and sky.

That night an event which had been long pending was precipitated.

Captain Daniel had given way to his fierce temper so often during the voyage, and had behaved with such cruel tyranny to his crew, that they had resolved to stand it no longer. His harsh conduct to the mate, in particular, who was a favourite with the men, had fostered the spirit of indignation, and the mate himself, being a man of no fixed principles, although good-natured enough when not roused, had at last determined to side with the men. He was a man of fierce passions, and had been roused by his superior’s tyranny and insolence to

almost uncontrollable fury; but he had not at that time been guilty of absolute insubordination.

When the vessel's course had been laid that night—which chanced to be a Friday, as some of the crew afterwards remembered—and the cabin lamp had been lighted, the captain sent for the mate, who saw by his looks that a storm was brewing.

"What did you mean, sir," began the captain at once, "by that insolent reply you made to me on shore yesterday?"

The young man might have answered temperately if they had been alone, but Zeppa was lying on a locker reading, and his son was also present, and Rosco knew that the captain meant to put him to shame before them. His spirit fired.

"Scoundrel!" he cried, "the measure of your iniquity is filled. You shall no longer command this schooner—"

Thus far he got when the captain, livid with rage, sprang up to rush at him. Zeppa also leaped up to aid in putting down what he clearly perceived was premeditated mutiny, but the mate sprang out of the cabin, and, shutting the door with a bang, locked it. At the same instant the man at the wheel—knowing what had occurred—closed and fastened the cabin sky-light. The captain threw himself several times with all his weight against the door, but it opened inwards and could not be forced.

There were two square windows in the stern of the schooner, one of which was open. Orlando perceived this, sprang up, clambered through it, gained the deck unperceived, and, running down the companion stair, past all the men, rushed against the cabin door, and burst it open.

Zeppa was endeavouring at the moment to wrench off the lock and was nearly thrown back. Recovering, he struck fiercely out at those who thronged the dark passage.

"Oh! father," groaned Orlando, as he fell before the blow.

With a terrible cry of consternation Zeppa stooped to pick up his child. He was felled with a handspike as he did so; the crew then rushed into the cabin and the captain was overpowered and bound.

"Overboard wi' them all!" shouted one of the men.

There were some among these villains who, having once given the reins to their rage, were capable of anything. These, ready to act on the diabolical suggestion, attempted to drag Zeppa and the captain up the companion ladder,

but their great size and weight rendered the effort difficult. Besides, Zeppa's consciousness was returning, and he struggled powerfully. It was otherwise with poor Orlando. One of the ruffians easily raised the lad's light frame and bore him to the deck. Next moment a sharp cry and splash were heard. Zeppa understood it, for he had seen his son carried away. With a wild shout he burst from those who held him, and would certainly have gained the deck and leaped overboard had not a mutineer from behind felled him a second time.

When Rosco heard what had been done he ran furiously on deck, but one glance at the dark sea, as the schooner rushed swiftly over it sufficed to show him that the poor boy's case was hopeless.

But Orley's case was not as hopeless as it seemed. The plunge revived him. Accustomed to swim for hours at a time in these warm waters, he found no difficulty in supporting himself. Of course his progress was aimless, for he could not see any distance around him, but a friend had been raised up for him in that desperate hour. At the moment he had been tossed overboard, a sailor, with a touch of pity left in his breast had seized a life-buoy and thrown it after him. Orlando, after swimming about for a few minutes, struck against this buoy by chance—if we may venture to use that word in the circumstances.

Seizing the life-preserver with an earnest "thank God" in his heart if not on his lips, he clung to it and looked anxiously around.

The sight was sufficiently appalling. Thick darkness still brooded on the deep, and nothing was visible save, now and then, the crest of a breaking wave as it passed close to him, or, rolling under him, deluged his face with spray.

Chapter Two

When Antonio Zeppa recovered consciousness, he found himself lying on a mattress in the schooner's hold, bound, bleeding, and with a dull and dreadful sense of pain at his breast, which at first he could not account for. Ere long the sudden plash of a wave on the vessel's side recalled his mind to his bereavement; and a cry—loud, long, and terrible—arose from the vessel's hold, which caused even the stoutest and most reckless heart on board to quail.

Richard Rosco—now a pirate captain—heard it as he sat alone in his cabin, his elbows resting on the table, and his white face buried in his hands. He did not repent—he could not repent; at least so he said to himself while the fires kindled by a first great crime consumed him.

Men do not reach the profoundest depths of wickedness at one bound. The descent is always graduated—for there are successive rounds to the ladder of

sin—but it is sometimes awfully sudden. When young Rosco left England he had committed only deeds which men are apt lightly to name the “follies” of youth. These follies, however, had proved to be terrible leaks through which streams of corruption had flowed in upon his soul. Still, he had no thought of becoming a reckless or heartless man, and would have laughed to scorn any one who should have hinted that he would ever become an outlaw and a pirate. But oppression bore heavily on his hasty, ill-disciplined temper, and now the lowest round of the ladder had been reached.

Even in this extremity he did not utterly give way. He would not become an out-and-out pirate. He would merely go forth as a plunderer to revenge himself on the world which had used him so ill. He would rob—but he would not kill; except of course in self-defence, or when men refused to give up what he demanded. He would temper retributive justice with mercy, and would not suffer injury to women or children. In short, he would become a semi-honourable, high-minded sort of pirate, pursuing wealth without bloodshed! True, in the sad case of poor Orlando, he had not managed to steer clear of murder; but then that deed was done without his orders or knowledge. If his comrades in crime had agreed, he would have preferred some sort of smuggling career; but they would not listen to that, so he had at last consented to hoist the black flag.

While the wretched youth was endeavouring to delude himself and gather crumbs of comfort from such thoughts as these, the awful cry from the ship’s hold again rang out, and as his thoughts reverted to the bereaved father, and the fair, light-hearted little mother on Ratinga Island, the deadly pallor that overspread his countenance was intensified.

Rising hastily—with what intent he himself hardly knew—he proceeded to the hold. It was broad day at the time, and sufficient light penetrated the place to reveal the figure of Antonio Zeppa crouching on his mattress, with his chin upon his knees, his handsome face disfigured with the blood that had dried upon it, and a wild, fierce light gleaming in his eyes.

He did not speak or move when Rosco entered and sat down on the head of a cask near him.

“Zeppa,” he said, with intense earnestness, “as God shall be my judge, I did not mean to—to—throw—to do this to your boy. It was done without my knowledge.”

“Hah!” burst from the stricken father; but nothing more, while he continued to gaze in the pirate captain’s face.

“Indeed it is true,” continued Rosco hurriedly. “I had no intention of letting

murder be done. I would not even slay the captain who has used me so ill. I would give my life if I could alter it now—but I cannot."

"Hah!" gasped Zeppa again, still keeping his eyes fixed on Rosco's face.

"Don't look at me that way," pleaded the pirate, "as if I had done the deed. You know I didn't. I swear I didn't! If I had been there, I would have saved Orlando at the cost of—"

He was interrupted at this point by the repetition of the cry which had before reached him in the cabin; but how much more awful did that despairing cry sound near at hand, as it issued full, deep-toned, and strong, from the chest of the Herculean man! There was a difference in it also this time—it terminated in a wild, fiendish fit of laughter, which caused Rosco to shrink back appalled; for now he knew that he confronted a maniac!

For some minutes the madman and the pirate sat gazing at each other in silent horror. Then the latter rose hastily and turned to leave the hold. As he did so, the madman sprang towards him, but he was checked by the chains which bound him, and fell heavily on the deck.

Returning to the cabin, Rosco went to a locker and took out a case bottle, from which he poured half a tumbler of brandy and drank it. Then he summoned the man who had been appointed his second in command.

"Redford," he said, assuming, by a mighty effort of self-restraint a calm tone and manner, "you told me once of a solitary island lying a long way to the south of the Fiji group. D'you think you could lay our course for it?"

"I'm sure I could, sir; but it is very much out of the way of commerce, and—"

"There is much sandal-wood on it, is there not?" asked Rosco, interrupting him.

"Ay, sir, plenty of that, an' plenty of fierce natives too, who will give us a warm reception. I would—"

"So much the better," returned the captain, with a cynical smile, again interrupting; "we may be able to obtain a load of valuable wood for nothing, and get rid of our cowards at the same time. Go, lay our course for—what's the island's name?"

"I don't know its right name, sir; but we call it Sugar-loaf Island from the shape of one end of it."

"That will do. And hark ye, friend, when I give orders or ask questions in

future, don’t venture to offer advice or raise objections. Let the crew understand that we must be able to pass for lawful traders, and that a load of sandal-wood will answer our purpose well enough. It will be your wisdom, also, to bear in mind that discipline is as useful on board a Free Rover as on board a man-of-war, and that there is only one way to maintain it.”

The pirate captain pointed to a brace of pistols that lay on the table beside him, and said, “Go.”

Redford went, without uttering another word. His was one of those coarse natures which are ever ready to presume and take advantage when there is laxity in discipline, but which are not difficult to subdue by a superior will. He forthwith spread the report that the new captain was a “stiff un,” a fact which nearly all the men were rather glad than otherwise to hear.

For some days after leaving Ratinga a stiff breeze enabled the schooner—which had been re-named by its crew the “Free Rover”—to proceed southward rapidly. Then a profound calm succeeded, and for a couple of days the vessel lay almost motionless on the sea.

During all this time the poor maniac in her hold lay upon his blood-stained couch, for no one dared—at least no one cared—to approach him. At meal times the cook pushed a plate of food within his reach. He usually took no notice of this until, hunger constrained him to devour a little, almost savagely. No word would he speak, but moaned continually without intermission, save when, in a burst of uncontrollable anguish, he gave vent to the terrible cry which so weighed on the spirits of the men, that they suggested to each other the propriety of throwing the father overboard after the son. Redford’s report of his interview with the captain, however, prevented the suggestion being acted on.

It is possible that the two tremendous blows which Zeppa had received during the mutiny may have had something to do with his madness; but there can be no doubt that the intense mutual affection which had subsisted between him and his only child, and the sudden and awful manner of that child’s end, were of themselves sufficient to account for it.

For Orlando had been all that a father could wish; loving, gentle, tender, yet lion-like and courageous in action, with a powerful frame like that of his father, and a modest, cheerful spirit like that of his mother. No wonder that both parents doted on him as their noblest terrestrial gift from God.

“And now,” thought the crushed man, as he crouched on his mattress in the hold, “he is gone,—snatched away before my eyes, suddenly and for ever!”

It was when this thought recurred, again and again, that the cry of agony burst from him, but it was invariably succeeded by the thought, “No, not for ever. Orlando is with the Lord. We shall see him again, Marie and I, when we reach the better land.”

And then Zeppa would laugh lightly, but the laugh would merge again into the bitter cry, as the thought would recur persistently—“gone—gone—for ever!”

Oh! it was pitiful to see the strong man thus reduced, and reason dethroned; and terrible were the pangs endured by the pirate chief as he heard and saw; but he had now schooled himself to accept what he called his “fate,” and was able to maintain a calm, indifferent demeanour before his men. Of course he never for a moment, during all that time, thought of crying to God for mercy, for as long as a man continues to ascribe his sins and their consequences to “fate,” he is a rampant and wilful, besides being an unphilosophical, rebel against his Maker.

At last, one afternoon, the peak of Sugar-loaf Island was descried on the horizon, close to where the sun was descending amid a world of golden clouds.

“Which side is the best for landing on!” asked the captain of his mate.

“The southern end, sir, which is steep and uninhabited,” said Redford.

In half an hour they were under the shelter of the cliffs close to a creek, at the inner end of which there was a morsel of flat beach. Beyond this lay a richly wooded piece of land, which seemed to be connected with a gorge among the hills.

“Lower the boat” said Rosco. “Have three men ready, and, when I call, send them to the hold.”

He descended as he spoke, and approached Zeppa, who looked at him with unmistakable ferocity.

“You are going on shore,” he said to the poor madman, who seemed neither to comprehend nor to care for what he said.

“Once again,” continued Rosco, after a pause, “I tell you that I had no hand in the death of your son. My men, if they had their way, would soon treat you as they treated him. They want to get rid of you, so, to save your life, I must send you on shore. It is an island—inhabited. I hope the natives will prove friendly to you. I hope you will get well—in time. Do you understand what I say?”

Zeppa neither spoke nor moved, but continued to glare at the man whom he

evidently regarded as his deadliest foe.

A touch of pity seemed to influence the pirate captain, for he added in a softer tone, “I would have taken you with me, if it had been possible, and landed you on Ratinga. Perhaps that may yet be done. At any rate I will return to this island—we shall meet again.”

At last the madman spoke, in a harsh, grating tone,—“If we meet again, you shall die!”

“I will do my best to avoid that fate,” returned Rosco, with a touch of sarcasm. “Ho! lads! come down.”

Three powerful seamen, who had stood at the hatchway awaiting the summons, descended, and at once laid hold of Zeppa. To their surprise, he made no resistance. To every one but the captain he behaved liked a lamb. Having been placed in the bottom of the boat alongside, with his hands still bound, they shoved off, and Rosco, taking the tiller, steered for the little creek.

The instant the keel touched the land two of the men jumped out and hauled the boat ashore. The others assisted Zeppa to land. They led him to a grassy bank, and bade him sit down. He obeyed meekly, and sat there gazing at the ground as if unable to comprehend what was being done. Rosco remained in the boat while a small box of biscuit was conveyed to the spot and left at the side of Zeppa.

Then, removing his bonds, the men re-embarked and returned to the schooner, which soon left that part of the island far astern. While it receded, the pirate captain kept his glass fixed on the wretched man whom he had thus forsaken. He saw that Zeppa never once turned his head seaward, but, after gazing in a state of abstraction at the ground for some time, rose and sauntered slowly inland. He did not appear to observe the small supply of provision left for his use. With his chin sunk upon his breast and his hands clasped behind him, he appeared to wander aimlessly forward until his tall figure was lost to view among the palm-groves that fringed the bottom of the mountain.

Leaving him there, we shall turn now to poor Orlando, who had been tossed so unceremoniously into the sea. Probably the reader is aware that the water of the southern seas is, in many parts, so much warmer than that of our northern climes, that people may remain in it for hours without being chilled. Hence natives of the coral islands are almost amphibious, and our young hero, having spent much of his life among these islands, could swim for the greater part of a day without becoming exhausted.

When, therefore, he caught hold of the life-preserver, as stated in the last

chapter, he clung to it with some degree of confidence; but by degrees the depressing influence of continued darkness began to tell upon him, and he became less and less hopeful of deliverance. He bethought him of the great distance they had sailed from Ratinga before the mutiny broke out, and the utter impossibility of his being able to swim back. Then he thought of sharks, and a nervous tendency to draw up his legs and yell out affected him. But the thought of his father, and of the probable fate that awaited him, at length overbore all other considerations, and threw the poor boy into such a state of despair, that he clung to the life-preserver for a long time in a state of semi-stupor.

At last the day dawned faintly in the east and the glorious sun arose, and Orley's heart was cheered. From earliest infancy he had been taught to pray, so you may be sure he did not fail at this crisis in his young life. But no answer was returned to his prayer until a great part of the weary day had passed, and he had begun to look forward with dread to the approaching night.

As evening advanced, exhaustion began to creep over him, and more than once he felt himself slipping from his support under the influence of sleep. The struggle to retain consciousness now became terrible. He fought the battle in many ways. Sometimes he tried to shake himself up by shouting. Then he again had recourse to prayer, in a loud voice. Once he even attempted to sing, but his heart failed him, and at last he could do nothing but grasp the life-buoy and cling with all the tenacity of despair. And, oh! what thoughts of his mother came over him then! It seemed as if every loving act and look of hers was recalled to his mind. How he longed to clasp her once more in his arms and kiss her before he died!

While these thoughts were gradually taking the form of a hazy dream, he was rudely aroused by something grasping his hair.

Sharks, of course, leaped to his mind, and he struggled round with a wild gurgling shriek, for the grasp partially sank him. Then he felt himself violently dragged upwards, and his eyes encountered the dark face and glittering eye-balls of a savage.

Then was Orley's cry of fear turned into a shout of joy, for in that dark countenance he recognised the face of a friend. A canoe full of Ratinga natives had nearly run him down. They had been absent on an expedition, and were alike ignorant of the visit of the Free Rover and the departure of Antonio Zeppa.

Their astonishment at finding Orlando in such a plight was only equalled by their curiosity to know how he had come there; but they were compelled to

exercise patience, for the poor boy, overcome by mingled joy and exhaustion, fell back in a swoon almost as soon as he was hauled out of the water.

Need we describe the state into which poor Madame Zeppa was thrown when Orlando returned to her?—the strange mingling of grief and terrible anxiety about her husband's fate, with grateful joy at the restoration of her son? We think not!

Ebony, the faithful and sable servitor of the family, got hold of Orlando as soon as his poor mother would let him go, and hurried him off to a certain nook in the neighbouring palm-grove where he was wont to retire at times for meditation.

"You's quite sure yous fadder was not shooted?" he began, in gasping anxiety, when he had forced the boy down on a grassy bank.

"I think not," replied Orley, with a faint smile at the negro's eagerness. "But you must remember that I was almost unconscious from the blow I received, and scarce knew what was done."

"But you no hear no shootin'?" persisted Ebony.

"No; and if any shots had been fired, I feel certain I should have heard and remembered them."

"Good! den der's a chance yous fadder's alive, for if de no hab shooted him at first, de no hab de heart to shoot him arterwards. No, he'd smile away der wikitness; de couldn' do it."

Orlando was unable to derive much comfort from this sanguine view of the influence of his father's smile—bright and sweet though he knew it to be—yet with the energy of youth he grasped at any straw of hope held out to him. All the more that Ebony's views were emphatically backed up by the chiefs Tomeo and Buttchee, both of whom asserted that Zeppa had never failed in anything he had ever undertaken, and that it was impossible he should fail now. Thus encouraged, Orlando returned home to comfort his mother.

Chapter Three

But Orley's mother refused to be comforted. What she had heard or read of pirates induced her to believe that mercy must necessarily be entirely banished from their hearts; and her husband, she knew full well, would sooner die than join them. Therefore, she argued in her despair, Antonio must have perished.

"But mother," said Orley, in a soothing tone, "you must remember that Rosco

and his men are not regular pirates. I only heard them shout ‘Hoist the black flag!’ when they seized me; but that does not prove that they did hoist it, or that Rosco agreed to do so. They were only mutineers, you see, and not hardened villains.”

“Hardened enough when they threw you overboard, my son,” returned poor little Madame Zeppa, with a sob.

“True; but that was in the hurry of the rising, and without orders from Rosco, as far as I know. Besides, mother, have you not often told me that God will never forsake His own children? Surely, then, He will not forsake father.”

“No, oh, no! the good Lord will never forsake him. He will certainly deliver his soul from sin and death; but God sometimes sees fit to allow the bodies of His children to suffer and die. It may be so now.”

“Yes, mother, but also it may not be so now. Let us take a hopeful view, and do what we can to find out—to find—to—”

Poor Orlando broke down here, laid his head on his little mother’s shoulder, and wept for his mind had suddenly run itself blank. What was there to find out? what could they do? Nothing, absolutely nothing, except pray; and they did that fervently.

Then Orley went out to consult again with his friends. Alas! there was no other outlet for their grief, save prayer and consultation, for action was, in the circumstances, impossible.

“Bin t’ink, t’inkin’ horroble hard all last night. Couldn’ sleep a wink,” said Ebony one day, some weeks after the return of Orlando, when, according to custom, he and the native missionary and his wife, with the chiefs Tomeo and Buttchee, assembled for a consultation in the palm-grove.

“What have you been thinking about?” asked Orley.

“Yous fadder, ob course.”

“Of course,” repeated the boy, “but what have you been thinking about him—anything new?”

“Not zackly noo,” returned the negro, with a very earnest look, “but ole t’oughts turned in a noo d’rection. Sit down, Tomeo, an’ I will tell you—an’ try to forgit yous hat if poss’ble. It’s ’xtroarnar good lookin’, a’most as much good lookin’ as yousself, so you got no occashin to be always t’inkin’ about it.”

We may remark here that both Tomeo and Buttchee understood a little of Ebony's English, though they could not speak a word. The reader will understand, therefore, that when we put words in their mouths we only give a free translation of their language. In like manner Ebony understood a little of the Ratinga tongue, but could not speak much of it, and Waroonga, who himself spoke uncommonly bad, though fluent, English, interpreted when necessary.

"Well, you mus' know," said Ebony, "dat jus before I goes to bed las' night I heat a little too much supper—"

"You doos that every night" interrupted Buttchee, with a grin.

Ebony ignored the interruption, and continued—

"So, you see, I dream berry bad—mos' drefful dreams! Yes. Well, what I dream was dis. I see Massa Zeppa forced by de pierits to walk de plank—"

"What's that?" asked Tomeo.

Waroonga looked at Ebony for an explanation, and then translated—

"When pirates want to kill people they sometimes tie up their eyes, and bind their hands, and make them walk along a plank stickin' over the ship's side, till they fall off the end of it into the sea, where they are left to drown."

Tomeo looked at Buttchee with a grin and nodded, as though he thought the mode of execution rather a good one; then, recollecting suddenly that any mode of slaying innocent men was inconsistent with his character as a convert to Christianity, he cast a glance of awful solemnity at Waroonga, and tried to look penitent.

"Well, hims walk de plank like a man," continued Ebony, "hims dood eberyting like a man. An' w'en hims topple into de sea hims give sitch a most awful wriggle dat his bonds bu'sted. But hims berry sly, was Massa Zeppa—amazin' sly. I t'ought him lie on's back zif him be dead. Jest move a leetle to look like drownin', an' w'en he long way astern, he slew round, off wid de hanky fro hims eyes an' larf to hisseff like one o'clock. Den he swum'd to a island an' git ashore, and climb up de rocks, an' sit down—an'—an'—dat's all."

"What! be that all?" asked Waroonga.

"Dat's all," repeated the negro. "I no dream no more arter dat, 'cause I was woked by a fly what hab hoed up my nose, an' kep' bumblin' in it like steam inside ob a kittle."

“Well, Ebony,” asked Orlando, “what conclusions do you draw from that dream?”

“I di’nt draw no kungklooshins from it ’cos I dunno what de are. Nebber hab notin’ to do wid what I don’ understan’. But what I was t’ink was dis: in de days ob old, some time after Adam an’ Eve was born, a sartin king, called Fair-ho, or some sitch name (Waroonga there knows all about him) had a dream, that siven swine came up—”

“Kine, Ebony—not swine,” interrupted the missionary, with a good-humoured smile, “which is all the same as cows.”

“Well, den, siven fat cows come up out ob a ribber, an’ hoed slap at siven thin cows—mis’rable skinny critters that—”

“All wrong, Ebony,” again interrupted Waroonga. “It’s just the other way. The skinny ones went at the fat ones.”

“Well, ob course you must be right,” returned the negro, humbly, “though I’d have ’spected it was t’other way. But I s’pose the skinny ones was so hungry that the fat ones hadn’t a chance wid ’em. However, it don’t matter. What I was goin’ to say was that a good man, called Joseph, went to Fair-ho an’ ’splained all his dream to him. Now, if Joseph could do dat, why shouldn’t Waroonga ’splain my dream to me?”

“Because I’s not Joseph, Ebony, an you’re not Pharoah,” returned Waroonga promptly.

Tomeo and Buttchee turned looks of inquiry on Ebony as if to say, “What d’ye say to that, you nigger?” But the nigger said nothing for some moments. He seemed not to have viewed the matter in that light.

“Well, I don’no,” he said at last with a deep sigh, “I t’ought I’d get hold ob suthin’ when I kitch hold ob dat dream. But, I do b’lieve myself, dat part of it means dat Zeppa hims git on an island, anyhow.”

“If my dear father got upon anything, it must have been an island,” said Orlando sadly.

“That’s troo,” remarked Mrs Waroonga. “Keep your mouth shut, my da’lin’.”

She referred to her brown baby, which she placed with some violence on her knee. It is well to remark here that little Zariffa had been supplied with a coal-scuttle bonnet proportioned to her size, made by her mother out of native straw, and that she did not wear anything else in the way of costume.

After Ebony's dream had been thoroughly discussed in all its bearings, and viewed in every possible point of relation to their great sorrow, the council adjourned, as usual, to various duties about the flourishing little village, and Orlando went to lay the result before his mother, who, although she could not believe these deliberations would end in anything practical, found it impossible, nevertheless, to resist the influence of so much faith and strong hopefulness, so that she was somewhat comforted, as it were, in spite of herself. Time flew by, and upwards of three years elapsed without anything happening at Ratinga Island to throw a single ray of light on the fate of the lost man.

During that period, however, much that was interesting and encouraging occurred to comfort the heart of the native missionary and the sorrowing Marie Zeppa. In the first place they received several visits from the mission-vessel, with small supplies of such luxuries as sugar, tea, and coffee for the body, and, for the spirit, a few bundles of tracts and books printed in the native tongue, among which, you may be sure, were many copies of the Book of books, the blessed Bible. Carpenters' and smiths' tools were also brought to them, so that they not only carried on their house-building and other operations with greater ease than heretofore, but even essayed the building of small boats with considerable success.

On the occasion of these visits, supplies of clothing were also left for the use of those converts who could be persuaded to put them on. But in these matters of taste Waroonga was not so successful as he had been in spiritual things. After his first disastrous landing, he had found no difficulty in persuading the natives to burn their false gods, and put away their too numerous wives—reserving only one to each man;—but when it was suggested that the usual bit of cloth round the loins was not quite sufficient for Christians, and that additional clothing was desirable, they betrayed decided symptoms of a tendency to rebel.

Savages in all parts of the world are usually much influenced for good or evil by the example of their chiefs. Those of Ratinga were no exception to the general rule, and the chiefs Tomeo and Buttchee did not encourage the putting on of clothes. In the matter of head-dress they had indeed given in; but when one day, Waroonga presented Tomeo with a pair of what are called slop-made trousers, and advised him to put them on, slapping his own at the same time, and asserting (we trust truthfully) that they were comfortable, Tomeo looked at them with an air of contempt and Buttchee, who was irreverent, laughed.

After much persuasion, however, and being good-natured, he consented to try. He got one leg in easily enough, but when he attempted to put in the other, not

being accustomed to the feat, he staggered and had to let the leg down. Raising it a second time, he made a successful plunge, got the foot in, lost his balance, made a frantic effort to disengage his foot, and fell to the ground.

“Sit down, my friend, and try it again,” said Waroonga, encouragingly.

Our missionary was of a gentle, loving disposition. His successes were in every case the result of suasion. He never sought to coerce men. Tomeo with childlike simplicity rebuked his own awkwardness, and humbly seated his huge body on a bank for another effort. In this position he got his legs easily into the trousers and drew them on, but when he stood up to complete the operation, it was found that they were very much too small for him, besides which he had put them on with the back to the front!

“Ah! my friend, they do not fit,” said Waroonga, thinking it unnecessary to refer to the error. “I will find a larger pair for you in the store. But try this coat. It is the kind worn by the white man when he goes to see his friends. It will be much easier to put on, I think.” So saying, Waroonga produced a blue surtout with bright brass buttons.

“No,” said Tomeo, drawing himself up with dignity, and putting the garment aside, “I do not require it. Has not a coat of skin been given to me? I want no other.”

And truly, the dark brown skin which fitted so perfectly to his muscular frame —tattooed as it was with many elegant devices—seemed to warrant his rejection of the ill-made surtout. But in Ratinga, as elsewhere, tastes differ. Buttchee’s fancy was caught by the brass buttons, and he volunteered to put on the coat, although he had looked with scorn on the trousers.

Like his brother chief, however, he experienced considerable difficulty, especially in distinguishing the difference between the left arm-hole and the breast pocket, despite the able assistance of Waroonga. At last he got the coat partially on, and with a mighty heave, forced it upon his broad shoulders. Then he stood with arms awkwardly curved and extended, uncertain what to do next. He was by no means properly into the garment, and his look of solemn inquiry said as much to the missionary.

“Try another heave, my friend,” said Waroonga, in a tone of encouragement.

Buttchee tried, with the result of a mysterious and incomprehensible noise at his back.

“What is that?” he said quickly, with looks of alarm, as he endeavoured to glance over his shoulder.

“I fear,” replied Waroonga with some hesitation, “that the coat has burst!”

There could be no doubt whatever about that, for a long strip of the chief’s back was visible, as if a gusset of brown leather had been introduced into the blue coat, from the waist to the collar.

For a considerable time after this, both chiefs declined further experiments in the clothing way, but ultimately Tomeo was induced to wear a striped flannel jersey, and Buttchee, of his own accord, adopted a scarlet flannel petticoat that had been given to his wife. Thus was the ice of conservatism broken in the island of Ratinga, and liberal views prevailed thenceforward in the matter of costume—whether to the advancement of taste and decency remains to this day an open question, as all liberal and conservative questions will probably remain till the crack of doom.

One day, to the inexpressible surprise and joy of the islanders, a large vessel was seen to pass through the narrow opening in the coral reef, and cast anchor in the lagoon. The excitement on Ratinga was great, for vessels rarely had occasion to visit the island, although some of them, probably South Sea whalers, were seen to pass it on the horizon two or three times a year.

Immediately four canoes full of natives put off to visit the stranger; but on reaching her they were sternly told to keep off, and the order was silently enforced by the protruding muzzle of a carronade, and the forbidding aspect of several armed men who looked over the side. “We are men of peace,” said Waroonga, who was in the foremost canoe, “and come as Christian friends.”

“We are men of war,” growled one of the men, “an’ don’t want no friends, Christian or otherwise.”

“We came to offer you hospitality,” returned the missionary in a remonstrative tone.

“An’ we came to take all the hospitality we want of you without waitin’ for the offer,” retorted the sailor, “so you’d better go back to where you came from, an’ keep yourselves quiet, if ye don’t want to be blowed out o’ the water.”

This was sufficient. With disappointed looks the natives turned their canoes shoreward and slowly paddled home.

“Depend upon it, this is another pirate,” said Orlando, when Waroonga reported to him the result of his visit.

“What would you advise us to do?” asked Waroonga.

Lest the reader should be surprised at this question, we must remind him that Orlando had, in the course of these three years, grown up almost to manhood. The southern blood in his veins, and the nature of the climate in which he had been born and brought up, may have had something to do with his early development; but, whatever the cause, he had, at the early age of eighteen, become as tall and nearly as powerful as his father had been, and so like to him in aspect and manner, that the natives began to regard him with much of that respect and love which they had formerly entertained towards Antonio. Of course Orlando had not the sprinkling of grey in his short black curly hair which had characterised the elder Zeppa; but he possessed enough of the black beard and moustache, in a soft rudimental form, to render the resemblance to what his sire had been very remarkable. His poor little mother left the management of all her out-of-door affairs with perfect confidence to her son. Tomeo and Buttchee also had begun to regard him as his father's successor.

"I would advise you to do nothing," said Orley, in reply to Waroonga's question, "beyond having all the fighting men of the village prepared for action, and being ready at a moment's notice to receive the strangers as friends if they choose to come as such."

"Well, then, Orley, I will be ready for them, as you tell to me, if they comes in peace; if not, you must go and carry out your own advice, for you is manager of all secular affairs here."

In the afternoon a large boat, full of men armed to the teeth, put off from the side of the strange vessel, which was barque-rigged, and rowed to the beach near the mouth of a small stream. Evidently the object of the visit was to procure fresh water. Having posted his men in ambush, with orders to act in strict accordance with his signals, Orlando sauntered down alone and unarmed to the place where the sailors were filling their water-casks.

"Is your captain here?" he asked quietly.

The men, who were seemingly a band of thorough ruffians, looked at him in surprise, but went on filling their casks.

"I am the captain," said one, stepping up to the youth with an insolent air.

"Indeed!" said Orlando, with a look of surprise.

"Yes, indeed, and let me tell you that we have no time to trouble ourselves wi' you or yours; but since you've put yourself in our power, we make you stay here till we've done watering."

"I have no intention of leaving you," replied Orley, seating himself on a rock,

with a pleasant smile.

“What d’ee say to kidnap the young buck?” suggested one of the men; “he might be useful.”

“Perhaps he might be troublesome,” remarked Orlando; “but I would advise you to finish your work here in peace, for I have a band of three hundred men up in the bush there—not ordinary savages, let me tell you, but men with the fear of God in their hearts, and the courage of lions in their breasts—who would think it an easy matter to sweep you all off the face of the earth. They are ready to act at my signal—or at my fall—so it will be your wisdom to behave yourselves.”

The quiet, almost gentle manner in which this was said, had a powerful effect on the men. Without more words they completed the filling of the casks, and then, re-embarking, pushed off. It was obvious that they acted in haste. When they had gone about a couple of boat-lengths from the beach, one of the men rose up with a musket, and Orlando distinctly heard him say—

“Shall I send a bullet into him?”

“If you do, the captain will skin you alive,” was the reply from one of the other men.

The alternative did not seem agreeable to the first speaker, for he laid down his musket, and resumed his oar.

Soon after the boat reached her, the sails of the stranger were spread, and she glided slowly out of the lagoon.

Chapter Four

Let us waft ourselves away, now, over the sea, in pursuit of the strange barque which had treated the good people of Ratinga so cavalierly.

Richard Rosco sits in the cabin of the vessel, for it is he who commands her. He had taken her as a prize, and, finding her a good vessel in all respects, had adopted her in preference to the old piratical-looking schooner. A seaman stands before him.

“It is impossible, I tell you,” says Rosco, while a troubled expression crosses his features, which have not improved since we saw him upwards of three years ago. “The distance between the two islands is so great that it is not probable he traversed it in a canoe, especially when we consider that he did not know the island’s name or position, and was raving mad when I put him

ashore."

"That may be so, captain," says the sailor: "nevertheless I seed him with my own eyes, an no mistake. Didn't you say he was a man that nobody could mistake, tall, broad, powerful, handsome, black curly hair, short beard and moustache, with sharp eyes and a pleasant smile?"

"The same, in every particular—and just bordering on middle age," answers the perplexed pirate.

"Well, as to age, I can't say much about that," returns the seaman; "he seemed to me more like a young man than a middle-aged one, but he had coolness and cheek enough for a hundred and fifty, or any age you like."

"Strange," muttered Rosco to himself, paying no regard to the last observation; "I wish that I or Mr Redford had gone with you, or some one who had seen him the last time we were here; but I didn't want to be recognised;" then checking himself—"Well, you may go, and send Mr Redford to me."

"I cannot account for Zeppa turning up in this way," he said, when the mate entered.

"No more can I, sir."

"Do all the men agree in saying that he seems to be quite sane."

"All. Indeed most of them seemed surprised when I asked the question. You see, what with death by sword, shot, and sickness, there's not a man in the ship who ever saw him, except yourself and me. The last of the old hands, you know, went with Captain Daniel when you sent him and the unwilling men away in the old schooner. I have no doubt, myself, from what they say, that Zeppa has got well again, and managed to return home as sound and sane as you or I."

"If you and I were sane, we should not be here," thought the pirate captain; but he did not give expression to the thought, save by a contemptuous curl of his lip.

"Well, Redford," he said, after a few seconds' pause, "my chief reason for going to Sugar-loaf Island is removed, nevertheless we shall still go there for a fresh load of sandal-wood and other things that will fetch a good price."

"I fear, sir," returned the mate after some hesitation, "that the crew will be apt to mutiny, if you insist on going there. They are tired of this mixture of trade with free-roving, and are anxious to sail in seas where we shall be more likely to fall in with something worth picking up."

“Stop, Redford, I want to hear no more. The crew shall go where I please as long as I command them; and you may add that I will guarantee their being pleased with my present plan. There, don’t refer to this subject again. Where did you say the British cruiser was last seen?”

“Bearing nor’-east, sir, hull down—on our starboard quarter. I called you at once, but she had changed her course to nor’-west and we lost sight of her.”

“That will just suit us,” said Rosco, going into his private cabin and shutting the door.

Well might the pirate captain be perplexed at that time, for he was surrounded by difficulties, not the least of which was that his men were thoroughly dissatisfied with him, and he with them. He did not find his crew sufficiently ready to go in for lucrative kidnapping of natives when the chance offered, and they did not find their captain sufficiently ferocious and bloodthirsty when prizes came in their way. Nevertheless, through the influence of utter recklessness, contemptuous disregard of death, and an indomitable will, backed by wonderful capacity and aptitude in the use of fist, sword, and pistol, he had up to this time held them in complete subjection.

In his heart Rosco had resolved to quit his comrades at the first favourable opportunity, and, with this intent had been making for one of the most out-of-the-way islands in the Pacific—there to go and live among the natives, and never more to see the faces of civilised men—against whom he had sinned so grievously. His intentions were hastened by the fact that a British man-of-war on the Vancouver station, hearing of his exploits, had resolved to search for him. And this cruiser did in fact come across his track and gave chase; but being a poor sailer, was left behind just before the pirate had reached Ratinga, where, as we have seen, she put in for water.

The discovery there made, as he supposed, that Antonio Zeppa had recovered his reason and returned home, not only amazed and puzzled Rosco, but disconcerted part of his plan, which was to find Zeppa, whose image had never ceased to trouble his conscience, and, if possible, convey him to the neighbourhood of some port whence he could easily return to Ratinga. It now struck him that, since Zeppa was no longer on Sugar-loaf Island, that spot would be as favourable a one as could be found for his purpose, being far removed from the usual tracks of commerce. He would go there, take to the mountains as Zeppa had done before him, leave his dissatisfied comrades to follow their own devices, and, crossing over to the other side of the island, ingratiate himself as well as he could with the natives, grow beard and moustache, which he had hitherto shaved, and pass himself off as a

shipwrecked sailor, should any vessel or cruiser touch there.

“And shipwrecked I am, body, soul, and spirit,” he muttered, bitterly, as he sat in his cabin, brooding over the past and future.

Leaving him there, and thus, we will return to Ratinga, the peaceful inhabitants of which were destined at this time to be tickled with several little shocks of more or less agreeable surprise.

One of these shocks was the sudden disappearance of Zariffa, the native missionary’s brown baby. It was an insignificant event in itself, and is only mentioned because of its having led indirectly to events of greater importance.

Zariffa had, by that time, passed out of the condition of brown-babyhood. She had, to her own intense delight, been promoted to the condition of a decently-clad little savage. In addition to the scuttle bonnet which was not quite so tremulous as that of her mother, she now sported a blue flannel petticoat. This was deemed sufficient for her, the climate being warm.

Zariffa was still, however, too young to take care of herself. Great, therefore, was Betsy Waroonga’s alarm when she missed her one day from her little bed where she should have been sleeping.

“Ebony!” cried Betsy, turning sharply round and glaring, “Zariffa’s gone.”

“Quite dead,” exclaimed the negro, aghast.

“Not at all dead,” said Betsy; “but gone—gone hout of hers bed.”

“Dat no great misfortin’, missis,” returned Ebony, with a sigh of relief.

“It’s little you knows, stoopid feller,” returned the native missionary’s wife, while her coal-scuttle shook with imparted emotion; “Zariffa never dis’beyed me in hers life. She’s lost. We must seek—seek quick!”

The sympathetic negro became again anxious, and looked hastily under the chairs and tables for the lost one, while her mother opened and searched a corner cupboard that could not have held a child half her size. Then the pair became more and more distracted as each excited the other, and ran to the various outhouses shouting, “Zariffa!” anxiously, entreatingly, despairing.

They gathered natives as they ran, hither and thither, searching every nook and corner, and burst at last in an excited crowd into the presence of Waroonga himself, who was in the act of detailing the history of Joseph to a select class of scholars, varying from seven to seventeen years of age.

“Oh! massa, Zariffa’s lost!” cried Ebony.

Waroonga glanced quickly at his wife. The excessive agitation of her bonnet told its own tale. The missionary threw Joseph overboard directly, proclaimed a holiday, and rushed out of the school-house.

“No use to go home, massa,” cried Ebony; “we’s sarch eberywhere dar; no find her.”

“Has you been to the piggery?” demanded the anxious father, who was well aware of his child’s fondness for “little squeakers.”

“Oh, yes; bin dar. I rousted out de ole sow for make sure Zariffa no hides behind her.”

At this juncture Orlando came up with a sack of cocoa-nuts on his back. Hearing what had occurred he took the matter in hand with his wonted energy.

“We must organise a regular search,” he said, throwing down the sack, “and go to work at once, for the day is far advanced, and we can do little or nothing after dark.”

So saying he collected all the able men of the village, divided them into bands, gave them minute, though hurried, directions where they were to go, and what signals they were to give in the event of the child being found; and then, heading one of the bands, he joined eagerly in the search. But, before going, he advised Betsy Waroonga to keep his mother company, as women could not be of much use in such work.

“No,” said Mrs Waroonga, with decision; “we will go home an’ pray.”

“Right, that will be better,” said Orlando. “You go back with her, Ebony, and fetch my gun. I left it in Waroonga’s house when I went in for a sack to hold the cocoa-nuts. It is behind the door. You’ll find me searching in the palm-grove. Now, boys, away; we’ve no time to lose.”

Returning to her house with her sable attendant, poor Betsy rushed into her private apartment threw herself on her knees and half across her lowly bed in an agony of alarm.

She was startled and horrified by a sharp, though smothered cry, while some living creature heaved under the bed-clothes. Instantly she swept them off, and lo! there lay Zariffa safe and well, though somewhat confused by her rude awaking and her mother’s weight.

“You’s keep up heart, missis,” said the sympathetic Ebony, looking hastily into

the room in passing; “we’s sartin sure to find—”

He stopped. Blazing amazement sat on his countenance for about six moments —a pause similar to that of an injured infant just preparing for a yell—then he exploded into a fit of laughter so uncontrollable that it seemed as if a hurricane had been suddenly let loose in the room, insomuch that Betsy’s remonstrances were quite unheard.

“Oh! missis,” he exclaimed at last, wiping his eyes, “I’s a-goin’ to bust.”

“Yes, an’ I’ll help you to do it,” she replied impatiently, seizing an old shoe, and laying it on the negro’s bare back with a crack like a pistol-shot.

Ebony strove to calm himself.

“Go ’long, you noisy feller, an’ tell Waroonga to stop the search.”

It was plain that Ebony had not sufficiently relieved his feelings, for his broad chest heaved, and ominous sounds came out of his nose.

“On’y tink,” said he, “dat you hoed down to say yous prayers on de berry top ob de babby!”

The thought was too much for him. He exploded again, and, rushing from the house, ascended the hills, and filled the groves as he went with hilarious melody.

But he did not find Orlando, who had completed his search of the palm-grove and passed over the ridge that formed the summit of the island in that part. It was by no means the highest part, but from it could be seen a large bay which lay on the side of the island opposite to the mission village. And here he beheld the cause of another of the little surprises with which we have said the people of Ratinga were visited at that time. It was a stately man-of-war, with the Union Jack flying from her peak, and her sails backed so as to check her way.

A boat was being lowered from her side, and Orlando with his party hastened to the beach to meet it.

The officer in command was evidently not aware that he had come to an island where the peaceful influences of the gospel of Jesus prevailed, for, on landing, he drew up his men, who were all armed to receive either as friends or foes the party of natives who advanced towards him. The officer was not a little surprised to observe that the natives were led by a white man, who halted them when within about three hundred yards off, and advanced alone and unarmed to the beach.

“I am happy to welcome you and offer hospitality,” said Orlando, taking off his cap.

“Thanks, good sir, I accept your offer most gladly,” returned the officer, holding out his hand; “all the more heartily that I had expected to meet with none but savages here.”

“We are Christians, thank God,” said Orlando.

“Then this must be the island of Ratinga, of which we have heard so much of late.”

“Even so.”

“But where, then, is your village, your church?” asked the officer, looking round.

“It is on the other side of the island. If you will take your ship round there you will find good anchorage and fresh water, of which last, if I may judge from the casks in your boat you are in search.”

The officer at once acted on this advice, and Orlando accompanied him on board to pilot the vessel round.

On the way the captain—Fitzgerald—asked if any suspicious craft had been seen lately, and, on hearing that a barque, flying British colours, had put in there only a day or two before, said that he had been sent out in chase of that barque, as she was commanded by a celebrated and rather eccentric pirate, named Rosco.

“I know him well,” said Orlando quickly, “he was mate of a schooner which called here between three and four years ago. It was commanded by a poor fellow named Daniel, who, I fear, was murdered by his crew. Alas! I have only too good reason to remember it.”

He then related the visit of the piratical-looking schooner to Ratinga; its departure with his father and himself on board; the mutiny, and all the other circumstances connected with that memorable event.

“And have you never heard of your father since then?” asked Captain Fitzgerald.

“Never. I am almost forced to the conclusion that he must have been murdered by the mutineers, for if he had escaped them, he would surely, long ere now, have managed to find his way home. And yet I cannot help feeling that

perhaps God may have spared his life, and may yet restore him to us."

"It is, perhaps, cruel to encourage hopes which may be doomed to bitter disappointment," returned the captain, regarding Orlando's sad face with a look of sympathy; "but it is by no means impossible that your father may be alive. Listen. I, too, know something of this affair, and will tell you all I know. Captain Daniel, of the schooner whose crew mutinied, was not murdered. This Rosco seems to have had, all through his career, a strong tendency to mercy. So much so that his men have threatened his own life more than once. At the same time, he possesses great power over them, and has held them for many years under command. We have heard of him more than once from persons whom he has set free, after taking their vessels; among others from Captain Daniel, who turned up in Vancouver's Island. It seems that after you were thrown overboard and supposed to be drowned, your poor father went—went—that is to say, his mind was unhinged, owing, no doubt, to the combined effect of your supposed murder and the two terrible blows by which he was felled during the mutiny."

"My father—mad!" exclaimed Orlando, in a low, horrified tone, clasping his hands, and gazing into Captain Fitzgerald's face.

"Nay, I did not say mad. It was a great shock, you know, and quite sufficient to account for temporary derangement. Then Rosco sailed away to a distant island, where he put your father ashore, and left him."

"What island—did you hear its name?" asked Orlando, quickly.

"It is an almost unknown island, not marked or named in any chart; but it had been seen by one of the mutineers on one of his early voyages, and named Sugar-loaf Island, from its shape. Well, after leaving the island Rosco attacked, and easily captured, a large merchantman. Finding it both good and new, he transhipped all that was worth retaining, including arms and guns, into this barque, and took command; then he assembled his men, asked who were willing to follow him, put those who were unwilling into the old schooner with Captain Daniel at their head, and left them to sail where they pleased. They landed, as I have said, at Vancouver's Island. The pirate Rosco, and his barque, the 'Flame,' have become notorious since then, both for daring and eccentricity, and I have been ordered to get hold of them, if possible. Now, I mean to go to Sugar-loaf Island, because, from various things I have heard of this scoundrel, I think it not unlikely that he will go there."

"And you will let me go with you?" suddenly exclaimed Orlando, in a voice of earnest entreaty.

"I will, my poor fellow," returned the captain; "but don't be too sanguine; and

let me advise you to say nothing of all this to your mother."

"You are right. She must not know—at least not now. It will be the first time in my life I have had a secret from my mother; but she must not know till—till we return."

That night there was great rejoicing in Ratinga, because of the recovery, if we may so call it, of Zariffa, and the visit of the British man-of-war.

In the midst of the rejoicings a huge, lustrous pair of black eyes gazed earnestly into Orlando's face, and an enormously thick pair of red lips said, "I go too, massa—eh?"

"Well, you may, Ebony, if the captain will let you. He has already agreed to take the missionary and the chiefs Tomeo and Buttchee; but, mind, not a whisper of our secret hope to any one."

Thus, with the approval of Madame Zeppa and Betsy Waroonga, these five representatives of Ratinga embarked on board the British man-of-war, and left the island.

Chapter Five

We left the poor madman, Antonio Zeppa, wandering aimlessly up into the mountains of Sugar-loaf Island. Whether it was the loss of his beloved Orley alone that had turned his brain, or that loss coupled with the injury to his head, we cannot tell, but certain it is that the outward and visible violence of his great sorrow seemed to depart from him after he had entered the rugged defiles of the mountain range. His mental malady appeared to take the form of simple indifference and inactivity. Sometimes he muttered to himself as he went slowly and wearily along, but generally he was silent with his chin sunk upon his breast as he gazed upon the ground with lack-lustre eyes.

At other times he started and looked around him with a sharp, inquiring, almost timid, glance; but the gleam of memory—if such it was—soon passed away, and his handsome face resumed the gentle, almost childish, look which had settled down on it. But never again did he give vent to the heart-broken cries and wails which had marked the first stage of his derangement.

The mutterings to which we have referred were seldom coherent; but the disjointed utterances sufficed to indicate the natural character of the man. As the ruling passion is said to become dominant in death, so, in this death of reason which appeared to have passed upon Zeppa, love of his wife and child and the natives of Ratinga, as well as profound reverence and love to his God,

became conspicuous in the broken sentences that occasionally dropped from his lips.

At first he had been like some grand instrument thrown wildly out of tune and swept by a reckless hand. Now he resembled the same instrument with the framework shattered, the strings hanging loose, and the music of discord as well as harmony gone for ever.

Oh it was sad, inexpressibly sad, to see the grand and good man—the image of himself, yet not himself, with bowed head and bent form, the very personification of humility—wandering forth on that lonely island of the southern seas!

After quitting the shore he continued slowly to ascend the mountain until he gained the summit. Here, seating himself on a rock, he lifted his eyes and looked slowly around him.

It was a glorious sight that met his unintelligent gaze. On the side which he had ascended, the mountain sloped abruptly into the sea, yet its precipices were not forbidding or gloomy, for they were clothed with the luxuriant and lovely vegetation of those favoured regions.

The rocks were fringed with grasses and wild flowers; the cliffs were softened by palmated leaves and gorgeous shrubs. Wild fruits in abundance grew on every side; in short, the land presented the appearance of a terrestrial paradise.

On the other side of the range similar, but softer, scenery rolled away for several miles in easy slopes, until it terminated in a plain, the farther end of which was bounded by the white sands of the shore.

Around all lay the great sea, like a transparent blue shield, on which the sun glinted in myriad ripples of burnished gold. Everywhere God’s work was glorious, but God’s image in man was not there, for poor Zeppa looked upon it all with total indifference.

The schooner was still visible from that lofty outlook, like a snowflake on the sea; but Zeppa saw it, or regarded it, not. On the shore of the island furthest from the mountain, the clustering huts of a native village could be seen; but Zeppa looked at it without a gleam of interest, and passed it over as if it were a group of ant-hills.

Hunger, however, soon claimed attention. After remaining motionless for more than an hour, he arose and plucked some fruit from a neighbouring tree.

“God is good—has always been good to me and mine,” he murmured, as he

placed the fruit on the grass and sat down beside it.

Then, clasping his hands and closing his eyes, he asked a blessing on his food in the same words and tone which he had been wont to use when at home.

After his hunger was appeased, he again wandered about apparently without aim; but as night began to descend, he sought and found a slightly hollowed part of a cliff with an overhanging ledge.

It was scarcely deep enough to be styled a cave, but appeared to be a sufficient shelter in the maniac's eyes, for he busied himself in gathering ferns and dried grass, until he had made himself a comfortable couch at the inner end of it.

Before lying down he knelt, clasped his hands, and poured out his soul in fervent prayer.

His words were now no longer incoherent and the burthen of his petition was —a blessing on the dear ones at home, and forgiveness of all his sins through Jesus Christ. It seemed evident judging by his words, that he had forgotten the recent past, and imagined that Orlando was still alive.

Then he lay down and fell asleep.

Thus days and weeks and months rolled on, and still the madman wandered aimlessly among the mountain peaks.

The savages at the other end of the island never molested him, for, having no occasion to clamber up these rocky heights, they did not become aware of his existence until a considerable time had elapsed.

His discovery at last was the result of a crime.

One of the savages committed a theft in the native village, and fled for refuge to the mountains. Wapoota, being a funny fellow, was a favourite with his chief Ongoloo, and occupied a position somewhat analogous to the court jester of old. Moreover, he was often consulted in serious matters by his chief—in short, was a sort of humorous prime minister.

But he could not resist the tendency to steal, and one day pilfered something or other from Ongoloo, who finally lost patience with him, for he was an old offender.

Ongoloo, though neither a warlike nor ferocious fellow, vowed to cut out the heart and liver of Wapoota, and expose them to public gaze.

Disliking publicity after this fashion, the thief fled, purposing to abide in the

mountains until his chief's wrath should have evaporated.

Rambling one day in his mountain refuge, the dishonest savage turned a jutting point of rock, and suddenly stood face to face with Zeppa. His jaw dropped, his eyes glared, his knees smote together, and lemon-yellow took the place of brown-ochre on his cheeks. It was an awkward place of meeting, for the path, if we may so style it, was a mere ledge, with a perpendicular cliff on one side, a precipice on the other.

And well might the savage by overcome with fear, on such a spot with such a man before him, for, in addition to his commanding stature, Zeppa had now the wild appearance resulting from long untrimmed locks and a shaggy beard.

Both locks and beard had also changed from black to iron-grey during these months of lonely wandering. His dress, too, had become much disordered and ragged, so that altogether his appearance and fierce aspect were eminently fitted to strike terror to the heart of a more courageous man than Wapoota, who happened to be rather mild in disposition.

After the first stare of astonishment he sank on his knees and held up his hands as if supplicating mercy. But he had nothing to fear from the maniac.

"My poor fellow," said Zeppa, in English, laying his hand on the native's head and patting it, "do not fear. I will not harm you."

Of course Wapoota did not understand the words but he fully appreciated the action, and the lemon-yellow began to fade while the brown-ochre returned.

Without uttering another word, Zeppa took Wapoota by the hand and led him to his cave, where he set before him such fruits as remained over from his last meal, and then, sitting down, gazed abstractedly on the ground. Wapoota ate from fear of offending his host, rather than hunger.

When he had finished, Zeppa rose, pointed to his couch at the inner part of the cave, nodded to him with a kindly smile, and left him.

At first the savage seemed disposed to make off when Zeppa's back was turned, but when he saw him slowly ascend the hill with his head bowed down he changed his mind, made some significant grimaces—which we will not attempt to explain—and lay down to sleep.

On his return, Wapoota tried to enter into conversation with his host but Zeppa only smiled, patted him gently on the head and shoulder, and paid no further attention to him. The savage was somewhat overawed by such treatment.

Observing his host more closely, it soon began to dawn upon him that he was

in the power of a madman, and some tinges of the lemon-yellow reappeared; but when he perceived that Zeppa was not merely a harmless but an exceedingly gentle madman, his confidence and the brown-ochre reasserted themselves.

Thus, for several days, the madman and the savage dwelt amicably together, and slept side by side during the night; but Zeppa made it very apparent that he did not wish for his visitor's society during the day-time, and the visitor had the sense to let him wander forth alone.

Wapoota was mistaken when he calculated on the cooling of Ongoloo's wrath. That angry chief, bent on the fulfilment of his anatomical vow, set forth with a small party of picked men to explore the Sugar-loaf in quest of the runaway. He found him one day gathering fruits for Zeppa's supper—for Wapoota had already become a sort of attached Friday to this unfortunate Crusoe.

On beholding his countrymen, the thief's visage underwent a series of remarkable changes, for he knew that escape was impossible, and the expression of his chief's face forbade him to hope for mercy.

"I have found you, mine enemy," growled Ongoloo—of course in the native tongue.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Wapoota, in a piteous tone. "Mercy no longer dwells in my breast," returned the chief.

In proof of the truth of this assertion he ordered his men to seize and bind Wapoota, and proceed at once with the execution of his cruel purpose.

The unfortunate wretch, unable to face the appalling prospect gave vent to a series of terrible shrieks, and struggled fiercely while they bound him. But in vain would he have struggled if his cries for mercy had not reached other ears than those of his countrymen.

Not far from the spot where the thief had been captured, Zeppa chanced to be sitting, idly toying with the branch of a tree which he had fashioned into a rude staff wherewith to climb the mountain more easily.

When the first shriek ran among the cliffs, it seemed to startle the maniac out of the depressing lethargy under which he had laboured so long. He sprang up and listened, with dilated eyes and partly open mouth.

Again and again the shrieks rang out, and were echoed from cliff to cliff.

As a tigress bounds to the rescue of her young, so sprang Zeppa down the hillside in the direction of the cries. He came suddenly to the edge of a cliff

which overlooked the scene, and beheld a savage just about to plunge a knife into Wapoota's breast.

Zeppa gave vent to a tremendous roar, which terminated in a wild laugh. Then he wrenched a mass of rock from the cliffs and hurled it down.

The height was greater than any sane man would have ventured to leap even to save his life; but the maniac gave no time to thought.

He followed the mass of rock with another wild laugh, and next moment stood in the midst of the savage group.

These men were no cowards. They were Ongoloo's picked warriors, and would have scorned to fly before a single foe, however large or fierce.

But when they saw plainly that Zeppa was a white man and a maniac, they turned, with one consent, and fled as if a visitant from the nether realms had assailed them.

Zeppa did not follow. All his sudden wrath vanished with the enemy. He turned calmly to the prostrate man, cut his bonds, and set him free. Then, without saying a word, he patted him on the shoulder, and wandered listlessly away with his head dropped as of old.

You may be sure that Wapoota did not hesitate to make good use of his freedom. He fled on the wings—or legs—of fear to the most inaccessible recesses of the mountains, from which he did not emerge till night had enshrouded land and sea. Then he crept stealthily back to Zeppa's cave, and laid himself quietly down beside his friend.

The inherent tendency of Zeppa's nature was towards peace and goodwill. Even in his madness and misery his spirit trickled, if it did not run, in the customary direction. His dethroned reason began, occasionally, to make fitful efforts after some plan which it sought to evolve. But before the plan could be arranged, much less carried out, the dull sense of a leaden grief overwhelmed it again, and he relapsed into the old condition of quiet apathy.

Chance, however, brought about that which the enfeebled intellect could not compass.

One day—whether inadvertently or not we cannot tell—Zeppa wandered down in the direction of the native settlement. That same day Ongoloo wandered towards the mountain, and the two men suddenly met so close to each other that there was no possibility of escape to either.

But, sooth to say, there was no thought of escape in the breast of either.

Ongoloo, being a brave savage, was ashamed of having given way to panic at his first meeting with the madman. Besides, he carried his huge war-club, while his opponent was absolutely unarmed—having forgotten to take his usual staff with him that day.

As for Zeppa, he had never at any time feared the face of man, and, in his then condition, would have faced man or fiend with equal indifference. But the sight of the savage chief seemed to recall something to his mind. He stood with his arms crossed, and an expression of perplexity on his countenance, while Ongoloo assumed an attitude of defence.

Suddenly a beaming smile overspread Zeppa's face. We have already said that his smile had fascination in it. The effect on the savage was to paralyse him for the moment. Zeppa advanced, took Ongoloo's face between both hands, and, placing his nose against that of the chief, gently rubbed it.

For the benefit of the ignorant, we may explain that this is the usual salutation of friendship among some of the South Sea Islanders.

Ongoloo returned the rub, and dropped his club. He was obviously glad of this peaceful termination to the rencontre.

Then, for the first time, it occurred to Zeppa to use the language of Ratinga. The chief evidently understood it.

"God is love," said Zeppa solemnly, pointing upward with his finger. "God forgives. You will forgive, and so be like God."

The chief was completely overawed by Zeppa's grandeur and gentleness. He had never before seen the two qualities combined.

Zeppa took him by the hand, as he had previously taken Wapoota, and led him up into the mountains. The chief submitted meekly, as if he thought a being from the better world were guiding him. On reaching the cave they found Wapoota arranging the supper-table—if we may so express it—for he had been in the habit of doing this for some time past, about sunset, at which time his protector had invariably returned home—alas! it was a poor home!

To say that Wapoota was transfixed, or petrified, on beholding Ongoloo, would not convey the full idea of his condition. It is useless to say that he glared; that his knees smote, or that lemon-yellow supplanted brown-ochre on his visage. Words can do much, but they cannot describe the state of that savage on that occasion. The reader's imagination is much more likely to do justice to the situation. To that we leave it.

But who, or what language, shall describe the state of mind into which both Ongoloo and Wapoota were thrown when Zeppa, having brought them close to each other, grasped them firmly by their necks and rubbed their noses forcibly together. There was no resisting the smile with which this was dune. The chief and the thief first glanced at each other, then at their captor, and then they laughed—absolutely roared—after which they rubbed noses of their own accord, and “made it up.”

We may remark, in passing, that Ongoloo was not sorry for the reconciliation, because Wapoota had become necessary to him both in council and during relaxation, and of late he had come to feel low-spirited for want of his humourist.

But both of them were much concerned to observe that after this reconciliation, the reconciler relapsed into his pensive mood and refused to be interested in anything.

They tried in vain to rouse him from his strange apathy—which neither of them could at all understand. Next day Ongoloo took occasion to give him the slip, and returned to his village.

Zeppa cared nothing for that. He did not even ask Wapoota what had become of him.

At this time a new idea occurred to Wapoota, who had been ordered by his chief to induce Zeppa to visit the native village. It struck him that as he had been led, so he might lead. Therefore one morning he waited until Zeppa had finished breakfast, and when he rose, as was his wont, to go off for the day, Wapoota took him gently by the hand and led him forth. To his surprise—and comfort, for he had had strong misgivings—Zeppa submitted. He did not seem to think that the act was peculiar.

Wapoota led him quietly and slowly down the mountain side, and so, by degrees, right into the native village, where Ongoloo was, of course, prepared to meet and welcome him.

He was received by the head men of the tribe with deep respect and conducted to a tent which had been prepared for him, where Wapoota, who had constituted himself his servant—or lieutenant—made him comfortable for the night.

Zeppa at first expressed some surprise at all the fuss that was made regarding him, but soon ceased to trouble himself about the matter, and gradually relapsed into his old condition. He was content to remain with the natives, though he did not cease his lonely wanderings among the hills, absenting

himself for days at a time, but always returning, sooner or later, to the tent that had been provided for him in the village.

Now, in Sugar-loaf Island, there was a tribe that had, for years past, been at war with the tribe into whose hands Zeppa had thus fallen, and, not long after the events just narrated, it chanced that the Ratura tribe, as it was named, resolved to have another brush with their old enemies, the subjects of Ongoloo. What they did, and how they did it, shall be seen in another chapter.

Chapter Six

After Zeppa had remained a short time in his new quarters, he began to take an interest in the children of his savage friends. At first the mothers of the village were alarmed when they saw their little ones in his strong arms, playing with his beard, which had by that time grown long and shaggy, as well as grey like his curly locks; but soon perceiving that the children had nothing to fear from the strange white man, they gave themselves no further concern on the subject.

If Zeppa had been in his right mind when the savages first found him, it is probable that they would have hunted him down and slain him without remorse—for it is well known that many of the South Sea Islanders regard shipwrecked persons as victims who have no claim on their hospitality, but are a sort of windfall to be killed and devoured. Their treatment of Zeppa, therefore, must have been owing to some feeling of respect or awe, inspired by his obvious insanity, coupled, no doubt, with his commanding size and presence as well as his singular conduct on the occasion of their first meeting.

Whatever the reason, it is certain that the natives amongst whom the poor madman’s lot had thus been cast, treated him in an exceptional manner, and with an amount of respect that almost amounted to reverence. At first Ongoloo made a slight attempt to ascertain where his guest had come from, and what was his previous history, but as Zeppa always met such inquiries with one of his sweetest smiles, and with no verbal reply whatever, the chief felt unusually perplexed, dropped the subject, and began to regard the madman as a species of demigod. Of course no one else dared to question him, so that ever afterwards he remained in the eyes of his entertainers as a “Great Mystery.”

By degrees Zeppa became intimately acquainted with the little boys and girls of the village, and took much pleasure in watching them at play. They soon found out that he was fond of them, and might have become rather troublesome in their attentions to him, if he had been a busy man, but as he had nothing whatever to do except follow his own inclinations, and as his inclinations led him to sympathise with childhood, he was never ruffled by their familiarities or by their wild doings around his tent. He even suffered a

few of the very smallest of the brown troop to take liberties with him, and pull his beard.

One brown mite in particular—a female baby of the smallest conceivable dimensions, and the wildest possible spirit—became an immense favourite with him. Her name was Lippy, or some sound which that combination of letters produces.

Lippy's mother, a large-eyed, good-looking young woman, with insufficient clothing—at least in the estimate of a Ratingaite—was transfixed the first time she saw her little one practise her familiarities on their demigod.

Zeppa was lying on his back at the time, in front of his hut, when Lippy prowled cautiously towards him, like a very small and sly kitten about to pounce on a very huge dog. She sprang, just as her mother caught sight of her, and was on his broad chest in a moment. The mother was, as we have said, transfixed with alarm. The human kitten seized Zeppa by the beard and laughed immoderately. Zeppa replied with a gentle smile—he never laughed out now—and remained quite still.

Having finished her laugh, Lippy drew herself forward until she was close to her human dog's chin. At this point her mother would have rushed to the rescue, but she was still paralysed! Having reached the chin Lippy became more audacious, stretched forth one of her little hands, and seized Zeppa's nose. Still he did not move, but when the little brown kitten proceeded to thrust a thumb into one of his eyes, he roused himself, seized the child in his powerful hands, and raised her high above his head; then, lowering her until her little mouth was within reach, he kissed her.

This sufficed to relieve the mother's fears, so she retired quietly from the scene.

She was not so easily quieted, however, some weeks later, when she beheld Zeppa, after amusing himself one day with Lippy for half an hour, start up, place her on his shoulder, and stalk off towards the mountains. He absented himself for three days on that occasion. Lippy's mother at first became anxious, then terrified, then desperate. She roused Ongoloo to such a pitch that he at last called a council of war. Some of the head men were for immediate pursuit of the madman; others were of opinion that the little brat was not worth so much trouble; a few wretches even expressed the opinion that they were well rid of her—there being already too many female babies in the community!

While the conflict of opinions was at its fiercest, Zeppa stalked into the midst of them with Lippy on his shoulder, looked round with a benignant expression

of countenance, delivered the child to her mother, and went off to his hut without uttering a word. The council immediately dissolved itself and retired humiliated.

It was during one of Zeppa's occasional absences that the Ratura tribe of natives, as before mentioned, decided to have another brush with the Mountain-men, as they styled their foes.

We are not sure that the word used in the Ratura language was the exact counterpart of the words "brush" and "scrimmage" in ours, but it meant the same thing, namely, the cutting of a number of throats, or the battering in of a number of human skulls unnecessarily.

Of course there was a casus belli. There always is among savage as well as civilised nations, and it is a curious coincidence that the reasons given for the necessity for war are about as comprehensible among the civilised as the savage. Of course among civilised nations these reasons for war are said to be always good. Christians, you know, could not kill each other without good reasons; but is it not strange that among educated people, the reasons given for going to war are often very much the reverse of clear?

The origin of the war which was about to be revived, besides being involved in the mists of antiquity, was somewhat shrouded in the clouds of confusion. Cleared of these clouds, and delivered from those mists, it would have been obviously a just—nay, even a holy war—so both parties said, for they both wanted to fight. Unfortunately no living man could clear away the clouds or mists; nevertheless, as they all saw plainly the exceeding righteousness of the war, they could not in honour, in justice, or in common sense, do otherwise than go at it.

At some remote period of antiquity—probably soon after the dispersion at Babel—it was said that the Mountain-men had said to the Raturans, that it had been reported to them that a rumour had gone abroad that they, the men of Ratura, were casting covetous eyes on the summit of their mountain. The Raturans replied that it had never entered into their heads either to covet or to look at the summit of their mountain, but that, if they had any doubts on the subject, they might send over a deputation to meet a Ratura deputation, and hold a palaver to clear the matter up.

The deputations were sent. They met. They palavered for about half-an-hour with an air of sententious sincerity, then the leading chief of the mountaineer deputation cracked the crown of the leading chief of the Raturan deputation, and the two deputations spent the remainder of that day in fighting. Reinforcements came up on both sides. The skirmish became a pitched battle.

Blood was shed lavishly, heads were broken beyond repair, and women, coming to the help of the men with the baskets of stones, were slain in considerable numbers, as well as little children who had an inconvenient but not uncommon habit of getting in the way of the combatants. At last the Raturans were driven into the impregnable swamps that bordered part of their country; their villages and crops were burned, and those of their women and children who had not escaped to the swamps were carried into slavery, while the aged of both sexes were slaughtered in cold blood.

It was a complete victory. We are inclined to think that the Mountain-men called it a "glorious" victory. Judging from the world's history they probably did, and the mountain women ever afterwards were wont to tell their little ones of the prowess of their forefathers—of the skulls battered in and other deeds of heroism done—in that just and reasonable war!

As centuries rolled on, the old story came to be repeated again, and over again, with slight variations to suit the varying ages. In particular it came to be well understood, and asserted, that that unconquerable desire of the Raturans to take possession of the mountain-top was growing apace and had to be jealously watched and curbed.

In one of the centuries—we are not sure which—the Raturan savages made some advances into their swampy grounds and began to improve them. This region lay very remote from the Mountain-men's villages, but, as it approached the mountain base in a round-about manner, and as the mountain-tops could be distinctly seen from the region, although well-nigh impassable swamps still lay between the reclaimed lands and the mountain base, these advances were regarded as another casus belli, and another war was waged, with practically the same results—damage to everybody concerned, and good to no one.

Thus was the game kept up until the chief Ongoloo began to strut his little hour upon the stage of time.

There are always men, savage as well as civilised, in every region and age, who march in advance of their fellows, either because of intellectual capacity or moral rectitude or both. Ongoloo was one of these. He did not believe in "war at any price." He thought it probable that God lived in a state of peace, and argued that what was best for the Creator must naturally be best for the creature.

He therefore tried to introduce a peace-policy into Sugar-loaf Island. His efforts were not successful. The war-party was too strong for him. At last he felt constrained to give in to the force of public opinion and agreed to hold an

unarmed palaver with the men of Ratura. The war-at-any-price party would have preferred an armed palaver, but they were overruled.

The Raturans chanced at this time to be in somewhat depressed circumstances, owing to a sickness which had carried off many of their best warriors and left their lands partly waste, so that their finances, if we may so express it were in a bad condition.

“Now is our chance—now or never,” thought the war-party, and pushed matters to extremity.

On the day appointed for the palaver, one of the most pugnacious of the Mountain-men got leave to open the deliberations.

“You’re a low-minded, sneaking son of an ignorant father,” he said to the spokesman of the Raturans.

“You’re another,” retorted his foe.

Having disposed of these preliminary compliments, the speakers paused, glared, and breathed hard.

Of course we give the nearest equivalent in English that we can find for the vernacular used.

“You and your greedy forefathers,” resumed the Mountain-man, “have always kept your false eyes on our mountain-top, and you are looking at it still.”

“That’s a lie,” returned the man of Ratura with savage simplicity.

Had they been armed, it is probable that the palaver would have closed abruptly at this point.

Seeing that the relations between the parties were “strained” almost to the breaking-point, one of the less warlike among the Ratura chiefs caught his own spokesman by the nape of the neck, and hurled him back among his comrades.

“We have not, O valiant men of the Mountain,” he said, in a gentle tone, “looked upon your hill-tops with desire. We only wish to improve our swamps, increase our sweet-potato grounds, and live at peace.”

“That is not true,” retorted the fiery Mountain-man, “and we must have a promise from you that you will let the swamps alone, and not advance one step nearer to the top of our mountain.”

“But the swamps are not yours,” objected the other.

“No matter—they are not yours. They are neutral ground, and must not be touched.”

“Well, we will not touch them,” said the peaceful Raturan.

This reply disconcerted the fiery mountaineer, for he was anxious to fight.

“But that is not enough,” he resumed, as a bright idea struck him, “you must promise not even to look at our mountain.”

The man of Ratura reflecting how ill able his tribe was to go to war just then, agreed not even to look at the mountain!

“More than that” resumed the mountaineer, “you must not even wink at it.”

“We will not even wink at it,” replied his foe. “Still further,” continued the warlike mountaineer in sheer desperation, “you must not even think of it.”

“We will not think of it” answered the accommodating man of Ratura.

“Bah! you may go—you peace-loving cowards,” said the disappointed mountaineer, turning on his heel in bitter disappointment.

“Yes, you may go—in peace!” said Ongoloo with sententious gravity, waving his band grandly to the retiring men of Ratura, and walking off with an air of profound solemnity, though he could not help laughing—in his arm, somewhere, as he had not a sleeve to do it in.

But the Raturans did not go in peace. They went away with bitter animosity in their hearts, and some of them resolved to have a brush with their old foes, come what might.

Savages do not, as a rule, go through the formality of declaring war by withdrawing ambassadors. They are much more prone to begin war with that deceptive act styled “a surprise.”

Smarting under the taunts of their foes, the Raturans resolved to make an attack on the enemy’s village that very night, but Ongoloo was more than a match for them. Suspecting their intentions, he stalked them when the shades of evening fell, heard all their plans while concealed among the long grass, and then, hastening home, collected his warriors.

It chanced that Zeppa had returned from one of his rambles at the time and was lying in his hut.

“Will you come out with us and fight?” demanded Ongoloo, entering abruptly.

The mention of fighting seemed to stir some chord which jarred in Zeppa's mind, for he shook his head and frowned. It is possible that, if the savage had explained how matters stood, the poor madman might have consented, but the chief had not the time, perhaps not the will, for that. Turning quickly round, therefore, he went off as abruptly as he had entered.

Zeppa cared nothing for that. Indeed he soon forgot the circumstance, and, feeling tired, lay down to sleep.

Meanwhile Ongoloo marched away with a body of picked men to station himself in a narrow pass through which he knew that the invading foe would have to enter. He was hugely disgusted to be thus compelled to fight, after he had congratulated himself on having brought the recent palaver to so peaceful an issue. He resolved, however, only to give his enemies a serious fright, for he knew full well that if blood should flow, the old war-spirit would return, and the ancient suspicion and hatred be revived and intensified. Arranging his plans therefore, with this end in view, he resolved to take that peaceful, though thieving, humorist Wapoota, into his secret councils.

Summoning him, after the ambush had been properly arranged and the men placed, he said,—"Come here, you villain."

Wapoota knew that Ongoloo was not displeased with him by the nature of his address. He therefore followed, without anxiety, to a retired spot among the bush-covered rocks.

"You can screech, Wapoota?"

"Yes, chief," answered the ex-thief in some surprise, "I can screech like a parrot the size of a whale."

"That will do. And you love peace, like me, Wapoota, and hate bloodshed, though you love thieving."

"True, chief," returned the other, modestly.

"Well then, listen—and if you tell any one what I say to you, I will squeeze the eyes out of your head, punch the teeth from your jaws, and extract the oil from your backbone."

Wapoota thought that this was pretty strong for a man who had just declared his hatred of bloodshed, but he said nothing.

"You know the rock, something in shape like your own nose, at the foot of this pass?" said Ongoloo.

“I know it, chief.”

“Well, go there; hide yourself, and get ready for a screech. When you see the Ratura dogs come in sight, give it out—once—only once,—and if you don’t screech well, I’ll teach you how to do it better afterwards. Wait then till you hear and see me and my men come rushing down the track, and then screech a second time. Only once, mind! but let it be long and strong. You understand? Now—away!”

Like a bolt from a crossbow Wapoota sped. He had not been in hiding two minutes when the Ratura party came stealthily towards the rock before mentioned. Wapoota gathered himself up for a supreme effort. The head of the enemy’s column appeared in view—then there burst, as if from the bosom of silent night, a yell such as no earthly parrot ever uttered or whale conceived. The very blood in the veins of all stood still. Their limbs refused to move. Away over the rolling plain went the horrid sound till it gained the mountain where, after being buffeted from cliff to crag, it finally died out far up among the rocky heights.

“A device of the Ratura dogs to frighten us,” growled Ongoloo to those nearest him. “Come, follow me, and remember, not a sound till I shout.”

The whole party sprang up and followed their chief at full gallop down the pass. The still petrified Raturans heard the sound of rushing feet. When Wapoota saw the dark forms of his comrades appear, he filled his chest and opened his mouth, and the awful skirl arose once again, as if to pollute the night-air. Then Ongoloo roared. With mingled surprise and ferocity his men took up the strain, as they rushed towards the now dimly visible foe.

Savage nerves could stand no more. The Raturans turned and fled as one man. They descended the pass as they had never before descended it; they coursed over the plains like grey-hounds; they passed through their own villages like a whirlwind; drew most of the inhabitants after them like the living tail of a mad comet, and only stopped when they fell exhausted on the damp ground in the remotest depths of their own dismal swamps.

Chapter Seven

Strange to say, the anger of the Raturans was not assuaged by the rebuff which they received at that time. They took counsel again, and resolved to wait till the suspicions of the Mountain-men had been allayed, and then attack them when off their guard.

Meanwhile Zeppa, who did not at all concern himself with these matters, took it into his head one day that he would teach his little favourite, Lippy, to sing. Being a religious man he naturally selected hymns as the foundation of his teaching. At first he found it rather up-hill work, for Lippy happened to be gifted with a strong sense of the ludicrous, so that when he took her on his knee—the day on which the idea occurred to him—opened his mouth, and gave forth the first notes of a hymn in a fine sonorous bass voice, the child gazed at him for a few moments in open-eyed wonder, and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of open-mouthed laughter.

Poor Zeppa! till that day, since his mental break-down, the idea of singing had never once occurred to him, and this reception of his first attempt to teach disconcerted him. He stopped abruptly and gazed at the child with a perplexed expression. This gaze was evidently regarded by Lippy as an additional touch of humour, for she went off into renewed explosions of delight and the lesson had to be given up for that time. Zeppa was gifted, however, with patient perseverance in a remarkable degree. He renewed his efforts, but changed his plan. From that time forward he took to humming hymns in a low, sweet voice, as if for his own amusement. In a short time he had the satisfaction of hearing Lippy attempt, of her own accord, to sing one of the hymns that had taken her fancy. She went wrong in one or two notes, however, which gave Zeppa the opportunity of putting her right. He took her on his knee, and told her, in her own tongue, to try it again.

“Listen, this is the way,” he said, opening his mouth to give an example; but the first note had scarcely begun to sound when Lippy thrust her brown fist into his mouth, and told him to stop. She would sing it herself!

Accordingly, she began in a sweet, tiny little voice, and her teacher gazed at her with intense pleasure depicted on his handsome face until she reached the note where she had formerly gone wrong.

“No—not so; sing thus,” he said, giving the right notes.

The pupil took it up at once, and thus the singing lessons were fairly begun.

But the matter did not rest here, for Lippy, proud of her new acquirement soon began to exhibit her powers to her little companions, and ere long a few of the smallest of these ventured to creep into Zeppa’s hut while the daily lesson was going on. Gradually they grew bolder, and joined in the exercise. Zeppa took pleasure in helping them, and at last permitted as many as could crowd into his hut to do so. Those who could not get inside sat on the ground outside, and, as the hut was open in front, the gathering soon increased. Thus, insensibly, without a well-defined intention or effort on the part of any one, the praise of

God and the sweet name of Jesus ascended to heaven from that heathen village.

The assembling of these children for their lesson brought powerfully to Zeppa's mind, one day, the meetings of the Ratinga people for worship, and the appropriateness of beginning with prayer occurred to him. Accordingly, that morning, just as he was about to commence the hymns, he clasped his hands, raised his eyes, and briefly asked God's blessing on the work.

Profound astonishment kept the little ones quiet, and before they had time to recover the prayer was over.

Zeppa's mode of terminating the assembly was characteristic. He did not like to order the children away, much less to put them out of his hut, and the little creatures, being fond of the teacher, were prone to remain too long. When, therefore, he thought it time to close, he simply rose up and took himself off, leaving his congregation to disperse when and how it pleased! Sometimes on these occasions he would remain away for, perhaps, two or three days, having totally forgotten the singing class, to the great disappointment of the children.

One night, while he was thus absent, the men of Ratura delivered the attack which they had long meditated.

It was an unusually dark and still night; such a night as tends almost irresistibly to quiet and subdue wayward spirits, and induces man to think of his Creator. Such a night as is apt to fill the guilty conscience with unresting fears, as though it felt the near approach of that avenging sword which sooner or later it must meet.

Nevertheless, unmoved by its influences—except in so far as it suited their dark designs—the Raturans chose it for the fell purpose of invading their neighbours' lands, and exterminating their ancient foes; for, driven to desperation by the taunts and scorn of the Mountain-men, they felt that nothing short of extermination would suffice. And they were right. Extermination of the sinners, or the sins, was indeed their only chance of peace! Not knowing the Gospel method of blotting out the latter, their one resource lay in obliterating the former.

In the dead of night—that darkest hour when deeds of villainy and violence are usually done—the Raturan chief once more assembled his men from all quarters of the rolling plains and the dismal swamps, until the entire force of the tribe was under his command.

Leaving the aged men and boys to protect the women and children, those dark-skinned warriors marched away to battle—not with the flaunting banners and

martial music of civilised man, but with the profound silence and the stealthy tread of the savage. Though the work in hand was the same, the means to the end were different; we will therefore describe them.

Had it been a daylight battle to which they went forth, their women and boys would have followed with reserve ammunition in the shape of baskets full of stones, and spare javelins; but, being a night attack, the fighting men went alone—each armed with a heavy club, a light spear, and a stone knife or hatchet.

Arrived at the pass where they had met with such a singular repulse on a former occasion, the main body was halted, and scouts were sent out in advance to see that all was clear. Then the plan of attack was formed. One detachment was to approach the enemy's village on the right; another was to go round to the left; while the main body was to advance in front.

There is a proverb relating to the plans of men as well as mice, which receives verification in every land and time. Its truth received corroboration at this time on Sugar-loaf Island. On that same night it chanced that the chief Ongoloo was unable to sleep. He sent for his prime-ministerial-jester and one of his chiefs, to whom he proposed a ramble. The chief and jester professed themselves charmed with the proposal, although each had been roused from a pleasant slumber.

In the course of the ramble they came unexpectedly on one of the Raturan scouts, whom they temporarily extinguished with a club. Ongoloo became at once alive to the situation, and took instant action.

"Wapoota!" he said in an excited whisper, "run to the rear of the foe. Go swiftly, like the sea bird. When you get there, yell, shriek—like—like—you know how! As you did last time! Change your ground at each yell—so they will think you a host. Fear not to be captured. Your death is nothing. Away!"

A kick facilitated Wapoota's flight, and the two chiefs returned at speed to rouse the sleeping camp.

Wapoota performed his part nobly—and without being captured, for he did not agree with Ongoloo as to the unimportance of his own death! At the unexpected outcry in the rear the Raturans halted, and held a hasty council of war.

"Let us go back and fight them," said one.

"No use, they are evil spirits—not men," said another.

Some agreed with the former—some with the latter.

“While we waste time here,” said the leading chief, “the mountain dogs will get ready for us. Come! Forward!”

The chief was right. Ongoloo’s ruse caused delay, so that when the Raturans reached the village they found armed men ready to receive them. These they attacked with great courage, and waged a somewhat scrambling fight until daylight enabled each party to concentrate its forces.

Meanwhile, at the first alarm, the women and children of the village had been sent off to the mountains for safety. Among the fugitives were Lippy and her mother. These happened to meet with the enemy’s detachment which had been sent to assault the village on the left. The women scattered and fled. The savage warriors pursued, and several were taken, among them Lippy and her mother, who were promptly despatched to the rear. Those of the broken band that escaped continued their flight to the hills.

They had not gone far when they met Zeppa returning from one of his rambles. His surprise on hearing that the village had been attacked was great and his anxiety considerable. Although he had refused to go out to war with his entertainers, he felt no disposition to stand idly by when they were attacked. Disordered though his mind was, he could make a clear distinction between aggressive war and self-defence.

“And where is Lippy?” he asked, glancing round on the terrified faces.

“She is caught and carried away—with her mother.”

“What!” exclaimed Zeppa, with a flash of his bright eyes that told of natural rage mingling with the fires of insanity.

The women did not wait for more. They ran away from him in terror.

But Zeppa had heard enough. Turning his face towards the village he sped over the ground at a pace that soon brought him in sight of the combatants, who seemed to be swaying to and fro—now here, now there—as the tide of battle flowed and victory leaned sometimes to one side sometimes to the other.

Zeppa was unarmed. As he drew near he was observed by both parties to stop abruptly in his career, and wrench out of the ground a stake that had been meant for the corner-post of a newly-begun hut. It resembled the great club of Hercules rather than a weapon of modern man.

Whirling it like a feather round his head, the maniac rushed on. He was thoroughly roused. A feeling of desperate anxiety coupled with a sense of

horrible injustice had set his spirit in a blaze. His great size, which became more apparent as he advanced, his flashing eyes, compressed lips, and the wild flowing of his uncut hair and beard, gave him altogether an aspect so terrible that his foes trembled, while his friends rejoiced, and when at last he uttered a roar like a mad bull, and launched himself into the thickest of the fight the Raturans could not stand it, but turned and fled in a body under the impression that he was more than human. He was too fleet for them, however. Overtaking a flying knot, he brought the the corner-post down on the mass, and three warriors were levelled with the ground. Then, hurling the mighty club away as if it were a mere hindrance to him, he ran straight at the leader of the Raturans, who, being head and shoulders above his fellows, seemed a suitable foe to single out.

Before reaching him, however, his attention was arrested by a cry from some one in the midst of the enemy in front. It was the voice of Wapoota, who was trying to break his way through the flying foe to his own people.

Fortunately Zeppa recognised the voice, and darted towards his friend, who was hard pressed at the time by a crowd of opponents.

One roar from the maniac sent these flying like chaff before the wind. It must be added, however, for the credit of the men of Ratura, that Ongoloo and his warriors had backed up their new leader gallantly.

When Wapoota saw his deliverer, he ran to him, panting, and said—

“Come with me—this way—Lippy is here!”

That was sufficient. Zeppa became submissive like a child, while the jester, taking him by the hand, ran with him at racing speed in the direction of the Raturan villages, towards which the child and her mother were being led by the party which had captured them.

This was briefly explained to Zeppa by Wapoota, who had chanced to encounter the party when returning from his yelling mission, if we may so express it.

The race was a long one, but neither the madman nor his friend flagged until they overtook the party. It consisted of about thirty warriors, but if it had been thirty hundred it would have made no difference in the effect of Zeppa’s roar and aspect as he rushed upon them with obviously awful intentions, though without arms. In fact the latter circumstance tended rather to increase the fears of the superstitious natives. They fled as one man at the first sight of the maniac and Lippy was recovered!

Instantly Zeppa’s ferocity vanished, and the tenderest of smiles rippled over his face as he took the child in his arms and kissed her.

But Wapoota did not feel quite so easy, for in their mad race they had outstripped the flying enemy, bands of whom were constantly passing them in their flight before the Mountain-men. His anxieties, however, were groundless, for no sooner did any of the Raturans set eyes on Zeppa, than, with howls of consternation, they diverged at a tangent like hunted hares, and coursed away homeward on the wings of terror.

As on former occasions of conquest, the Mountain-men pursued the flying host into their swamps, but they did not, as in former times, return to slay the aged and carry the women and children into captivity.

To the surprise of all his followers, and the anger of not a few, Ongoloo commanded his men to return to their village and leave the Raturans alone. One of his chiefs, who showed a disposition to resist his authority, he promptly knocked down, whereupon the rest became obedient and went quietly home.

On reaching the village, Zeppa went straight to his hut with Lippy on his shoulder. Apparently he had forgotten all about the recent fight for, without even waiting to take food or rest he sat down, and began to give his little friend a singing lesson!

With the air of a little princess, who felt that she was only receiving her due, the child accepted the attention. Her young companions, attracted by the sweet sounds, soon flocked to the old place of rendezvous, and when the last of the straggling warriors returned from the field of battle they found the singing class going full swing as if nothing had happened.

But when the wounded and the dead were brought in, other sounds began to arise—sounds of wailing and woe, which soon drowned the hymns of praise. As soon as Zeppa became fully alive to this fact he ceased singing and went about trying to comfort those who wept but, from his perplexed air, and the frequency with which he paused in his wanderings to and fro and passed his hand across his brow, as if to clear away some misty clouds that rested there, it was evident that his shattered intellect had taken in a very imperfect impression of what had occurred.

As if to get rid of this beclouded state, he started off that evening at a quick walk towards his favourite haunts among the hills. No one ever followed him on these occasions. The natives regarded his person as in some measure sacred, and would have deemed it not only dangerous but insolent to go up among the rocky heights when the madman was known to be there.

Once, indeed, Wapoota, with that presumptuous temerity which is a characteristic of fools in general, ventured, on the strength of old acquaintance, to follow him, and even went towards the well known cave where he had found refuge and protection in the day of his distress; but Zeppa had either forgotten his former intercourse with the jester or intended to repudiate the connection, for he did not receive him kindly.

On the way up, Wapoota, who felt somewhat timorous about the visit, had made up his mind as to the best mode of address with which to approach his friend. He had decided that, although he was not particularly youthful, the language and manner of a respectful son to a revered father would best befit the occasion. Accordingly when he reached the cave and saw Zeppa busy beside his fire with a cocoa-nut, he assumed a stooping attitude of profound respect, and drew near.

Zeppa looked up with a frown, as if annoyed at the intrusion.

“Your unworthy son,” began Wapoota, “comes to—”

But he got no further. He could not well have hit upon a more unfortunate phrase.

“My unworthy son!” shouted Zeppa, leaping up, while unearthly fires seemed to shoot from his distended eyes. “My son! son! Ha! ha-a-a-a!”

The horrified intruder heard the terminal yell, and saw the maniac bound over the fire towards him, but he saw and heard no more, for his limbs became suddenly endued with something like electric vitality. He turned and shot over a small precipice, as if flung from an ancient catapult. What he alighted on he did not know, still less did he care. It was sufficiently soft to prevent death.

Another awful cry echoed and re-echoed from the heights above, and intensified the electric battery within him. He went down the slopes regardless of gradient at a pace that might have left even Zeppa behind if he had followed; but Zeppa did not follow.

When Wapoota went over the precipice and disappeared, Zeppa halted and stood erect, gazing with a questioning aspect at the sky, and drawing his hand slowly across his brows with that wearied and puzzled aspect which had become characteristic.

Returning after a few minutes to his cave, he reseated himself quietly beside his fire, and, with his usual placid expression, devoted himself earnestly to his cocoa-nut.

That was the first and last occasion on which the poor madman experienced intrusion from the natives in his mountain retreat.

Chapter Eight

Let us return, now, to our miserable and half-hearted pirate, far out upon the raging sea.

It must not be supposed that the Pacific Ocean is always peaceful. No—there are days and nights when its winds howl, and its billows roar, and heave, and fume, with all the violence and fury of any other terrestrial sea.

On one such night, the pirate's barque was tossed like a cork on the Pacific's heaving bosom, while the shrieking winds played, as it were, fiendishly with the fluttering shreds of sails which they had previously blown to ribbons.

Richard Rosco stood beside the weather-bulwarks holding on to one of the mizzen back-stays. His mate Redford assisted the man at the wheel.

Upwards of three years of Rosco's rule had subdued Redford to the condition of a hypocritical and sly, but by no means a submissive, savage. One or two spurts at the commencement of their career had satisfied the mate, as well as the men, that the only way to overcome Rosco was to take his life; and as Redford had not sufficient courage, and the men no desire, to do that, they pursued their evil courses in comparative harmony. Nevertheless, the pirate captain knew well that the savage Redford was more acceptable to the pirates than himself so he determined to carry out intentions which had been simmering in his brain for some time, and rid the pirate crew of his presence.

"We will sight the island to-morrow afternoon, sir, if this holds," said the mate.

"I know it," answered Rosco.

"There is no good anchorage around it," continued the mate.

"So you have told me before," returned the captain, "but it matters not; we shall not anchor."

"Not anchor!" repeated Redford in surprise. "I understood that we were to land there to ship sandal-wood. The crew thought so too, and I'm quite sure __"

"Well—go on—what are you sure of?"

"Oh! nothing—only sure that Captain Rosco understands his own intentions

best.”

Rosco made no reply, and nothing further passed between the inharmonious pair at that time. Next day the gale abated, and, as Redford had predicted, Sugar-loaf Island was sighted in the afternoon.

Running close in under the shelter of the mountain, the barque was hove-to and a boat lowered.

“The crew will take arms with them, I suppose, sir?” asked the mate.

“Of course, though there will not be occasion for them, as there are no natives at this part of the island. I merely wish to ascend the hill to reconnoitre. You will go with me. Put your pistols in your belt, and fetch my rifle. We may get some fresh meat among the hills.”

Breech-loading rifles had just come into fashion at that time, and the pirate captain had possessed himself of a double-barrelled one, with which he became wonderfully expert. This weapon was put into the boat with a large pouch full of cartridges. No comments were made in regard to this, the pirates having been accustomed to see their commander land in various places for a day’s shooting, the result of which was usually an acceptable addition of fresh food to their larder.

“Remain by the boat, lads, till we return,” said Rosco, leaping out when the keel grated on the shore. “Come with me, Redford.”

The mate obeyed, following his commander towards the same ravine where, about four years before, they had seen poor Zeppa disappear among the recesses of the mountain. Redford felt a little surprise, and more than a little discomfort, at the peculiar conduct of his captain; but he comforted himself with the thought that if he should attempt any violence, there was a brace of pistols in his belt, and a cutlass at his side. He even for a moment meditated using the pistols when he looked at Rosco’s broad back; but he knew that some of the men in the boat had a sort of sneaking fondness for their captain, and refrained—at least till he should get out of sight of the boat and into the shelter of the woods where his actions could not be seen, and any account of the affair might be coloured to suit his convenience.

Richard Rosco divined pretty well what was passing in his mate’s mind. He also knew that as long as they were in sight of the boat, his enemy would not dare to injure him; he therefore threw his rifle carelessly over his shoulder, and walked with the most easy air of nonchalance over the strip of level land that lay between the sea and the forest that fringed the mountain base.

On the instant of entering the mouth of the ravine, however, he wheeled suddenly round and said—

“Now, Redford, you will lead the way, and I will direct you.”

The mate was startled, and his right hand moved, as if by involuntary impulse, toward the handle of a pistol.

Instantly the muzzle of the captain’s rifle was pointed at his breast.

“Drop your hand!” he said sternly. “Another such threat, and I will shoot you with as much indifference as I would a sneaking dog. Now go on and do as I bid you.”

Redford gave in at once. He was at Rosco’s mercy. Without a word he passed on in advance, and ascended the ravine with a quick, steady step. To say the truth, he knew well that while his commander, on the one hand, would not threaten what he did not mean to perform, on the other hand he would never shed human blood needlessly. He therefore felt less troubled than might have been expected.

They soon reached a small eminence or rocky plateau, from which was obtained a splendid view of the sea, with the barque floating like a large albatross on its surface. From that point the boat could also be clearly seen, and every step of the path by which they had reached the eminence.

“Now, Redford,” said Rosco, throwing his rifle into the hollow of his left arm, so as to bring the muzzle full on the mate’s chest, while, with the forefinger of his right hand, he lightly touched the triggers, “draw your pistols from your belt, and be very careful how you do it—very careful—for if, even by chance, you touch hammer or trigger, you are a dead man.”

There was something of banter in Rosco’s manner, yet this was associated with an air and tone of such calm decision that the mate felt curiously uncomfortable. He obeyed orders, however, promptly, and stood with a pistol in each hand. It must have been a tantalising position, for, had they been cocked, he could have blown out Rosco’s brains in a moment. Indeed, he was sorely tempted to break the half-cock catch on the chance of one or both going off, but his commander’s eye and muzzle forbade it.

“Drop them,” said Rosco, suddenly.

If they had been red-hot irons, the mate could scarcely have let them go more quickly. It almost seemed as if his guilty desire had passed into the weapons and intensified the laws of gravitation—they came to the rock with such a

clatter.

“That will do. Now, two paces step—back, march! Splendid. Why, Redford, I had no idea you were so well up in your drill,” said Rosco, stepping to the spot beside the pistols, which the mate had just vacated. “You are fit to act fugleman to the British army. Now, clasp your hands behind your back, and don’t unclasp them till I give you leave. It’s a new piece of drill but not difficult to learn.”

The cowed pirate was too much alarmed to be amused by this last sally. He stood, sulkily it is true, but anxiously, awaiting further orders.

“Look here, Redford,” continued the pirate captain. “I want to prove to you that the distance from this spot to the boat is about five hundred yards. You see that gull on the water? It is about the same distance off as the boat—well—”

He sighted his rifle for five hundred yards, took a rapid aim, fired, and the gull, leaping its own height out of the water, fell back dead.

“Oh! don’t start my fine fellow, you forget the other barrel!”

The reminder was in time to check an unwise impulse on the mate’s part.

“Now,” continued Rosco, assuming a more serious tone, “I have brought you here for a last conversation. You have long desired to command that vessel, and I have long desired to resign the command. We shall both have our desires gratified this day. I intend to take up my abode here; you are free to go where you please—but not to come here again. Lay my words to heart, now, and let me advise you to impress them on your crew. If you ever venture to come to this island again, I promise you to shoot every man that puts his foot upon the shore, and to shoot all that follow, as long as my ammunition lasts. And, you see, I have brought a pretty large bag of it on shore, which I do not mean to waste on gulls, or anything else. I mean to keep it entirely for your benefit, my worthy friend—so, after this warning, you will please yourself, and take your own course. Now, go down to the boat; row straight back to your ship, tell your crew whatever you choose as to our interview, and go where you please. But bear in mind that my rifle will cover you during every step that you take from this spot down to the beach, ay, and after you have left the beach too, until you are safe on board. Remember, also, that the rifle is sighted for one thousand yards, and that the barque is not much farther off than that. Go!”

The last word was uttered in such a tone, that Redford instantly turned, and, without even a word of reply, retraced his steps to the shore. Then he promptly embarked, and the men promptly shoved off while Rosco sat on the rocky eminence, quietly watching them.

No words did Redford speak to his wondering men, except such as were needed to direct the boat. On gaining the vessel, he sprang up the side, ordered all sail to be set and the guns to be loaded. When the vessel had increased her distance a few hundred yards from the shore, he brought her broadside to bear on the land, and then, having carefully laid the guns, gave the word to fire.

The hull of the pirate vessel was instantly enveloped in a snowy curtain of smoke, and, next moment, the echoes of the hills were rudely startled by a thunderous crash, while a dozen or more iron balls burst like bomb-shells on the cliffs immediately above the spot where Rosco sat, sending showers of rock in all direction; and driving the sea-mews in shrieking terror from their nests.

“A mere waste of ammunition,” murmured Rosco, with a contemptuous curl of his lip, as he rose. “But the next may be better aimed, so I’ll bid you good-bye, Redford!”

Descending into the ravine, he was soon safe from the iron messengers of death, of which the enraged Redford sent another group ashore before finally bidding the island farewell.

Now, it so happened that Zeppa was ascending the Sugar-loaf mountain on its other side, when all this cannonading was going on. He was naturally surprised at such unwonted sounds, and, remembering that cannon implied ships, and that ships were necessary to deliverance from his enforced exile, he naturally hastened his steps, and experienced an unusual degree of excitement.

When he reached his favourite outlook—a ledge of flat land on the southern face of the hill, partially covered with bushes—he saw the pirate vessel sailing away from the island, and the smoke of her two broadsides rising like two snowy cloudlets into the blue sky. At first an expression of disappointment flitted across Zeppa’s countenance, but it quickly passed, leaving the usual air of childlike submission behind. He sat down on a ledge of rock, and gazed long and wistfully at the retreating vessel. Then, casting his eyes upwards to the blue vault, he gave way to an impulse which had been growing upon him for some time—he began to pray aloud.

It was while he was engaged in this act of devotion that Richard Rosco came upon the scene.

At the first sound of the madman’s deep voice, the pirate stopped and listened with a feeling of superstitious dread which seemed to check the very action of his heart—for, at the moment, a few bushes concealed his old enemy from his sight. Stepping cautiously forward, he could see through the interlacing

boughs without himself being seen; and then the blood forsook his visage, and his limbs trembled as if he had been a paralysed old man.

Could the man before him, in tattered garments, with the dishevelled mass of flowing, curly, iron-grey hair, with the long, heavy beard and moustache, the hollow cheeks, and the wonderfully solemn eyes—could that be Zeppa? It seemed impossible, yet there was no mistaking the well known and still handsome features, or the massive, sinewy frame—still less was it possible to doubt the deep, sonorous voice. But then—Zeppa had been seen on Ratinga Island, and the description given of him by those who had seen him had been so exact that Rosco had never doubted his return home and recovery of reason.

Whatever he thought or felt, however, the pirate's whole being was soon absorbed in the madman's prayer. It was simple, like himself. He asked for permission to return home, and made a humble confession of sin. From the tenor of it, there could be no doubt that poor Zeppa had come to regard his exile as a direct punishment from God. Then the prayer changed to a petition for blessings on his wife and son and the deep voice became deeper and full of tenderness.

The pirate experienced a shock of surprise—was the son, then, still alive? And, if so, how came Zeppa to know? He could not know it! The man before him must either be the creature of his own disordered fancy, or a real visitant from the world of spirits!

As these thoughts coursed like lightning through the pirate's brain, he was suddenly startled by the sound of his own name.

"And Rosco," said the madman, still looking steadily up into the sky, while a dark frown slowly gathered on his brow—"Oh! God, curse—no—no, no. Forgive me, Lord, and forgive him, and save him from his sins." He stopped abruptly here, and looked confused.

The mention of the pirate and his sins seemed to remind the poor father that his son had been murdered, and yet, somehow, he had fancied him alive, and had been praying for him! He could not understand it at all. The old look of mingled perplexity and patient submission was beginning again to steal over his face, and his hand was in the familiar act of passing over the troubled brow, when Zeppa's eyes alighted on Rosco's countenance.

It would be difficult to say which, at that moment, most resembled a maniac. The sight of his enemy did more, perhaps, to restore Zeppa to a spurious kind of sanity than anything that had occurred since the fatal day of his bereavement, and called up an expression of fierce indignation to his countenance. All memory of his previous prayer vanished, and he glared for a

moment at the pirate with intense fury.

At the same time Rosco stood with blanched cheeks, intense horror in his eyes, his lower jaw dropped, and his whole frame, as it were, transfixed.

The inaction of both was, however, but momentary. The madman sprang up, clutched the heavy staff he was wont to use in climbing the hills, and rushed impetuously but without word or cry at his foe. The pirate, brave though he undoubtedly was, lost all self-control, and fled in abject terror. Fortunately, the first part of the descent from the spot was unobstructed; for, in the then condition of their feelings, both men would probably have flung themselves over any precipice that had lain in their way. A few moments, however, sufficed to restore enough of self-possession to the pirate to enable him to direct his course with some intelligence. He naturally followed the path by which he had ascended, and soon gained the beach, closely followed by Zeppa.

In speed the two men were at the time well matched, for any advantage that Zeppa had in point of size and strength was counterbalanced by the youth and superstitious terror of Rosco. At first, indeed, the madman gained on his foe, but as the impetuosity of his first dash abated, the pirate’s courage returned, and, warming to the race, he held his ground.

Like hare and greyhound they coursed along the level patch of ground that lay on that side of the island, until they came in sight of the swampy land, covered with low but dense wood which bounded the lands of the Raturans. Dismay overwhelmed the pirate at first sight of it. Then hope rebounded into his soul, and he put on a spurt which carried him considerably ahead of his pursuer. He reached the edge of the swamp-land, and dashed into its dark recesses. He had barely entered it a few yards when he plunged into water up to the neck. The heavy root of a tree chanced to hang over him. Drawing himself close beneath it, he remained quite still. It was his best—indeed his only—chance.

Next moment Zeppa plunged headlong into another part of the same half-hidden pool. Arising, like some shaggy monster of the swamp, with weeds and slimy plants trailing from his locks, he paused a moment, as if to make sure of his direction before resuming the chase. At that moment he was completely in the power of the pirate, for his broad back was not more than a few feet from the screen of roots and tendrils by which Rosco was partially hidden. The temptation was strong. The pirate drew the keen knife that always hung at his girdle, but a feeling of pity induced him to hesitate. The delay sufficed to save Zeppa’s life. Next moment he seized an overhanging branch, drew himself out of the swamp, and sped on his way; but, having lost sight of his enemy, he soon paused and looked round with indecision.

“It must have been a dream,” he muttered, and began to retrace his steps with an air of humiliation, as if half ashamed of having given way to such excitement. From his hiding-place the pirate saw him pass, and watched him out of sight. Then, clambering quickly out of the stagnant pool, he pushed deeper and deeper into the recesses of the morass, regardless of every danger, except that of falling into the madman’s hands.

Chapter Nine

Who shall tell, or who shall understand, the thoughts of Richard Rosco, the ex-pirate, as he wandered, lost yet regardless, in that dismal swamp?

The human spirit is essentially galvanic. It jumps like a grasshopper, bounds like a kangaroo. The greatest of men can only restrain it in a slight degree. The small men either have exasperating trouble with it, or make no attempt to curb it at all. It is a rebellious spirit. The best of books tells us that, “Greater is he that ruleth it, than he that taketh a city.”

Think of that, youngster, whoever you are, who readeth this. Think of the conquerors of the world. Think of the “Great” Alexander, whose might was so tremendous that he subjugated kingdoms and spent his life in doing little else. Think of Napoleon “the Great,” whose armies ravaged Europe from the Atlantic to Asia: who even began—though he failed to finish—the conquest of Africa; who made kings as you might make pasteboard men, and filled the civilised world with fear, as well as with blood and graves—all for his own glorification! Think of these and other “great” men, and reflect that it is written, “He who rules his own spirit” is greater than they.

Yes, the human spirit is difficult to deal with, and uncomfortably explosive. At least so Richard Rosco found it when, towards the close of the day on which his enemy chased him into the dismal swamp, he sat down on a gnarled root and began to reflect.

His spirit jumped almost out of him with contempt, when he thought that for the first time in his life, he had fled in abject terror from the face of man! He could not conceal that from himself, despite the excuse suggested by pride—that he had half believed Zeppa to be an apparition. What even if that were true? Had he not boastfully said more than once that he would defy the foul fiend himself if he should attempt to thwart him? Then his spirit bounded into a region of disappointed rage when he thought of the lost opportunity of stabbing his enemy to the heart. After that, unbidden, and in spite of him, it dropped into an abyss of something like fierce despair when he recalled the past surveyed the present, and forecast the future. Truly, if hell ever does begin

to men on earth, it began that day to the pirate, as he sat in the twilight on the gnarled root, with one of his feet dangling in the slimy water, his hands clasped so tight that the knuckles stood out white, and his eyes gazing upwards with an expression that seemed the very embodiment of woe.

Then his spirit lost its spring, and he began to crawl, in memory, on the shores of “other days.” He thought of the days when, comparatively innocent he rambled on the sunny hills of old England; played and did mischief with comrades; formed friendships and fought battles, and knew what it was to experience good impulses; understood the joy of giving way to these, as well as the depression consequent on resisting them; and recalled the time when he regarded his mother as the supreme judge in every case of difficulty—the only comforter in every time of sorrow.

At this point his spirit grovelled like a crushed worm in the stagnant pool of his despair, for he had no hope. He had sinned every opportunity away. He had defied God and man, and nothing was left to him, apparently, save “a fearful looking-for of judgment.”

As he bent over the pool he saw his own distorted visage dimly reflected therein, and the thought occurred,—“Why not end it all at once? Five minutes at the utmost and all will be over!” The pirate was a physically brave man beyond his fellows. He had courage to carry the idea into effect but—“after death the judgment!” Where had he heard these words? They were strange to him, but they were not new. Those who are trained in the knowledge of God’s Word are not as a general rule, moved in an extraordinary degree by quotations from it. It is often otherwise with those who have had little of it instilled into them in youth and none in later years. That which may seem to a Christian but a familiar part of the “old, old story,” sometimes becomes to hundreds and thousands of human beings a startling revelation. It was so to the pirate on this occasion. The idea of judgment took such a hold of him that he shrank from death with far more fear than he ever had, with courage, faced it in days gone by. Trembling, terrified, abject he sat there, incapable of consecutive thought or intelligent action.

At last the gloom which had been slowly deepening over the swamp sank into absolute blackness, and the chills of night, which were particularly sharp in such places, began to tell upon him. But he did not dare to move, lest he should fall into the swamp. Slowly he extended himself on the root; wound his arms and fingers convulsively among leaves and branches, and held on like a drowning man. An ague-fit seemed to have seized him, for he trembled violently in every limb; and as his exhausted spirit was about to lose itself in sleep, or, as it seemed to him, in death, he gave vent to a subdued cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner!”

Rest, such as it was, refreshed the pirate, and when the grey dawn, struggling through the dense foliage, awoke him, he rose up with a feeling of submissiveness which seemed, somehow, to restore his energy.

He was without purpose, however, for he knew nothing of his surroundings, and, of course, could form no idea of what was best to be done. In these circumstances he rose with a strange sensation of helplessness, and wandered straight before him.

And oh! how beautiful were the scenes presented to his vision! Everything in this world is relative. That which is hideous at one time is lovely at another. In the night the evening, or at the grey dawn, the swamp was indeed dismal in the extreme; but when the morning advanced towards noon all that was changed, as if magically, by the action of the sun. Black, repulsive waters reflected patches of the bright blue sky, and every leaf, and spray, and parasite, and tendril, that grew in the world above was faithfully mirrored in the world below. Vistas of gnarled roots and graceful stems and drooping boughs were seen on right and left, before and behind, extending as if into infinite space, while innumerable insects, engaged in the business of their brief existence, were filling the region with miniature melodies.

But Richard Rosco saw it not. At least it made no sensible impression on him. His mental retina was capable of receiving only two pictures: the concentrated accumulation of past sin—the terrible anticipation of future retribution. Between these two, present danger and suffering were well-nigh forgotten.

Towards noon, however, the sense of hunger began to oppress him. He allayed it with a few wild berries. Then fatigue began to tell, for walking from root to root sometimes on short stretches of solid land, sometimes over soft mud, often knee-deep in water, was very exhausting. At last he came to what appeared to be the end of the swamp, and here he discovered a small patch of cultivated ground.

The discovery awoke him to the necessity of caution, but he was awakened too late, for already had one of the Raturan natives observed him advancing out of the swamp. Instantly he gave the alarm that a “white face” was approaching. Of course the appearance of one suggested a scout, and the speedy approach of a host. Horrified to see a supposed enemy come from a region which they had hitherto deemed their sure refuge, the few natives who dwelt there flew to arms, and ran to meet the advancing foe.

The pirate was not just then in a mood to resist. He had no weapon, and no spirit left. He therefore suffered himself to be taken prisoner without a

struggle, satisfied apparently to know that the madman was not one of those into whose hands he had fallen.

Great was the rejoicing among the Raturans when the prisoner was brought in, for they were still smarting under the humiliation of their defeat, and knew well that their discomfiture had been largely owing to the influence of “white faces.” True, they did not fall into the mistake of supposing that Rosco was the awful giant who had chased and belaboured them so unmercifully with a long stake, but they at once concluded that he was a comrade of Zeppa—perhaps one of a band who had joined their foes. Besides, whether he were a comrade or not was a matter of small moment. Sufficient for them that his face was white, that he belonged to a race which, in the person of Zeppa, had wrought them evil, and that he was now in their power.

Of course, the Raturans had not during all these years, remained in ignorance of the existence of Zeppa. They had heard of his dwelling in the mountain soon after he had visited the village of their enemies, and had also become aware of the fact that the white man was a madman and a giant, but more than this they did not know, because of their feud preventing interchange of visits or of news between the tribes. Their imaginations, therefore, having full swing, had clothed Zeppa in some of the supposed attributes of a demigod. These attributes, however, the same imaginations quickly exchanged for those of a demi-devil, when at last they saw Zeppa in the flesh, and were put to flight by him. His size, indeed, had rather fallen short of their expectation, for sixty feet had been the average estimate, but his fury and aspect had come quite up to the mark, and the fact that not a man of the tribe had dared to stand before him, was sufficient to convince a set of superstitious savages that he was a real devil in human guise. To have secured one of his minor comrades, therefore, was a splendid and unlooked-for piece of good fortune, which they resolved to make the most of by burning the pirate alive.

Little did the wretched man think, when they conducted him to a hut in the middle of their village and supplied him with meat and drink, that this was a preliminary ceremony to the terrible end they purposed to make of him. It is true he did not feel easy in his mind, for, despite this touch of hospitality, his captors regarded him with looks of undisguised hatred.

There was something of the feline spirit in these Raturan savages. As the cat plays with the mouse before killing it, so did they amuse themselves with the pirate before putting him to the final torture which was to terminate his life.

And well was it for Rosco that they did so, for the delay thus caused was the means of saving his life—though he did not come out of the dread ordeal scathless.

They began with a dance—a war-dance it is to be presumed—at all events it involved the flourishing of clubs and spears, the formation of hideous faces, and the perpetration of frightful grimaces, with bounds and yells enough to warrant the conclusion that the dance was not one of peace. Richard Rosco formed the centre of that dance—the sun, as it were, of the system round which the dusky host revolved. But he did not join in the celebration, for he was bound firmly to a stake set up in the ground, and could not move hand or foot.

At first the warriors of the tribe moved round the pirate in a circle, stamping time slowly with their feet while the women and children stood in a larger circle, marking time with hands and voices. Presently the dance grew more furious, and ultimately attained to a pitch of wild violence which is quite indescribable. At the height of the paroxysm, a warrior would ever and anon dart out from the circle with whirling club, and bring it down as if on the prisoner’s skull, but would turn it aside so deftly that it just grazed his ear and fell with a dull thud on the ground. Other warriors made at him with their spears, which they thrust with lightning speed at his naked breast, but checked them just as they touched the skin.

Two or three of these last were so inexpert that they pricked the skin slightly, and blood began to trickle down, but these clumsy warriors were instantly kicked from the circle of dancers, and compelled to take their place among the women and children.

When they had exhausted themselves with the dance, the warriors sat down to feast upon viands, which had, in the meanwhile, been preparing for them, and while they feasted they taunted their prisoner with cowardice, and told him in graphic language of the horrors that yet awaited him.

Fortunately for the miserable man—who was left bound to the stake during the feast—he did not understand a word of what was said. He had been stripped of all clothing save a pair of short breeches, reaching a little below the knee, and his naked feet rested on a curious piece of basketwork. This last would have been too slight to bear his weight if he had not been almost suspended by the cords that bound him to the stake.

Rosco was very pale. He felt that his doom was fixed; but his native courage did not forsake him. He braced himself to meet his fate like a man, and resolved to shut his eyes, when next they began to dance round him, so that he should not shrink from the blow or thrust which, he felt sure, would ere long end his ill-spent life. But the time seemed to him terribly long, and while he hung there his mind began to recall the gloomy past. Perhaps it was a

refinement of cruelty on the part of the savages that they gave him time to think, so that his courage might be reduced or overcome.

If so, they were mistaken in their plan. The pirate showed no unusual sign of fear. Once he attempted to pray, but he found that almost impossible.

Wearied at length with waiting, the savages arose, and began to put fagots and other combustibles under the wicker-basket on which the pirate stood. Then, indeed, was Rosco's courage tried nearly to the uttermost and when he saw the fire actually applied, he uttered a cry of "Help! help!" so loud and terrible that his enemies fell back for a moment as if appalled.

And help came from a quarter that Rosco little expected.

But to explain this we must return to Zeppa. We have said that he gave up the chase of the pirate under the impression that the whole affair was a dream; but, on returning to his cave, he found that he could not rest. Old associations and memories had been too violently aroused, and, after spending a sleepless night he rose up, determined to resume the chase which he had abandoned. He returned to the spot where he had lost sight of his enemy in the swamp, and, after a brief examination of the place, advanced in as straight a line as he could through the tangled and interlacing boughs.

Naturally he followed the trail of the pirate, for the difficulties or peculiar formations of the ground which had influenced the latter in his course also affected Zeppa much in the same way. Thus it came to pass that when the Raturans were about to burn their prisoner alive, the madman was close to their village. But Zeppa did not think of the Raturans. He had never seen or heard of them, except on the occasion of their attack on the Mountain-men. His sole desire was to be revenged on the slayer of his boy. And even in this matter the poor maniac was still greatly perplexed, for his Christian principles and his naturally gentle spirit forbade revenge on the one hand, while, on the other, a sense of justice told him that murder should not go unpunished, or the murderer remain at large; so that it required the absolute sight of Rosco before his eyes to rouse him to the pitch of fury necessary to hold him to the execution of his purpose.

It was while he was advancing slowly, and puzzling his brain over these considerations, that Rosco's cry for help rang out.

Zeppa recognised the voice, and a dark frown settled on his countenance as he stopped to listen. Then an appalling yell filled his ears. It was repeated again and again, as the kindling flames licked round the pirate's naked feet, causing him to writhe in mortal agony.

Instantly Zeppa was stirred to action. He replied with a tremendous shout.

Well did the Raturans know that shout. With caught breath and blanched faces they turned towards the direction whence it came, and they saw the madman bounding towards them with streaming locks and glaring eyes. A single look sufficed. The entire population of the village turned and fled!

Next moment Zeppa rushed up to the stake, and kicked the fire-brands from beneath the poor victim, who was by that time almost insensible from agony and smoke. Drawing his knife, Zeppa cut the cords, and, lifting the pirate in his arms, laid him on the ground.

The madman was terribly excited. He had been drenched from frequent immersions in the swamp, besides being much exhausted by his long and difficult walk, or rather, scramble, after a sleepless night; and this sudden meeting with his worst enemy in such awful circumstances seemed to have produced an access of insanity, so that the pirate felt uncertain whether he had not been delivered from a horrible fate to fall into one perhaps not less terrible.

As he lay there on his back, scorched, tormented with thirst and helpless, he watched with fearful anxiety each motion of the madman. For some moments Zeppa seemed undecided. He stood with heaving chest expanding nostrils, and flashing eyes, gazing after the flying crew of natives. Then he turned sharply on the unhappy man who lay at his feet.

“Get up!” he said fiercely, “and follow me.”

“I cannot get up, Zeppa,” replied the pirate in a faint voice. “Don’t you see my feet are burnt? God help me!”

He ended with a deep groan, and the ferocity at once left Zeppa’s countenance, but the wild light did not leave his eyes, nor did he become less excited in his actions.

“Come, I will carry you,” he said.

Stooping down quickly, he raised the pirate in his arms as if he had been a child, and bore him away.

Avoiding the swamp, he proceeded in the direction of the mountain by another route—a route which ran so near to Ongoloo’s village, that the Raturans never ventured to use it.

He passed the village without having been observed, and began to toil slowly up the steep ascent panting as he went, for his mighty strength had been overtaxed, and his helpless burden was heavy.

“Lay me down and rest yourself,” said Rosco, with a groan that he could not suppress, for his scorched lower limbs caused him unutterable anguish, and beads of perspiration stood upon his brow, while a deadly pallor overspread his face.

Zeppa spoke no word in reply. He did, indeed, look at the speaker once, uneasily, but took no notice of his request. Thus, clasping his enemy to his breast he ascended the steep hill, struggling and stumbling upwards, as if with some fixed and stern purpose in view, until at last he gained the shelter of his mountain cave.

Chapter Ten

We change the scene once more, and transport our readers over the ocean waves to a noble ship which is breasting those waves right gallantly. It is H.M.S. “Furious.”

In a retired part of the ship’s cabin there are two savage nobles who do not take things quite as gallantly as the ship herself. These are our friends Tomeo and Buttchee of Ratinga. Each is seated on the cabin floor with his back against the bulkhead, an expression of woe-begone desolation on his visage, his black legs apart, and a ship’s bucket between them. It were bad taste to be too particular as to details here!

On quitting Ratinga, Tomeo and his brother chief had said that nothing would rejoice their hearts so much as to go to sea. Their wish was gratified, and, not long afterwards, they said that nothing could rejoice their hearts so much as to get back to land! Such is the contradictoriness of human nature.

There was a stiffish breeze blowing, as one of the man-of-war’s-men expressed it and “a nasty sea on”—he did not say on what. There must have been something nasty, also, on Tomeo’s stomach, from the violent way in which he sought to get rid of it at times—without success.

“Oh! Buttchee, my brother,” said Tomeo (of course in his native tongue), “many years have passed over my head, a few white streaks begin to—to—” He paused abruptly, and eyed the bucket as if with an intention.

“To appear,” he continued with a short sigh; “also, I have seen many wars and suffered much from many wounds as you—you—ha!—you know, Buttchee, my brother, but of all the—”

He became silent again—suddenly.

“Why does my brother p–pause?” asked Buttchee, in a meek voice—as of one who had suffered severely in life’s pilgrimage.

There was no occasion for Tomeo to offer a verbal reply.

After a time Buttchee raised his head and wiped his eyes, in which were many tears—but not of sorrow.

“Tomeo,” said he, “was it worth our while to forsake wives and children, and church, and hymns, and taro fields, and home for th–this?”

“We did not leave for this,” replied Tomeo, with some acerbity, for he experienced a temporary sensation of feeling better at the moment; “we left all for the sake of assisting our friends in—there! it comes—it—”

He said no more, and both chiefs relapsed into silence—gazing the while at the buckets with undue interest.

They were interrupted by the sudden entrance of Ebony.

“Come, you yaller-cheeked chiefs; you’s die if you no make a heffort. Come on deck, breeve de fresh air. Git up a happetite. Go in for salt pork, plum duff, and lop-scouse, an’ you’ll git well ’fore you kin say Jack Rubinson.”

Tomeo and Buttchee looked up at the jovial negro and smiled—imbecile smiles they were.

“We cannot move,” said Tomeo and Buttchee together, “because we—w—” Together they ceased giving the reason—it was not necessary!

“Oh dear!” said Ebony, opening his great eyes to their widest. “You no kin lib long at dat rate. Better die on deck if you mus’ die; more heasy for you to breeve up dar, an’ more comf’rable to fro you overboard w’en you’s got it over.”

With this cheering remark the worthy negro, seizing the chiefs each by a hand, half constrained, half assisted them to rise, and helped them to stagger to the quarter-deck, where they were greeted by Orlando, Captain Fitzgerald, Waroonga, and the missionary.

“Come, that’s right,” cried the captain, shaking the two melancholy chiefs by the hand, “glad to see you plucking up courage. Tell them, Mr Zeppa, that we shall probably be at Sugar-loaf Island to-morrow, or next day.”

The two unfortunates were visibly cheered by the assurance. To do them justice, they had not quite given way to sea-sickness until then, for the weather

had been moderately calm, but the nasty sea and stiff breeze had proved too much for them.

“Are you sure we shall find the island so soon?” asked Orlando of the captain in a low, earnest tone, for the poor youth’s excitement and anxiety deepened as they drew near to the place where his father might possibly be found—at the same time a strange, shrinking dread of what they might find made him almost wish for delay.

“I am not sure, of course,” returned the captain, “but if my information is correct, there is every probability that we shall find it to-morrow.”

“I hopes we shall,” remarked Waroonga. “It would be a grand blessing if the Lord will gif us the island and your father in same day.”

“Mos’ too good to be true,” observed Ebony, who was a privileged individual on board, owing very much to his good-humoured eccentricity. “But surely you not spec’s de niggers to tumbil down at yous feet all at wance, Massa Waroonga?”

“Oh no, not at once. The day of miracle have pass,” returned the missionary. “We mus’ use the means, and then, has we not the promise that our work shall not be in vain?”

Next day about noon the Sugar-loaf mountain rose out of the sea like a great pillar of hope to Orlando, as well as to the missionary. Captain Fitzgerald sailed close in, sweeping the mountain side with his telescope as he advanced until close under the cliffs, when he lay-to and held a consultation with his passengers.

“I see no habitations of any kind,” he said, “nor any sign of the presence of man, but I have heard that the native villages lie at the lower side of the island. Now, the question is, whether would it suit your purposes best to land an armed party here, and cross over to the villages, or to sail round the island, drop anchor in the most convenient bay, and land a party there?”

Orlando, to whom this was more directly addressed, turned to the missionary.

“What think you, Waroonga? You know native thought and feeling best.”

“I would not land armed party at all,” answered Waroonga. “But Cappin Fitzgald know his own business most. What he thinks?”

“My business and yours are so mingled,” returned the captain, “that I look to you for advice. My chief duty is to obtain information as to the whereabouts of the pirate vessel, and I expect that such information will be got more readily

through you, Waroonga, than any one else, for, besides being able to speak the native language, you can probably approach the savages more easily than I can."

"They are not savages," returned Waroonga quietly, "they are God's ignorant children. I have seen worse men than South sea islanders with white faces an' soft clothin' who had not the excuse of ignorance."

"Nay, my good sir," said the captain, "we will not quarrel about terms. Whatever else these 'ignorant children' may be, I know that they are brave and warlike, and I shall gladly listen to your advice as to landing."

"If you wish to go to them in peace, do not go to them with arms," said Waroonga.

"Surely you would not advise me to send an unarmed party among armed sav—children?" returned the captain, with a look of surprise, while Orlando regarded his friend with mingled amusement and curiosity.

"No. You best send no party at all. Jis' go round the island, put down angker, an' leave the rest to me."

"But what do you propose to do?" asked the captain.

"Swum to shore with Bibil."

Orlando laughed, for he now understood the missionary's plan, and in a few words described the method by which Waroonga had subdued the natives of Ratinga.

"You see, by this plan," he continued, "nothing is presented to the natives which they will be tempted to steal, and if they are very warlike or fierce, Waroonga's refusal to fight reduces them to a state of quiet readiness to hear, which is all that we want. Waroonga's tongue does the rest."

"With God's Holy Spirit and the Word," interposed the missionary.

"True, that is understood," said Orlando.

"That is not always understood," returned Waroonga.

"The plan does not seem to me a very good one," said Captain Fitzgerald thoughtfully. "I can have no doubt that it has succeeded in time past, and may probably succeed again, but you cannot expect that the natives, even if disposed to be peaceful, will accept your message at once. It may take weeks, perhaps months, before you get them to believe the gospel, so as to permit of

my men going ashore unarmed, and in the meantime, while you are engaged in this effort, what am I to be doing?"

"Wait God's time," answered Waroonga simply. "But time presses. The pirate vessel, where-ever it may be, is escaping me," said the captain, unable to repress a smile. "However, I will at all events let you make the trial and await the result; reminding you, however, that you will run considerable risk, and that you must be prepared to accept the consequences of your rather reckless proceedings."

"I hope, Waroonga," said Orlando, when the captain left them to give orders as to the course of the ship, "that you will let me share this risk with you?"

"It will be wiser not. You are a strong man, an' sometimes fierce to behold. They will want to fight you; then up go your blood, an' you will want to fight them."

"No, indeed, I won't," said Orlando earnestly.

"I will promise to go in the spirit of a missionary. You know how anxious I am to get news of my dear father. How could you expect me to remain idle on board this vessel, when my soul is so troubled? You may depend on me, Waroonga. I will do exactly as you bid me, and will place myself peaceably in the power of natives—leaving the result, as you advise, to God."

The young man's tone was so earnest, and withal so humble, that Waroonga could not help acceding to his request.

"Well, well," said Captain Fitzgerald, when he heard of it; "you seem both to be bent on making martyrs of yourselves, but I will offer no opposition. All I can say is that I shall have my guns in readiness, and if I see anything like foul play, I'll bombard the place, and land an armed force to do what I can for you."

Soon the frigate came in sight of Ongoloo's village, ran close in, brought up in a sheltered bay, and lowered a boat while the natives crowded the beach in vast numbers, uttering fierce cries, brandishing clubs and spears, and making other warlike demonstrations—for these poor people had been more than once visited by so-called merchant ships—the crews of which had carried off some of them by force.

"We will not let a living man touch our shore," said Ongoloo to Wapoota, who chanced to be near his leader, when he marshalled his men.

"Oh! yes, we will, chief," replied the brown humorist. "We will let some of

them touch it, and then we will take them up carefully, and have them baked. A long-pig supper will do us good. The rest of them we will drive back to their big canoe."

By the term "long-pig" Wapoota referred to the resemblance that a naked white man when prepared for roasting bears to an ordinary pig.

A grim smile lit up Ongoloo's swarthy visage as he replied—

"Yes, we will permit a few fat ones to land. The rest shall die, for white men are thieves. They deceived us last time. They shall never deceive us again."

As this remark might have been meant for a covert reference to his own thievish tendencies, Wapoota restrained his somewhat ghastly humour, while the chief continued his arrangements for repelling the invaders.

Meanwhile, these invaders were getting into the boat.

"What! you's not goin' widout me?" exclaimed Ebony, as one of the sailors thrust him aside from the gangway.

"I fear we are," said Orlando, as he was about to descend the vessel's side. "It was as much as I could do to get Waroonga to agree to let me go with him."

"But dis yar nigger kin die in a good cause as well as you, massa," said Ebony, in a tone of entreaty so earnest that the men standing near could not help laughing.

"Now then, make haste," sang out the officer in charge of the boat.

Orlando descended, and the negro, turning away with a deeply injured expression, walked majestically to the stern to watch the boat.

Waroonga had prepared himself for the enterprise by stripping off every article of clothing save a linen cloth round his loins, and he carried nothing whatever with him except a small copy of God's Word printed in the language of the islanders. This, as the boat drew near to shore, he fastened on his head, among the bushy curls of his crisp black hair, as in a nest.

Orlando had clothed himself in a pair of patched old canvas trousers, and a much worn unattractive cotton shirt.

"Stop now," said the missionary, when the boat was about five or six hundred yards from the beach. "Are you ready?"

"Ready," said Orlando.

“Then come.”

He dropped quietly over the side and swam towards the shore. Orlando, following his example, was alongside of him in a few seconds.

Both men were expert and rapid swimmers. The natives watched them in absolute silence and open-mouthed surprise.

A few minutes sufficed to carry the swimmers to the beach.

“Have your rifles handy, lads,” said the officer in charge of the boat to his men.

“Stand by,” said the captain of the “Furious” to the men at the guns.

But these precautions were unnecessary, for when the swimmers landed and walked up the beach they were seen by the man-of-war’s-men to shake hands with the chief of the savages, and, after what appeared to be a brief palaver, to rub noses with him. Then the entire host turned and led the visitors towards the village.

With a heart almost bursting from the combined effects of disappointment, humiliation, and grief, poor Ebony stood at the stern of the man-of-war, his arms crossed upon his brawny chest, and his great eyes swimming in irrepressible tears, a monstrous bead of which would every now and then overflow its banks and roll down his sable cheek.

Suddenly the heart-stricken negro clasped his hands together, bowed his head, and dropped into the sea!

The captain, who had seen him take the plunge, leaped to the stern, and saw him rise from the water, blow like a grampus, and strike out for land with the steady vigour of a gigantic frog.

“Pick him up!” shouted the captain to the boat, which was by that time returning to the ship.

“Ay, ay, sir,” was the prompt reply.

The boat was making straight for the negro and he for it. Neither diverged from the straight course.

“Two of you in the bow, there, get ready to haul him in,” said the officer.

Two sturdy sailors drew in their oars, got up, and leaned over the bow with outstretched arms. Ebony looked at them, bestowed on them a tremendous grin, and went down with the oily ease of a northern seal!

When next seen he was full a hundred yards astern of the boat, still heading steadily for the shore.

“Let him go!” shouted the captain.

“Ay, ay, sir,” replied the obedient officer.

And Ebony went!

Meanwhile our missionary, having told the wondering savages that he brought them good news, was conducted with his companion to Ongoloo’s hut. But it was plain that the good news referred to, and even Waroonga himself, had not nearly so great an effect on them as the sight of Orlando, at whom they gazed with an expression half of fear and half of awe which surprised him exceedingly.

“Your story is not new to us,” said Ongoloo, addressing the missionary, but gazing at Orlando, “it comes to us like an old song.”

“How so?” exclaimed Waroonga, “has any one been here before with the grand and sweet story of Jesus and His love.”

The reply of the savage chief was strangely anticipated and checked at that moment by a burst of childish voices singing one of the beautiful hymns with which the inhabitants of Ratinga had long been familiar. As the voices swelled in a chorus, which distance softened into fairy-like strains, the missionary and his companion sat entranced and bewildered, while the natives looked pleased, and appeared to enjoy their perplexity.

“Our little ones,” said Ongoloo, after a few minutes’ pause, “are amusing themselves with singing. They often do that.”

As he spoke the party were startled and surprised by the sudden appearance of Ebony, who quietly stalked into the circle and seated himself beside the missionary with the guilty yet defiant air of a man who knows that he has done wrong, but is resolved at all hazards to have his way. Considering the turn that affairs had taken, neither Orlando nor Waroonga were sorry to see him.

“This is a friend,” said the latter in explanation, laying his hand on the negro’s shoulder. “But tell me, chief, we are impatient for to know, where learned you that song?”

“From one who is mad,” replied the chief still gazing earnestly at Orlando.

“Mad!” repeated the youth, starting up and trembling with excitement—“how

know you that? Who—where is he? Ask him, Waroonga."

The explanation that followed left no doubt on Orlando's mind that his father was bereft of reason, and wandering in the neighbouring mountain.

If there had been any doubt, it would have been swept away by the chief, who quietly said, "the madman is your father!"

"How does he know that Waroonga?"

"I know, because there is no difference between you, except years—and—"

He did not finish the sentence, but touched his forehead solemnly with his finger.

"Does he dwell alone in the mountains?" asked Orlando.

"Yes, alone. He lets no one approach him," answered Ongoloo.

"Now, Waroonga," said Orlando, "our prayers have been heard, and—at least partly—answered. But we must proceed with caution. You must return on board and tell Captain Fitzgerald that I go to search for my father alone."

"Wid the help ob dis yar nigger," interposed Ebony.

"Tell him on no account to send men in search of me," continued Orlando, paying no attention to the interruption; "and in the meantime, you know how to explain my purpose to the natives. Adieu."

Rising quickly, he left the assembly and, followed modestly but closely by the unconquerable negro, set off with rapid strides towards the mountains.

Chapter Eleven

When Zeppa, as related in a previous chapter, staggered up the mountain side with Richard Rosco in his arms, his great strength was all but exhausted, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he succeeded at last, before night-fall, in laying his burden on the couch in his cave.

Then, for the first time, he seemed to have difficulty in deciding what to do. Now, at last, the pirate was in his power—he could do to him what he pleased! As he thought thus he turned a look of fierce indignation upon him. But, even as he gazed, the look faded, and was replaced by one of pity, for he could not help seeing that the wretched man was suffering intolerable anguish, though no murmur escaped from his tightly-compressed lips.

“Slay me, in God’s name, kill me at once, Zeppa,” he gasped, “and put me out of torment.”

“Poor man! poor Rosco!” returned the madman in a gentle voice, “I thought to have punished thee, but God wills it otherwise.”

He said no more, but rose hastily and went into the bush. Returning in a few moments with a bundle of herbs, he gathered some sticks and kindled a fire. A large earthenware pot stood close to the side of the cave’s entrance—a clumsy thing, made by himself of some sort of clay. This he filled with water, put the herbs in, and set it on the fire. Soon he had a poultice spread on a broad leaf which, when it was cold, he applied to one of the pirate’s dreadfully burnt feet. Then he spread another poultice, with which he treated the other foot.

What the remedy was that Zeppa made use of on this occasion is best known to himself; we can throw no light on the subject. Neither can we say whether the application was or was not in accordance with the practice of the faculty, but certain it is that Rosco’s sufferings were immediately assuaged, and he soon fell into a tranquil sleep.

Not so the madman, who sat watching by his couch. Poor Zeppa’s physical sufferings and exertion had proved too much for him; the strain on his shattered nerves had been too severe, and a burning fever was now raging within him, so that the delirium consequent on disease began to mingle, so to speak, with his insanity.

He felt that something unusual was going on within him. He tried to restrain himself, and chain down his wandering, surging thoughts, but the more he sought to hold himself down, the more did a demon—who seemed to have been especially appointed for the purpose—cast his mental fastenings adrift.

At last he took it into his head that the slumbering pirate had bewitched him. As this idea gained ground and the internal fires increased, the old ideas of revenge returned, and he drew the knife which hung at his belt, gazing furtively at the sleeper as he did so.

But the better nature within the man maintained a fierce conflict with the worse.

“He murdered my son—my darling Orley!” murmured the madman, as he felt the keen edge and point of his knife, and crept towards the sleeper, while a fitful flicker of the dying fire betrayed the awful light that seemed to blaze in his eyes. “He carried me from my home! He left Marie to die in hopeless grief! Ha! ha! ha! Oh God! keep me back—back from this.”

The noise awoke Rosco, who sat up and gazed at Zeppa in horror, for he saw at a glance that a fit of his madness must have seized him.

“Zeppa!” he exclaimed, raising himself with difficulty on both hands, and gazing sternly in the madman’s face.

“Ha!” exclaimed the latter, suddenly throwing his knife on the ground within Rosco’s reach, “see, I scorn to take advantage of your unarmed condition. Take that and defend yourself. I will content myself with this.”

He caught up the heavy staff which he was in the habit of carrying with him in his mountain rambles. At the same instant Rosco seized the knife and flung it far into the bush.

“See! I am still unarmed,” he said.

“True, but you are not the less guilty, Rosco, and you must die. It is my duty to kill you.”

He advanced with the staff up-raised.

“Stay! Let us consider before you strike. Are you not a self-appointed executioner?”

The question was well put. The madman lowered the staff to consider. Instantly the pirate made a plunge at and caught it. Zeppa strove to wrench it from his grasp, but the pirate felt that his life might depend on his retaining hold, and, in his extremity, was endued with almost supernatural strength. In the fierce struggles that ensued, the embers of the fire were scattered, and the spot reduced to almost total darkness. During the unequal conflict, the pirate, who could only get upon his knees, was swept and hurled from side to side, but still he grasped the staff with vice-like power to his breast. Even in that fearful moment the idea, which had already occurred to him, of humouring his antagonist gained force. He suddenly loosed his hold. Zeppa staggered backward, recovered himself, sprang forward, and aimed a fearful blow at his adversary, who suddenly fell flat down. The staff passed harmlessly over him and was shattered to pieces on the side of the cave.

“Ha! ha!” laughed the pirate lightly, as he sat up again, “you see, Zeppa, that Providence is against you. How else could I, a helpless cripple, have held my own against you? And see, the very weapon you meant to use is broken to pieces. Come now, delay this execution for a little, and let us talk together about this death which you think is due. There is much to be said about death, you know, and I should like to get to understand it better before I experience it.”

“There is reason in that, Rosco,” said Zeppa, sitting down on the ground by the side of the pirate, and leaning his back against the rock. “You have much need to consider death, for after death comes the judgment, and none of us can escape that.”

“True, Zeppa, and I should not like to face that just now, for I am not fit to die, although, as you truly say, I deserve death. I have no hesitation in admitting that,” returned the pirate, with some bitterness; “I deserve to die, body and soul, and, after all, I don’t see why I should seek so earnestly to delay the righteous doom.”

“Right, Rosco, right; you talk sense now, the doom is well deserved. Why, then, try to prevent me any longer from inflicting it when you know it is my duty to do so?”

“Because,” continued the pirate, who felt that to maintain the conflict even with words was too much for his exhausted strength, “because I have heard that God is merciful.”

“Merciful!” echoed Zeppa. “Of course He is. Have you not heard that His mercy is so great that He has provided a way of escape for sinners—through faith in His own dear Son?”

“It does not, however, seem to be a way of escape for me,” said the pirate, letting himself sink back on his couch with a weary sigh.

“Yes, it is! yes, it is!” exclaimed Zeppa eagerly, as he got upon the familiar theme; “the offer is to the chief of sinners, ‘Whosoever will,’ ‘Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?’”

“Tell me about it” said Rosco faintly, as the other paused.

Zeppa had delayed a moment in order to think for his disordered mind had been turned into a much-loved channel, that of preaching the Gospel to inquiring sinners. For many years he had been training himself in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and, being possessed of a good memory, he had got large portions of it by heart. Gathering together the embers of the scattered fire, he sat down again, and, gazing thoughtfully at the flickering flames, began to point out the way of salvation to the pirate.

Sleep—irresistible sleep—gradually overcame the latter; still the former went on repeating long passages of God’s word. At last he put a question, and, not receiving an answer, looked earnestly into the face of his enemy.

“Ah! poor man. He sleeps. God cannot wish me to slay him until I have made

him understand the gospel. I will delay—till to-morrow."

Before the morrow came Zeppa had wandered forth among the cliffs and gorges of his wild home, with the ever-increasing fires of fever raging in his veins.

Sometimes his madness took the form of wildest fury, and, grasping some bush or sapling that might chance to be near, he would struggle with it as with a fiend until utter exhaustion caused him to fall prostrate on the ground, where he would lie until partial rest and internal fire gave him strength again to rise. At other times he would run up and down the bills like a greyhound, bounding from rock to rock, and across chasms where one false step would have sent him headlong to destruction.

Frequently he ran down to the beach and plunged into the sea, where he would swim about aimlessly until exhaustion sent him to the shore, where he would fall down, as at other times, and rest—if such repose could be so styled.

Thus he continued fighting for his life for several days.

During that time Richard Rosco lay in the cave almost starving.

At first he had found several cocoa-nuts, the hard shells of which had been broken by Zeppa, and appeased his hunger with these, but when they were consumed, he sought about the cave for food in vain. Fortunately he found a large earthenware pot—evidently a home-made one—nearly full of water, so that he was spared the agony of thirst as well as hunger.

When he had scraped the shells of the cocoa-nuts perfectly clean, the pirate tried to crawl forth on hands and knees, to search for food, his feet being in such a state that it was not possible for him to stand, much less to walk. But Zeppa had long ago cleared away all the wild fruits that grew in the neighbourhood of his cave, so that he found nothing save a few wild berries. Still, in his condition, even these were of the utmost value: they helped to keep him alive. Another night passed, and the day came. He crept forth once more, but was so weakened by suffering and want that he could not extend his explorations so far as before, and was compelled to return without having tasted a mouthful. Taking a long draught of water, he lay down, as he firmly believed, to die.

And as he lay there his life rose up before him as an avenging angel, and the image of his dead mother returned with a reproachful yet an appealing look in her eyes. He tried to banish the one and to turn his thoughts from the other, but failed, and at last in an agony of remorse, shouted the single word "Guilty!"

It seemed as if the cry had called Zeppa from the world of spirits—to which Rosco believed he had fled—for a few minutes afterwards the madman approached his mountain-home, with the blood still boiling in his veins. Apparently he had forgotten all about the pirate, for he was startled on beholding him.

“What! still there? I thought I had killed you.”

“I wish you had, Zeppa. It would have been more merciful than leaving me to die of hunger here.”

“Are you prepared to die now?”

“Yes, but for God’s sake give me something to eat first. After that I care not what you do to me.”

“Miserable man, death is sufficient for you. I have neither command nor desire to torture. You shall have food immediately.”

So saying, Zeppa re-entered the bush. In less than half-an-hour he returned with several cocoa-nuts and other fruits, of which Rosco partook with an avidity that told its own tale.

“Now,” said Zeppa, rising, when Rosco had finished, “have you had enough?”

“No,” said the pirate, quickly, “not half enough. Go, like a good fellow, and fetch me more.”

Zeppa rose at once and went away. While he was gone the fear of being murdered again took possession of Rosco. He felt that his last hour was approaching, and, in order to avoid his doom if possible, crawled away among the bushes and tried to hide himself. He was terribly weak, however, and had not got fifty yards away when he fell down utterly exhausted.

He heard Zeppa return to the cave, and listened with beating heart.

“Hallo! where are you?” cried the madman.

Then, receiving no answer, he burst into a long, loud fit of laughter, which seemed to freeze the very marrow in the pirate’s bones.

“Ha! ha!” he shouted, again and again, “I knew you were a dream, I felt sure of it—ha! ha! and now this proves it. And I’m glad you were a dream, for I did not want to kill you, Rosco, though I thought it my duty to do so. It was a dream—thank God, it was all a dream!”

Zeppa did not end again with wild laughter, but betook himself to earnest

importunate prayer, during which Rosco crept, by slow degrees, farther and farther away, until he could no longer hear the sound of his enemy's voice.

Now, it was while this latter scene had been enacting, that Orlando and the faithful negro set out on their search into the mountain.

At first they did not speak, and Ebony, not feeling sure how his young master relished his company, kept discreetly a pace or two in rear. After they had crossed the plain, however, and begun to scale the steep sides of the hills, his tendency towards conversation could not be restrained.

"Does you t'ink, Massa Orley, that hims be you fadder?"

"I think so, Ebony, indeed I feel almost sure of it."

Thus encouraged, the negro ranged up alongside.

"An' does you t'ink hims mad?"

"I hope not. I pray not; but I fear that he—"

"Hims got leettle out ob sorts," said the sympathetic Ebony, suggesting a milder state of things.

As Orlando did not appear to derive much consolation from the suggestion, Ebony held his tongue for a few minutes.

Presently his attention was attracted to a sound in the underwood near them.

"Hist! Massa Orley. I hear somet'ing."

"So do I, Ebony," said the youth, pausing for a moment to listen; "it must be some sort of bird, for there can be no wild animals left by the natives in so small an island."

As he spoke something like a low moan was heard. The negro's mouth opened, and the whites of his great eyes seemed to dilate.

"If it am a bird, massa, hims got a mos' awful voice. Mus' have cotched a drefful cold!"

The groan was repeated as he spoke, and immediately after they observed a large, sluggish-looking animal, advancing through the underwood.

"What a pity we's not got a gun!" whispered Ebony. "If we's only had a spear or a pitchfork, it's besser than nuffin."

“Lucky that you have nothing of the sort, else you’d commit murder,” said Orlando, advancing. “Don’t you see—it is a man!”

The supposed animal started as the youth spoke, and rose on his knees with a terribly haggard and anxious look.

“Richard Rosco!” exclaimed Orley, who recognised the pirate at the first glance.

But Rosco did not reply. He, too, had recognised Orley, despite the change in his size and appearance, and believed him to be a visitant from the other world, an idea which was fostered by the further supposition that Ebony was the devil keeping him company.

Orlando soon relieved him, however. The aspect of the pirate, so haggard and worn out, as he crawled on his hands and knees, was so dreadful that a flood of pity rushed into his bosom.

“My poor fellow,” he said, going forward and laying his hand gently on his shoulder, “this is indeed a most unexpected, most amazing sight. How came you here?”

“Then you were not drowned?” gasped the pirate, instead of answering the question.

“No, thank God. I was not drowned,” said Orley, with a sad smile. “But again I ask, How came you here?”

“Never mind me,” said Rosco hurriedly, “but go to your father.”

“My father! Do you know, then, where he is?” cried Orlando, with sudden excitement.

“Yes. He is up there—not far off. I have just escaped from him. He is bent on taking my life. He saved me from the savages. He is mad—with fever—and stands terribly in need of help.”

Bewildered beyond expression by these contradictory statements, Orlando made no attempt to understand, but exclaimed—

“Can you guide us to him?”

“You see,” returned the pirate sadly, “I cannot even rise to my feet. The savages were burning me alive when your father came to my rescue. The flesh is dropping from the bones. I cannot help you.”

“Kin you git on my back?” asked Ebony. “You’s a good lift, but I’s awful

strong."

"I will try," returned Rosco, "but you will have to protect me from Zeppa if he sees me, for he is bent on taking my life. He thinks that you were drowned—as, indeed, so did I—the time that you were thrown overboard without my knowledge—mind that, without my knowledge—and your father in his madness thinks he is commissioned by God to avenge your death. Perhaps, when he sees you alive, he may change his mind, but there is no depending on one who is delirious with fever. He will probably still be in the cave when we reach it."

"We will protect you. Get up quickly, and show us the way to the cave."

In a moment the stout negro had the pirate on his broad shoulders, and, under his guidance, mounted the slightly-marked path that led to Zeppa's retreat.

No words were spoken by the way. Orlando was too full of anxious anticipation to speak. The negro was too heavily weighted to care about conversation just then, and Rosco suffered so severely from the rough motions of his black steed that he was fain to purse his lips tightly to prevent a cry of pain.

On reaching the neighbourhood of the cave the pirate whispered to Ebony to set him down.

"You will come in sight of the place the moment you turn round yonder cliff. It is better that I should remain here till the meeting is over. I hear no sound, but doubtless Zeppa is lying down by this time."

The negro set his burden on the ground, and Rosco crept slowly into the bush to hide, while the others hurried forward in the direction pointed out to them.

Chapter Twelve

No sooner had Orlando and the negro passed round the cliff to which Rosco had directed them, than they beheld a sight which was well calculated to fill them with anxiety and alarm, for there stood Zeppa, panting and wrestling with one of the fiends that were in the habit of assailing him.

The fiend, on this occasion, was familiar enough to him—the stout branch of a tree which overhung his cave, but which his delirious brain had transformed into a living foe. No shout or cry issued from the poor man's compressed lips. He engaged in the deadly struggle with that silent resolve of purpose which was natural to him. The disease under which he laboured had probably reached its climax, for he swayed to and fro, in his futile efforts to wrench off

the limb, with a degree of energy that seemed more than human. His partially naked limbs showed the knotted muscles standing out rigidly; his teeth were clenched and exposed; his blood-shot eyes glared; the long, curling and matted hair of his head and beard was flying about in wild disorder; and his labouring chest heaved as he fiercely, silently, and hopelessly struggled.

Oh! it was a terrible picture to be presented thus suddenly to the gaze of a loving son.

“Stay where you are, Ebony. I must meet him alone,” whispered Orlando.

Then, hastening forward with outstretched arms, he exclaimed—

“Father!”

Instantly Zeppa let go his supposed enemy and turned round. The change in his aspect was as wonderful as it was sudden. The old, loving, gentle expression overspread his features, and the wild fire seemed to die out of his eyes as he held out both hands.

“Ah! once more, my son!” he said, in the tenderest of tones. “Come to me. This is kind of you, Orley, to return so soon again; I had not expected you for a long time. Sit down beside me, and lay your head upon my knee—so—I like to have you that way, for I see you better.”

“Oh, father—dear father!” said Orlando, but the words were choked in his throat, and tears welled from his eyes.

“Yes, Orley?” said Zeppa, with a startled look of joyful surprise, while he turned his head a little to one side, as if listening in expectancy; “speak again, dear boy; speak again. I have often seen you since you went to the spirit-land, but have never heard you speak till to-day. Speak once more, dear boy!”

But Orley could not speak. He could only hide his face in his father’s bosom and sob aloud.

“Nay, don’t cry, lad; you never did that before! What do you mean? That is unmanly. Not like what my courageous boy was wont to be. And you have grown so much since last I saw you. Why, you’ve even got a beard! Who ever heard of a bearded man sobbing like a child? And now I look at you closely I see that you have grown wonderfully tall. It is very strange—but all things seem strange since I came here. Only, in all the many visits you have paid me, I have never seen you changed till to-day. You have always come to me in the old boyish form. Very, very strange! But, Orley, my boy” (and here Zeppa’s voice became intensely earnest and pleading), “you won’t leave me again, will

you? Surely they can well spare you from the spirit-world for a time—just a little while. It would fill my heart with such joy and gratitude. And I'm your father, Orley, surely I have a right to you—more right than the angels have—haven't I? and then it would give such joy, if you came back, to your dear mother, whom I have not seen for so long—so very long!"

"I will never leave you, father, never!" cried Orlando, throwing his arms round Zeppa's neck and embracing him passionately.

"Nay, then, you are going to leave me," cried Zeppa, with sudden alarm, as he clasped Orlando to him with an iron grip. "You always embrace me when you are about to vanish out of my sight. But you shall not escape me this time. I have got you tighter than I ever had you before, and no fiend shall separate us now. No fiend!" he repeated in a shout, glaring at a spot in the bushes where Ebony, unable to restrain his feelings, had unwittingly come into sight.

Suddenly changing his purpose, Zeppa let go his son and sprang like a tiger on the supposed fiend. Ebony went down before him like a bulrush before the hurricane, but, unlike it, he did not rise again. The madman had pinned him to the earth and was compressing his throat with both hands. It required all the united strength of his son and the negro to loosen his grasp, and even that would not have sufficed had not the terrible flame which had burned so long died out. It seemed to have been suddenly extinguished by this last burst of fury, for Zeppa fell back as helpless as an infant in their hands. Indeed he lay so still with his eyes closed that Orlando trembled with fear lest he should be dying.

"Now, Ebony," said he, taking the negro apart, when they had made the exhausted man as comfortable as possible on his rude couch in the cave; "you run down to the ship and fetch the doctor here without delay. I will be able to manage him easily when alone. Run as you never ran before. Don't let any soul come here except the doctor and yourself. Tell the captain I have found him—through God's mercy—but that he is very ill and must be carefully kept from excitement and that in the meantime nobody is to disturb us. The doctor will of course fetch physic; and tell him to bring his surgical instruments also, for, if I mistake not, poor Rosco needs his attention. Do you bring up as much in the way of provisions as you can carry, and one or two blankets. And, harkee, make no mention of the pirate to any one. Away!"

During the delivery of this message, the negro listened eagerly, and stood quite motionless, like a black statue, with the exception of his glittering eyes.

"Yes, massa," he said at its conclusion, and almost literally vanished from the scene.

Orlando then turned to his father. The worn out man still lay perfectly quiet, with closed eyes, and countenance so pale that the dread of approaching death again seized on the son. The breathing was, however, slow and regular, and what appeared to be a slight degree of moisture lay on the brow. The fact that the sick man slept soon became apparent, and when Orlando had assured himself of this he arose, left the cave with careful tread, and glided, rather than walked, back to the place where the pirate had been left. There he still lay, apparently much exhausted.

“We have found him, thank God,” said Orlando, seating himself on a bank; “and I would fain hope that the worst is over, for he sleeps. But, poor fellow, you seem to be in a bad case. Can I do aught to relieve you?”

“Nothing,” replied Rosco, with a weary sigh.

“I have sent for a surgeon—”

“A surgeon!” repeated the pirate, with a startled look; “then there must be a man-of-war off the coast for South sea traders are not used to carry surgeons.”

“Ah! I forgot. You naturally don’t wish to see any one connected with a man-of-war. Yes, there is one here. I came in her. But you can see this surgeon without his knowing who or what you are. It will be sufficient for him to know that you are an unfortunate sailor who had fallen into the hands of the savages.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Rosco, grasping eagerly at the idea; “and that’s just what I am. Moreover, I ran away from my ship! But—but—do you not feel it your duty to give me up?”

“What I shall feel it my duty to do ultimately is not a matter for present consideration. Just now you require surgical assistance. But how did you come here? and what do you mean by saying that you ran away from your ship?”

Rosco in reply gave a brief but connected narrative of his career during the past three years, in which he made no attempt to exculpate himself, but, on the contrary, confessed his guilt and admitted his desert of death.

“Yet I shrink from death,” he said in conclusion. “Is it not strange that I, who have faced death so often with perfect indifference, should draw back from it now with something like fear?”

“A great writer,” replied Orlando, “whom my father used to read to me at home, says that ‘conscience makes cowards of us all.’ And a still greater authority says that ‘the wicked flee when no man pursueth.’ You are safe here,

Rosco—at all events for the present. But you must not go near the cave again. Rest where you are and I will search for some place where you may remain concealed till you are well. I shall return quickly."

Leaving the pirate where he lay, Orlando returned to his father, and, finding that he still slept, went off to search for a cave.

He soon found a small one in the cliffs, suitable for his purpose. Thither he carried the pirate, laid him tenderly on a couch of branches and leaves, put food and water within his reach, and left him with a feeling of comfort and of contentment at heart that he had not experienced for many years.

That night the surgeon of the "Furious" ascended to the mountain cave. His approach was made known to Orlando, as he watched at the sick man's side, by the appearance of Ebony's great eyes glittering at him over the bushes that encircled the cave's mouth. No wonder that poor Zeppa had mistaken him for a demon! Holding up a finger of caution, Orlando glided towards him, seized his arm, and, after leading him to a safe distance, asked in a low voice—

"Well, have you brought the doctor?"

"Ho, yis, massa, an' I bring Tomeo and Buttchee too."

"Didn't I tell you to let no one else come near us?" said Orlando in a tone of vexation.

"Dat's true, massa, but I no kin stop dem. So soon as dey hear dat Antonio Zeppa am found, sick in de mountains, dey swore dey mus' go see him. I say dat you say no! Dey say dey not care. I say me knock 'em bofe down. Dey say dey turn me hinside hout if I don't ole my tongue. What could dis yar nigger do? Dey's too much for me. So dey follered, and here dey am wid de doctor, waiting about two hun'rd yards down dere for leave to come. But, I say, massa, dey's good sort o' fellers after all—do whatever you tells 'em. Good for go messages, p'raps, an save dis yar nigger's poor legs."

Ebony made the latter suggestion with a grin so broad that in the darkness his face became almost luminous with teeth and gums.

"Well, I suppose we must make the most of the circumstances," said Orlando. "Come, lead me to them."

It was found that though the strong affection of the two chiefs for Zeppa had made them rebellious in the matter of visiting the spot, the same affection, and their regard for Orlando, rendered them submissive as lambs, and willing to do absolutely whatever they were told.

Orlando, therefore, had no difficulty in prevailing on them to delay their visit to his father till the following day. Meanwhile, he caused them to encamp in a narrow pass close at hand, and, the better to reconcile them to their lot, imposed upon them the duty of mounting guard each alternate couple of hours during the night.

“He will do well,” said the doctor, after examining the patient. “This sleep is life to him. I will give him something when he awakes, but the awaking must be left to nature. Whether he recovers his reason after what he has passed through remains to be seen. You say he has been wandering for some time here in a state of insanity? How came that about?”

“It is a long and sad story, doctor,” said Orlando, evading the question, “and I have not time to tell it now, for I want you to visit another patient.”

“Another patient?” repeated the surgeon, in surprise; “ah! one of the natives, I suppose?”

“No, a white man. He is a sailor who ran away from his ship, and was caught by the natives and tortured.”

“Come, then, let us go and see the poor fellow at once. Does he live far from here?”

“Close at hand,” answered Orlando, as he led the way; “and perhaps, doctor, it would be well not to question the poor man at present as to his being here and in such a plight. He seems very weak and ill.”

When the surgeon had examined Rosco’s feet he led Orlando aside.

“It is a bad case,” he said; “both legs must be amputated below the knee if the man’s life is to be saved.”

“Must it be done now?”

“Immediately. Can you assist me?”

“I have assisted at amateur operations before now,” said Orlando, “and at all events you can count on the firmness of my nerves and on blind obedience. But stay—I must speak to him first, alone.”

“Rosco,” said the youth, as he knelt by the pirate’s couch, “your sins have been severely punished, and your endurance sorely tried—”

“Not more than I deserve, Orlando.”

“But I grieve to tell you that your courage must be still further tried. The

doctor says that both feet must be amputated."

A frown gathered on the pirate's face, and he compressed his lips for a few moments.

"And the alternative?" he asked.

"Is death."

Again there was a brief pause. Then he said slowly, almost bitterly—

"Oh, death! you have hovered over my head pretty steadily of late! It is a question whether I had not better let you come on and end these weary struggles, rather than become a hopeless cripple in the prime of life! Why should I fear death now more than before?"

"Have you any hope of eternal life, Rosco?"

"How can I tell? What do I know about eternal life!"

"Then you are not prepared to die; and let me earnestly assure you that there is something well worth living for, though at present you do not—you cannot know it."

"Enough. Let it be as the doctor advises," said the pirate in a tone of resignation.

That night the operation was successfully performed, and the unfortunate man was afterwards carefully tended by Ebony.

Next day Tomeo and Buttchee were told that their old friend Zeppa could not yet be seen, but that he required many little comforts from the "Furious," which must be brought up with as little delay as possible. That was sufficient. Forgetting themselves in their anxiety to aid their friend, these affectionate warriors went off on their mission, and were soon out of sight.

When Zeppa awoke at last with a deep sigh, it was still dark. This was fortunate, for he could not see whose hand administered the physic, and was too listless and weak to inquire. It was bright day when he awoke the second time and looked up inquiringly in his son's face.

"What, are you still there, Orley?" he said faintly, while the habitual sweet expression stole over his pale features, though it was quickly followed by the perplexed look. "But how comes this change? You look so much older than you are, dear boy. Would God that I could cease this dreaming!"

"You are not dreaming now, father. I am indeed Orley. You have been ill and

delirious, but, thanks be to God, are getting well again."

"What?" exclaimed the invalid; "has it been all a dream, then? Were you not thrown into the sea by mutineers, and have I not been wandering for months or years on a desert island? But then, if these things be all dreams," he added, opening his eyes wide and fixing them intently on Orlando's face, "how comes it that I still dream the change in you? You are Orley, yet not Orley! How is that?"

"Yes, all that is true, dear, dear father," said the youth, gently clasping one of the helpless hands that lay crossed on Zeppa's broad chest; "I was thrown overboard by the mutineers years ago, but, thank God, I was not drowned; and you have been wandering here in—in—very ill, for years; but, thank God again, you are better, and I have been mercifully sent to deliver you."

"I can't believe it, Orley, for I have so often seen you, and you have so often given me the slip—yet there does seem something very real about you just now—very real, though so changed—yet it is the same voice, and you never spoke to me before in my dreams—except once. Yes, I think it was once, that you spoke. I remember it well, for the sound sent such a thrill to my heart. Oh! God forbid that it should again fade away as it has done so often!"

"It will not fade, father. The time you speak of was only yesterday, when I found you. You have been sleeping since, and a doctor is attending you."

"A doctor! where did he come from?"

At that moment Ebony approached with some food in a tin pan. The invalid observed him at once.

"Ebony! can that be you? Why—when—oh! my poor brain feels so light—it seems as if a puff of wind would blow it away. I must have been very ill." Zeppa spoke feebly, and closed his eyes, from which one or two tears issued—blessed tears!—the first he had shed for many a day.

"His reason is restored," whispered the doctor in Orlando's ear, "but he must be left to rest."

Orlando's heart was too full to find relief through the lips.

"I cannot understand it at all," resumed Zeppa, reopening his eyes; "least of all can I understand you, Orley, but my hope is in God. I would sleep now, but you must not let go my hand." (Orlando held it tighter.) "One word more. Your dear mother?"

"Is well—and longs to see you."

A profound, long-drawn sigh followed, as if an insupportable burden had been removed from the wearied soul, and Zeppa sank into a sleep so peaceful that it seemed as if the spirit had forsaken the worn out frame. But a steady, gentle heaving of the chest told that life was still there. During the hours that followed, Orlando sat quite motionless, like a statue, firmly grasping his father's hand.

Chapter Thirteen

A few days after the discovery of Zeppa by his son, a trading vessel chanced to touch at the island, the captain of which no sooner saw the British man-of-war than he lowered his gig, went aboard in a state of great excitement, and told how that, just two days before, he had been chased by a pirate in latitude so-and-so and longitude something else!

A messenger was immediately sent in hot haste to Sugar-loaf Mountain to summon Orlando.

"I'm sorry to be obliged to leave you in such a hurry," said Captain Fitzgerald, as they were about to part, "but duty calls, and I must obey. I promise you, however, either to return here or to send your mission-vessel for you, if it be available. Rest assured that you shall not be altogether forsaken."

Having uttered these words of consolation, the captain spread his sails and departed, leaving Orlando, and his father, Waroonga, Tomeo, Buttchee, Ebony, and Rosco on Sugar-loaf Island.

Several days after this, Waroonga entered the hut of Ongoloo and sat down. The chief was amusing himself at the time by watching his prime minister Wapoota playing with little Lippy, who had become a favourite at the palace since Zeppa had begun to take notice of her.

"I would palaver with the chief," said the missionary.

"Let Lippy be gone," said the chief.

Wapoota rolled the brown child unceremoniously out of the hut, and composed his humorous features into an expression of solemnity.

"My brother," continued the missionary, "has agreed to become a Christian and burn his idols?"

"Yes," replied Ongoloo with an emphatic nod, for he was a man of decision. "I like to hear what you tell me. I feel that I am full of naughtiness. I felt that

before you came here. I have done things that I knew to be wrong, because I have been miserable after doing them—yet, when in passion, I have done them again. I have wondered why I was miserable. Now I know; you tell me the Great Father was whispering to my spirit. It must be true. I have resisted Him, and He made me miserable. I deserve it. I deserve to die. When any of my men dare to resist me I kill them. I have dared to resist the Great Father, yet He has not killed me. Why not? you tell me He is full of love and mercy even to His rebels! I believe it. You say, He sent His Son Jesus to die for me, and to deliver me from my sins. It is well, I accept this Saviour—and all my people shall accept Him."

"My brother's voice makes me glad," returned Waroonga; "but while you can accept this Saviour for yourself, it is not possible to force other people to do so."

"Not possible!" cried the despotic chief, with vehemence. "Do you not know that I can force my people to do whatever I please?—at least I can kill them if they refuse."

"You cannot do that and, at the same time, be a Christian."

"But," resumed Ongoloo, with a look of, so to speak, fierce perplexity, "I can at all events make them burn their idols."

"True, but that would only make them hate you in their hearts, and perhaps worship their idols more earnestly in secret. No, my brother; there is but one weapon given to Christians, but that is a sharp and powerful weapon. It is called Love; we must win others to Christ by voice and example, we may not drive them. It is not permitted. It is not possible."

The chief cast his frowning eyes on the ground, and so remained for some time, while the missionary silently prayed. It was a critical moment. The man so long accustomed to despotic power could not easily bring his mind to understand the process of winning men. He did, indeed, know how to win the love of his wives and children—for he was naturally of an affectionate disposition, but as to winning the obedience of warriors or slaves—the thing was preposterous! Yet he had sagacity enough to perceive that while he could compel the obedience of the body—or kill it—he could not compel the obedience of the soul.

"How can I," he said at last, with a touch of indignation still in his tone, "I, a chief and a descendant of chiefs, stoop to ask, to beg, my slaves to become Christians? It may not be, I can only command them."

"Woh!" exclaimed Wapoota, unable to restrain his approval of the sentiment.

“You cannot even command yourself, Ongoloo, to be a Christian. How, then, can you command others? It is the Great Father who has put it into your heart to wish to be a Christian. If you will now take His plan, you will succeed. If you refuse, and try your own plan, you shall fail.”

“Stay,” cried the chief, suddenly laying such a powerful grasp on Waroonga’s shoulder, that he winced; “did you not say that part of His plan is the forgiveness of enemies?”

“I did.”

“Must I, then, forgive the Raturans if I become a Christian?”

“Even so.”

“Then it is impossible. What! forgive the men whose forefathers have tried to rob my forefathers of their mountain since our nation first sprang into being! Forgive the men who have for ages fought with our fathers, and tried to make slaves of our women and children—though they always failed because they are cowardly dogs! Forgive the Raturans? Never! Impossible!”

“With man this is impossible. With the Great Father all things are possible. Leave your heart in His hands, Ongoloo; don’t refuse His offer to save you from an unforgiving spirit, as well as from other sins, and that which to you seems impossible will soon become easy.”

“No—never!” reiterated the chief with decision, as he cut further conversation short by rising and stalking out of the hut, closely followed by the sympathetic Wapoota.

Waroonga was not much depressed by this failure. He knew that truth would prevail in time, and did not expect that the natural enmity of man would be overcome at the very first sound of the Gospel. He was therefore agreeably surprised when, on the afternoon of that same day, Ongoloo entered the hut which had been set apart for him and the two Ratinga chiefs, and said—

“Come, brother, I have called a council of my warriors. Come, you shall see the working of the Great Father.”

The missionary rose at once and went after the chief with much curiosity, accompanied by Tomeo and Buttchee: Zeppa and his son, with Ebony and the pirate, being still in the mountains.

Ongoloo led them to the top of a small hill on which a sacred hut or temple stood. Here the prisoners of war used to be slaughtered, and here the orgies of

heathen worship were wont to be practised. An immense crowd of natives—indeed the entire tribe except the sick and infirm—crowned the hill. This, however, was no new sight to the missionary, and conveyed no hint of what was pending.

The crowd stood in two orderly circles—the inner one consisting of the warriors, the outer of the women and children. Both fell back to let the chief and his party pass.

As the temple-hut was open at one side, its interior, with the horrible instruments of execution and torture, as well as skulls, bones, and other ghastly evidences of former murder, was exposed to view. On the centre of the floor lay a little pile of rudely carved pieces of timber, with some loose cocoa-nut fibre beneath them. A small fire burned on something that resembled an altar in front of the hut.

The chief, standing close to this fire, cleared his throat and began an address with the words, “Men, warriors, women and children, listen!” And they did listen with such rapt attention that it seemed as if not only ears, but eyes, mouths, limbs, and muscles were engaged in the listening act, for this mode of address—condescending as it did to women and children—was quite new to them, and portended something unusual.

“Since these men came here,” continued the chief, pointing to Waroonga and his friends, “we have heard many wonderful things that have made us think. Before they came we heard some of the same wonderful things from the great white man, whose head is light but whose heart is wise and good. I have made up my mind, now, to become a Christian. My warriors, my women, my children need not be told what that is. They have all got ears and have heard. I have assembled you here to see my gods burned (he pointed to the pile in the temple), and I ask all who are willing, to join me in making this fire a big one. I cannot compel your souls. I could compel your bodies, but I will not!”

He looked round very fiercely as he said this, as though he still had half a mind to kill one or two men to prove his point, and those who stood nearest to him moved uneasily, as though they more than half expected him to do some mischief, but the fierce look quickly passed away, and he went on in gentle, measured tones—

“Waroonga tells me that the Book of the Great Father says, those who become Christians must love each other: therefore we must no more hate, or quarrel, or fight, or kill—not even our enemies.”

There was evident surprise on every face, and a good deal of decided shaking of heads, as if such demands were outrageous.

“Moreover, it is expected of Christians that they shall not revenge themselves, but suffer wrong patiently.”

The eyebrows rose higher at this.

“Still more; it is demanded that we shall forgive our enemies. If we become Christians, we must open our arms wide, and take the Raturans to our hearts!”

This was a climax, as Ongoloo evidently intended, for he paused a long time, while loud expressions of dissent and defiance were heard on all sides, though it was not easy to see who uttered them.

“Now, warriors, women and children, here I am—a Christian—who will join me?”

“I will!” exclaimed Wapoota, stepping forward with several idols in his arms, which he tossed contemptuously into the temple.

There was a general smile of incredulity among the warriors, for Wapoota was well known to be a time-server: nevertheless they were mistaken, for the jester was in earnest this time.

Immediately after that, an old, white-headed warrior, bent nearly double with infirmity and years, came forward and acted as Wapoota had done. Then, turning to the people, he addressed them in a weak, trembling voice. There was a great silence, for this was the patriarch of the tribe; had been a lion-like man in his youth, and was greatly respected.

“I join the Christians,” he said, slowly. “Have I not lived and fought for long —very long?”

“Yes, yes,” from many voices.

“And what good has come of it?” demanded the patriarch. “Have not the men of the Mountain fought with the men of the Swamp since the Mountain and the Swamp came from the hand of the Great Father?” (A pause, and again, “Yes, yes,” from many voices.) “And what good has come of it? Here is the Mountain; yonder is the Swamp, as they were from the beginning; and what the better are we that the swamp has been flooded and the mountain drenched with the blood of our fathers? Hatred has been tried from the beginning of time, and has failed. Let us now, my children, try Love, as the Great Father counsels us to do.”

A murmur of decided applause followed the old man’s speech, and Ongoloo, seizing him by both shoulders, gazed earnestly into his withered face. Had

they been Frenchmen, these two would no doubt have kissed each other's cheeks; if Englishmen, they might have shaken hands warmly; being Polynesian savages, they rubbed noses.

Under the influence of this affectionate act, a number of the warriors ran off, fetched their gods, and threw them on the temple floor. Then Ongoloo, seizing a brand from the fire, thrust it into the loose cocoa-nut fibre, and set the pile in a blaze. Quickly the flames leaped into the temple thatch, and set the whole structure on fire. As the fire roared and leaped, Waroonga, with Tomeo and Buttchee, started a hymn. It chanced to be one which Zeppa had already taught the people, who at once took it up, and sent forth such a shout of praise as had never before echoed among the palm-groves of that island. It confirmed the waverers, and thus, under the influence of sympathy, the whole tribe came that day to be of one mind!

The sweet strains, rolling over the plains and uplands, reached the cliffs at last, and struck faintly on the ears of a small group assembled in a mountain cave. The group consisted of Zeppa and his son, Ebony and the pirate.

"It sounds marvellously like a hymn," said Orlando, listening.

"Ah! dear boy, it is one I taught the natives when I stayed with them," said Zeppa; "but it never reached so far as this before."

Poor Zeppa was in his right mind again, but oh! how weak and wan and thin the raging fever had left him!

Rosco, who was also reduced to a mere shadow of his former self, listened to the faint sound with a troubled expression, for it carried him back to the days of innocence, when he sang it at his mother's knee.

"Dat's oncommon strange," said Ebony. "Nebber heard de sound come so far before. Hope de scoundrils no got hold ob grog."

"Shame on you, Ebony, to suspect such a thing!" said Orlando. "You would be better employed getting things ready for to-morrow's journey than casting imputations on our hospitable friends."

"Dar's not'ing to git ready, massa," returned the negro. "Eberyting's prepared to start arter breakfust."

"That's well, and I am sure the change to the seashore will do you good, father, as well as Rosco. You've both been too long here. The cave is not as dry as one could wish—and, then, you'll be cheered by the sound of children playing round you."

“Yes, it will be pleasant to have Lippy running out and in again,” said Zeppa.

They did not converse much, for the strength of both Zeppa and Rosco had been so reduced that they could not even sit up long without exhaustion, but Orlando kept up their spirits by prattling away on every subject that came into his mind—and especially of the island of Ratinga.

While they were thus engaged they heard the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps, and next moment Tomeo and Buttchee bounded over the bushes, glaring and panting from the rate at which they had raced up the hill to tell the wonderful news!

“Eberyting bu’nt?” exclaimed Ebony, whose eyes and teeth showed so much white that his face seemed absolutely to sparkle.

“Everything. Idols and temple!” repeated the two chiefs, in the Ratinga tongue, and in the same breath.

“An’ nebber gwine to fight no more?” asked Ebony, with a grin, that might be more correctly described as a split, from ear to ear.

“Never more!” replied the chiefs.

Next morning the two invalids were tenderly conveyed on litters down the mountain side and over the plain, and before the afternoon had passed away, they found a pleasant temporary resting-place in the now Christian village.

Chapter Fourteen

The slopes and knolls and palm-fringed cliffs of Ratinga were tipped with gold by the western sun one evening as he declined towards his bed in the Pacific, when Marie Zeppa wandered with Betsy Waroonga and her brown little daughter Zariffa towards the strip of bright sand in front of the village.

The two matrons, besides being filled with somewhat similar anxieties as to absent ones, were naturally sympathetic, and frequently sought each other’s company. The lively Anglo-French woman, whose vivacity was not altogether subdued even by the dark cloud that hung over her husband’s fate, took special pleasure in the sedate, earnest temperament of her native missionary friend, whose difficulty in understanding a joke, coupled with her inability to control her laughter when, after painful explanation, she did manage to comprehend one, was a source of much interest—an under-current, as it were, of quiet amusement.

“Betsy,” said Marie, as they walked slowly along, their naked feet just laved

by the rippling sea, “why do you persist in wearing that absurd bonnet? If you would only let me cut four inches off the crown and six off the front, it would be much more becoming. Do let me, there’s a dear. You know I was accustomed to cutting and shaping when in England.”

“But what for the use?” asked Betsy, turning her large brown eyes solemnly on her companion. “It no seems too big to me. Besides, when brudder Gubbins give him to me he—”

“Who is brudder Gubbins?” asked Marie, with a look of smiling surprise.

“Oh! you know. The min’ster—Gubbins—what come to the mission-station just afore me an’ Waroonga left for Ratinga.”

“Oh! I see; the Reverend Mr Gubbins—well, what did he say about the bonnet?”

“W’at did he say? ah! he say much mor’n I kin remember, an’ he look at the bonnet with’s head a one side—so sad an’ pitiful like. ‘Ah! Betsy Waroonga,’ ses he, ‘this just the thing for you. Put it on an’ take it to Ratinga, it’ll press the natives there.’”

“Impress them, you mean, Betsy.”

“Well, p’raps it was that. Anyhow I put it on, an’ he looked at me so earnest an’ ses with a sigh, ‘Betsy,’ ses he, ‘it minds me o’ my grandmother, an’ she was a good old soul—brought me up, Betsy, she did. Wear it for her sake an’ mine. I make a present of it to you.’”

“Ah! Betsy,” said Marie, “the Reverend Gubbins must be a wag, I suspect.”

“W’at’s a wag, Marie?”

“Don’t you know what a wag is?”

“Oh, yis, I know. When leetil bird sit on a stone an shake hims tail, I’ve heerd you an Orley say it wag—but misser Gubbins he got no tail to wag—so how can he wag it?”

“I didn’t say he wagged it, Betsy,” returned Marie, repressing a laugh, “but—you’ll never get to understand what a wag means, so I won’t try to explain. Look! Zariffa is venturesome. You’d better call her back.”

Zariffa was indeed venturesome. Clad in a white flannel petticoat and a miniature coal-scuttle, she was at that moment wading so deep into the clear sea that she had to raise the little garment as high as her brown bosom to keep

it out of the water; and with all her efforts she was unsuccessful, for, with that natural tendency of childhood to forget and neglect what cannot be seen, she had allowed the rear-part of the petticoat to drop into the sea.

This, however, occasioned little or no anxiety to Betsy Waroonga, for she was not an anxious mother; but when, raising her eyes a little higher, she beheld the tip of the back-fin of a shark describing lively circles in the water as if it had scented the tender morsel and were searching for it, her easy indifference vanished. She gave vent to a yell and made a bound that told eloquently of the savage beneath the missionary, and, in another instant was up to the knees in the water with the coal-scuttle quivering violently. Seizing Zariffa, she squeezed her almost to the bursting point against her palpitating breast, while the shark headed seaward in bitter disappointment.

“Don’t go so deep agin, Ziffa,” said the mother, with a gasp, as she set her little one down on the sand.

“No, musser,” said the obedient child; and she kept on the landward side of her parent thereafter with demonstrative care.

It may be remarked here that, owing to Waroonga’s love for, and admiration of, white men, Zariffa’s native tongue was English—broken, of course, to the pattern of her parents.

“It was a narrow escape, Betsy,” said Marie, solemnised by the incident.

“Yes, thank the Lord,” replied the other, continuing to gaze out to sea long after the cause of her alarm had disappeared.

“Oh! Marie,” she added, with a sigh, “when will the dear men come home?”

The question drove all the playful humour out of poor Marie, and her eyes filled with sudden tears.

“When, indeed? Oh! Betsy, my man will never come. For Orley and the others I have little fear, but my Antonio—”

Poor Marie could say no more. Her nature was as quickly, though not as easily, provoked to deep sorrow as to gaiety. She covered her face with her hands.

As she did so the eyes of Betsy, which had for some time been fixed on the horizon, opened to their widest, and her countenance assumed a look so deeply solemn that it might have lent a touch of dignity even to the coal-scuttle bonnet, if it had not bordered just a little too closely on the ridiculous.

“Ho! Marie,” she exclaimed in a whisper so deep that her friend looked up with a startled air; “see! look—a sip.”

“A ship—where?” said the other, turning her eager gaze on the horizon. But she was not so quick-sighted as her companion, and when at length she succeeded in fixing the object with her eyes, she pronounced it a gull.

“No ’snot a gull—a sip,” retorted Betsy.

“Ask Zariffa. Her eyes are better than ours,” suggested Marie.

“Kumeer, Ziffa!” shouted Betsy.

Zariffa came, and, at the first glance, exclaimed. “A sip!”

The news spread in a moment for other and sharper eyes in the village had already observed the sail, and, ere long, the beach was crowded with natives.

By that time most of the Ratingans had adopted more or less, chiefly less, of European costume, so that the aspect of the crowd was anything but savage. It is true there were large proportions of brown humanity presented to view—such as arms, legs, necks, and chests, but these were picturesquely interspersed with striped cotton drawers, duck trousers, gay guernseys, red and blue flannel petticoats, numerous caps and straw hats as well as a few coal-scuttles—though none of the latter could match that of Betsy Waroonga for size and tremulosity.

But there were other signs of civilisation there besides costume, for, in addition to the neat huts and gardens and whitewashed church, there was a sound issuing from the pointed spire which was anything but suggestive of the South sea savage. It was the church bell—a small one, to be sure, but sweetly toned—which was being rung violently to call in all the fighting men from the woods and fields around, for at that time the Ratingans had to be prepared for the reception of foes as well as friends.

A trusty chief had been placed in charge of the village by Tomeo before he left. This man now disposed his warriors in commanding positions as they came trooping in, obedient to the call, and bade them keep out of sight and watch his signals from the beach.

But now let us see what vessel it was that caused such commotion in Ratinga.

She was a brig, with nothing particularly striking in her rig or appointments—a mere trading vessel. But on her bulwarks at the bow and on the heel of the bowsprit was gathered a group that well deserves notice, for there, foremost of all, and towering above the others, stood Antonio Zeppa, holding on to a

forestay, and gazing with intensity and fixedness at the speck of land which had just been sighted. Beside him, and not less absorbed, stood his valiant and amiable son; while around, in various attitudes, sat or stood the chiefs Tomeo and Buttchee, Rosco and Ebony, Ongoloo and Wapoota, and little Lippy with her mother!

But the native missionary was not there. He had positively refused to quit the desert which had so unexpectedly and suddenly begun to blossom as the rose, and had remained to water the ground until his friends should send for him.

The chief and prime minister of the Mountain-men were there because, being large-minded, they wished to travel and see the world; and Lippy was there because Zeppa liked her; while the mother was there because she liked Lippy and refused to be parted from her.

Great was the change which had come over Zeppa during his convalescence. The wild locks and beard had been cut and trimmed; the ragged garments had been replaced by a suit belonging to Orley, and the air of wild despair, alternating with vacant simplicity, which characterised him in his days of madness, had given place to the old, sedate, sweet look of gentle gravity. It is true the grey hairs had increased in number, and there was a look, or, rather, an effect, of suffering in the fine face which nothing could remove; but much of the muscular vigour and the erect gait had been regained during those months when he had been so carefully and untiringly nursed by his son on Sugar-loaf Island.

It was not so with the ex-pirate. Poor Rosco was a broken man. The shock to his frame from the partial burning and the subsequent amputation of his feet had been so great that a return to anything like vigour seemed out of the question. But there was that in the expression of his faded face, and in the light of his sunken eye, which carried home the conviction that the ruin of his body had been the saving of his soul.

“I cannot tell you, Orley, how thankful I am,” said Zeppa, “that this trader happened to touch at the island. As I grew stronger my anxiety to return home became more and more intense; and to say truth, I had begun to fear that Captain Fitzgerald had forgotten us altogether.”

“No fear of that, father. The captain is sure to keep his promise. He will either return, as he said, or send some vessel to look after us. What are you gazing at, Ebony?”

“De steepil, massa. Look!” cried the negro, his whole face quivering with excitement, and the whites of his eyes unusually obtrusive as he pointed to the ever-growing line of land on the horizon, “you see him?—glippering like

fire!”

“I do see something glittering,” said Orlando, shading his eyes with his hand; “yes, it must be the steeple of the church, father. Look, it was not there when you left us. We’ll soon see the houses now.”

“Thank God!” murmured Zeppa, in a deep, tremulous voice.

“Can you see it, Rosco?” said Orley.

The pirate turned his eyes languidly in the direction pointed out.

“I see the land,” he said faintly, “and I join your father in thanking God for that—but—but it is not home to me.”

“Come, friend,” said Zeppa, laying his hand gently on the poor man’s shoulder, “say not so. It shall be home to you yet, please God. If He has blotted out the past in the cleansing blood of the Lamb, what is man that he should remember it? Cheer up, Rosco, you shall find a home and a welcome in Ratinga.”

“Always returning good for evil, Zeppa,” said Rosco, in a more cheerful voice. “I think it is this tremendous weakness that crushes my spirits, but come—I’ll try to ‘cheer up,’ as you advise.”

“Dat’s right massa!” cried Ebony, in an encouraging tone; “an’ jus’ look at the glipperin’ steepil. He’ll do yous heart good—somet’ing like de fire in de wilderness to de Jipshins—”

“To the Israelites you mean,” said Orley.

“Ah, yis—de Izlrights, to be sure. I mis-remembered. Ho! look; dar’s de house-tops now; an’ the pine grove whar’ we was use to hold palaver ’bout you, Massa, arter you was lost; an’—yis—dat’s de house—yous own house. You see de wife lookin’ out o’ winder bery soon. I knows it by de pig-sty close ’longside whar’ de big grumper sow libs, dat Ziffa’s so fond o’ playin’ wid. Ho! Lippy, come here, you little naked ting,” (he caught up the child an’ sat her on his broad shoulder). “You see de small leetil house. Dat’s it. Dat’s whar’ Ziffa lubs to play, but she’ll hab you to play wid soon, an’ den she’ll forsake de ole sow. Ho! but I forgit—you no understan’ English.”

Hereupon Ebony began to translate his information as he best could into the language of the little creature, in which effort he was not very successful, being an indifferent linguist.

Meanwhile the vessel gradually neared the island, stood into the lagoon, and,

finally, dropped anchor. A boat was at once lowered and made for the shore.

And oh! how intensely and intently did those in the boat and those on the shore gaze at each other as the space between them diminished!

“They not look like enemies,” said Betsy in subdued tones.

“And I don’t think they are armed,” returned Marie, with palpitating heart, “but I cannot yet make out the faces—only, they seem to be white, some of them.”

“Yis, an’ some of ’em’s brown.”

Thus—on the shore. In the boat:—

“Now den, massa, you sees her—an’ ha! ha! dar’s Betsy. I’d know her ’mong a t’ousind. You sees de bonnit—tumblin’ about like a jollyboat in a high sea; an’ Ziffa too wid de leetil bonnit, all de same shape, kin you no’ see her?”

Zeppa protested, rather anxiously, that he could not see them, and no wonder, for just then his eyes were blinded by tears which no amount of wiping sufficed to clear away.

At that moment a shriek was heard on shore, and Betsy was seen to spring, we are afraid to say how many feet, into the air.

“Dar’, she’s reco’nised us now!” exclaimed Ebony with delight; and it was evident that he was right for Betsy continued to caper upon the sands in a manner that could only be the result of joy or insanity, while the coal-scuttle beat tempestuously about her head like an enraged balloon.

Another moment and a signal from the chief brought the ambushed Christian warriors pouring down to the shore to see the long-lost and loved ones reunited, while Ebony ran about in a state of frantic excitement, weeping copiously, and embracing every one who came in his way.

But who shall describe the agony of disappointment endured by poor Betsy when she found that Waroonga was not among them? the droop of the spirits, the collapse of the coal-scuttle! Language is impotent. We leave it to imagination, merely remarking that she soon recovered on the faith of the happiness which was yet in store for her.

Chapter Fifteen

And now, once again, we find ourselves in the palm-grove of Ratinga Island. It is a fine autumn afternoon. The air is still as regards motion, but thrilling with

the melody of merry human voices as the natives labour in the fields, and alive with the twittering of birds as they make love, quarrel, and make it up again in the bushes. Now and then a hilarious laugh bursts from a group of children, or a hymn rises from some grateful heart, for as yet there is no secular music in Ratinga!

In the lagoon lies a man-of-war, its sails neatly furled, and its trim rigging, dark hull, and taper spars, perfectly reproduced in the clear water.

As the sun sank lower towards the west, our friend Ebony might have been seen slowly climbing the side of one of the neighbouring hills with Richard Rosco, the ex-pirate, on his back.

“Set me down now, my friend,” said Rosco, “you are far too good to me; and let me know what it is you have to say to me. You have quite roused my curiosity by your nods and mysterious manner. Out with it now, whatever it is.”

The negro had placed Rosco in such a position on a ledge of rock that he could see the lagoon and the ship at anchor.

The ex-pirate had by that time recovered some of his former strength, and, although there rested on his countenance an air of profound sadness, there mingled with it a hue of returning health, which none who saw him land had expected to see again. But the care of gentle hands and the power of gladsome emotions had wrought miraculously on the man, body and soul.

“I’s heerd massa an’ Cappin Fizzroy talkin’ about you,” said the negro, crossing his arms on his chest and regarding his questioner with a somewhat quizzical expression.

“Ha! I thought so. I am wanted, eh?”

“Well, yis, you’s wanted, but you’s not getted yet—so far as I knows.”

“Ah! Ebony,” returned Rosco, shaking his head, “I have long expected it, and now I am prepared to meet my deserved fate like a man—I may humbly say, a Christian man, thanks to God the Saviour and Zeppa the instrument. But, tell me, what did the commander of the man-of-war say?”

“What did he say? Well, I’s tell you. Fust he hoed into massa’s house an’ shook hands with missis, also wid Missis Waroonga wot happined to be wid her, an’ hims so frindly dat he nigh shookt de bonnit off her head. Den dey talk ’bout good many t’ings, an’ after a while de cappin turn full on massa, an say, —

“‘I’s told Missr Zeppa dat you’s got dat willain Rosco de pirit here.’

“Ho! you should hab see poor massa’s face how it grow long, I most t’ink it also grow a leetil pale, an’ missis she give a squeak what she couldn’t help, an’ Betsy she giv’ a groan an’ jump up, slap on hers bonnit, back to de front, an’ begin to clar out, but de cappin jump up an’ stop her. ‘Many apologies,’ ses de hipperkrit ‘for stoppin’ a lady, but I don’t want any alarm given. You know dat de pirit’s life am forfitid to his country, so ob course you’ll gib him up.’”

“And what said Zeppa to that?” asked Rosco eagerly.

“I’s just a-goin’ to tell you, massa. You see I’s in de back kishen at de time an’ hear ebery word. ‘Well,’ ses massa, awful slow an’ unwillin’ like, ‘I cannot deny that Rosco is in the island, but I do assure you, sir, that he is quite unable to do any furder mischief to any one, for—an massa stop all of a suddint.’

“‘Well,’ ses de cappin, ‘why you not go on?’

“‘Has you a description of him?’ he asked.

“‘Oh! yes,’ ses de cappin, drawin’ out a paper an’ readin’ it. De bery ting, as like you it was as two pease, even to de small mole on side ob you’s nose, but it say not’ing ’bout you’s feet. Clarly he nebber heerd ob dat an’ massa he notice dat, seems to me, for he ses, ‘Well, Cappin Fizzerald, it may be your duty to seize dis pirit and deliber him up to justice, but it’s no duty ob mine to help you.’

“‘Oh! as to dat,’ ses de cappin, ‘I’ll easily find him widout your assistance. I have a party of men with me, and no one knows or even suspects de reason ob my visit. But all of you who now hear me mus’ promise not to say a word about this matter till my search is over. I believe you to be an honourable Christian man, Zeppa, who cannot break his word; may these ladies be relied on?’

“‘Dey may,’ ses massa, in a voice ob woe dat a’most made me cry. So w’en I hear dat I tink’s to myself, ‘oh! you British hipperkrit, you’s not so clebber as you t’inks, for Ebony’s got to wind’ard ob you,’ an’ wid dat I slips out ob do back winder an’ run to you’s cottage, an’ ask if you’d like to have a ride on my back as usual, an’ you say yis, an’—now you’s here, an’ I dessay de cappin’s lookin’ for you.”

“It is very kind of you, Ebony,” said Rosco, with a deep sigh and a shake of the head, “very kind, both of you and Zeppa, but your efforts cannot now avail me. Just consider. If the description of me possessed by Captain Fitzgerald is as faithful and minute as you say, the mere absence of my feet could not

deceive him. Besides, when I am found, if the commander of the man-of-war asks me my name I will not deny it, I will give myself up."

"But if you do dey will hang you!" said Ebony in a somewhat exasperated tone.

"Even so. It is my fate—and deserved."

"But it would be murder to hang a innercent man what's bin reformed, an' don't mean for to do no more mischief—not on'y so, but can't!"

"I fear you won't get the broken law to look at it in that light, Ebony."

"Broken law! what does I care for de broken law? But tell me, massa, hab you make up you's mind to gib youself up?"

"I have," returned Rosco sadly.

"Quite sure an' sartin'?"

"Quite," returned Rosco, with a faint smile at the poor negro's persistency.

"Well, den, you come an' hab a last ride on my back. Surely you no kin refuse so small a favour to dis yar black hoss w'ats carried you so of in, afore you die!"

"Of course not, my poor fellow! but to what purpose—of what use will it be to delay matters? It will only prolong the captain's search needlessly."

"Oh! nebber mind. Der's good lot o' huts in de place to keep de hipperkrit goin'. Plenty ob time for a last leetil ride. Besides, I want you to see a place I diskiver not long ago—most koorious place—you nebber see."

"Come along, then," said Rosco, thinking it right to humour one who had been more like a brother than a servant to him during his long illness, "stoop down. Now, then, heave!"

In a twinkling Rosco was on the back of his "black horse," which carried him a considerable distance in among the hills.

"Ah! Ebony," said the rider at last, "I feel sure you are deceiving me—that you hope to conceal me here, but it is of no use, I tell you, for I won't remain concealed."

"No, massa, I not deceive you. I bring you here to show you de stronary place I hab diskiver, an ax you what you t'ink ob him."

“Well, show it me quickly, and then let us hasten home.”

Without replying, the negro clambered up a somewhat steep and rugged path which brought them to the base of a low precipice which was partially fringed with bushes. Pushing one of these aside, he entered a small cavern not much larger than a sentry-box, which seemed to have no outlet; but Ebony, placing his right foot on a projection of rock just large enough to receive it, raised himself upwards so as to place his left foot on another projection, which enabled him to get on what appeared to be a shelf of rock. Rising up, he entered another cavern.

“A strange place truly, but very dark,” said Rosco; “does it extend far?”

“You’ll see, jus’ now,” muttered the negro, obtaining a light by means of flint and steel, with which he kindled a torch. “You see I’s bin ’splorin’ here before an’ got t’ings ready.”

So saying, he carried Rosco through several winding passages until he gained a cavern so large and high, that the torch was unable to reveal either its extent or its roof.

“Wonderful! why did you not tell us of this place before, Ebony?”

“’Cause I on’y just diskiver him, ’bout a week past. I t’ink him splendid place for hide our wimen an childers in, if we’s iver ’tacked by savages. See, I even make some few preparations—got straw in de corner for lie on—soon git meat an’ drink if him’s required.”

“Very suitable indeed, but if you have brought me here to hide, as I still suspect, my poor fellow, you have troubled yourself in vain, for my mind is made up.”

“Dat’s berry sad, massa, berry sad,” returned Ebony, with a deep sigh, “but you no object sit on de straw for a bit an’ let me rest. Dere now. You’s growin’ heavier every day, massa. I stick de torch here for light. Look, here you see I hab a few t’ings. Dis is one bit ob rope wid a loop on him.”

“And what may that be for?” asked Rosco, with some curiosity.

“For tie up our enemies when we’s catch dem. Dis way, you understan’.”

As he spoke, Ebony passed the loop over Rosco’s shoulders and drew it tight so as to render his arms powerless, and before the latter realised what he was about his legs were also securely bound.

“Surely you do not mean to keep me here by force!” cried Rosco angrily.

“I’s much afraid, massa, dat’s zactly what I mean!”

“Come, come, Ebony, you have carried this jest far enough. Unbind me!”

“Berry sorry to disoblige you, massa, but dat’s impossible just now.”

“I command you, sir, to undo this rope!” cried Rosco fiercely.

“Dere’s a good deal ob de ole ring about dat, sar, but you’s not a pirit cappen now, an’ I ain’t one ob de pirit crew.”

Rosco saw at once the absurdity of giving way to anger, and restrained himself.

“But you cannot restrain my voice, Ebony,” he continued, “and I promise you that I will shout till I am heard.”

“Shout away, massa, much as you please. Bu’st you’s lungs if you like, for you’s in de bow’ls ob de hill here.”

Rosco felt that he was in the negro’s powers and remained silent.

“I’s berry sorry to leave you tied up,” said Ebony, rising to quit the place, “but when men is foolish like leetil boys, dey must be treat de same. De straw will keep you comf’rable. I daren’t leave de torch, but I’ll soon send you food by a sure messenger, and come back myself soon as iver I can.”

“Stay, Ebony, I’m at your mercy, and as no good can come of my remaining bound, I must give in. Will you unbind me if I promise to remain quiet?”

“Wid pleasure,” said the negro cheerfully, as his glistening teeth showed themselves. “You promise to wait here till I come for you?”

“I promise.”

“An’ you promise not to shout?”

“I do.”

In a moment the rope was cast off, and Rosco was free. Then Ebony, bidding him keep up his heart, glided out of the cavern and left him in profound darkness.

Captain Fitzgerald searched the island high and low, far and wide, without success, being guided during the search chiefly by Ebony.

That wily negro, on returning to the village, found that the search had already

begun. The captain had taken care that no one, save those to whom he had already spoken, should know what or who he was searching for, so that the pirate might not be prematurely alarmed. Great, therefore, was his surprise when he was accosted by the negro, and asked in a mysterious manner to step aside with him out of ear-shot of the sailors who assisted him.

“What have you got to say to me, my man?” he asked, when they had gone a few yards into the palm-grove.

“You’s lookin’ for the pirit!” said Ebony in a hoarse whisper, and with a superhumanly intelligent gaze.

“Why, how came you to know that?” asked the captain, somewhat perplexed and thrown off his guard.

“Ho! ho!” laughed Ebony in a subdued voice, “how I comes to know dat, eh? I come to knows many t’ings by putting dis an’ dat togider. You’s cappen ob man-ob-war. Well, you no comes here for notting. Well, Rosco de pirit, de horroble scoundril, hims lib here. Ob course you come for look for him. Hofficers ob de Brish navy got notting else to do but kotch an’ hang sitch varmints. Eh? I’s right?”

“Well, no,” returned Captain Fitzgerald, laughing, “not altogether right as to the duties of officers of the British navy. However, you’re right as to my object, and I see that this pirate is no friend of yours.”

“No friend, oh! no—not at all. Him’s far more nor dat. I lub him as a brudder,” said the negro with intense energy.

Captain Fitzgerald laughed again, for he supposed that the negro spoke ironically, and Ebony extended his thick lips from ear to ear because he foresaw and intended that the captain would fall into that mistake.

“Now you lose no time in sarch for him,” said Ebony, “an’ dis yar nigger will show you de way.”

“Do, my fine fellow, and when we find him, I’ll not forget your services.”

“You’s berry good, a’most too good,” said Ebony, with an affectionate look at his new employer.

So, as we have said, the village and island were searched high and low without success. At last, while the searching party was standing, baffled, on the shore farthest from the village, Captain Fitzgerald stopped abruptly, and looking Zeppa in the face, exclaimed, “Strange, is it not? and the island so small, comparatively.”

“Quite unaccountable,” answered Zeppa, who, with his son, had at last joined in the search out of sheer anxiety as to Rosco’s fate.

“Most perplexing!” said Orlando.

“Most amazin’!” murmured Ebony, with a look of disappointment that baffles description.

Suddenly the negro pointed to the beach, exclaiming, “Oh! I knows it now! Look dare. You see two small canoes? Dere wor tree canoes dare yisterday. De t’ird wan am dare now. Look!”

They all looked eagerly at the horizon, where a tiny speck was seen. It might have been a gull or an albatross.

“Impossible,” said Zeppa. “Where could he hope to escape to in that direction —no island within a thousand miles?”

“A desprit man doos anyt’ing, massa.”

“Well. I shall soon find out, for the wind blows in that direction,” said the captain, wheeling about and returning to his ship.

Soon the sails were spread, the anchor weighed, the coral reef passed, and the good ship was leaping merrily over the sea in pursuit of the pirate, while Ebony was seated on the straw beside Rosco, expanding his mouth to an extent that it had never reached before, and causing the cavern to ring with uproarious laughter.

Chapter Sixteen

It need scarcely be said that the man-of-war did not overtake the pirate’s canoe!

She cruised about for some days in the hope of falling in with it. Then her course was altered, and she was steered once more for Ratinga. But the elements seemed to league with Ebony in this matter, for, ere she sighted the island, there burst upon her one of those tremendous hurricanes with which the southern seas are at times disturbed. So fierce was the tempest that the good ship was obliged to present her stern to the howling blast, and scud before it under bare poles.

When the wind abated, Captain Fitzgerald found himself so far from the scene of his recent visit, and so pressed for time, as well as with the claims of other duties—possibly, according to Ebony, the capturing and hanging of other

pirates—that he resolved to postpone his visit until a more convenient season. The convenient season never came. Captain Fitzgerald returned home to die, and with him died the memory of Rosco the pirate—at least as far as public interest in his capture and punishment was concerned—for some of the captain's papers were mislaid and lost and among them the personal description of the pirate, and the account of his various misdeeds.

But Rosco himself did not die. He lived to prove the genuine nature of his conversion, and to assist Waroonga in his good work. As it is just possible that some reader may doubt the probability—perhaps even the possibility—of such a change, we recommend him to meditate on the fact that Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, became Paul, the loving Apostle of the Lord.

One morning, not long after the events just narrated, Zeppa came to Rosco's hut with a bundle under his arm. He was followed by Marie, Betsy, Zariffa, and Lippy with her mother. By that time Lippy had been provided with a bonnet similar to that of her friend Ziffa, and her mother had been induced to mount a flannel petticoat, which she wore tied round her neck or her waist, as her fancy or her forgetfulness inclined her. The party had accompanied Zeppa to observe the effect of this bundle on Rosco.

That worthy was seated on a low couch constructed specially for him by Ebony. He was busy reading.

"Welcome, friends all," he said, with a look of surprise at the deputation-like visit.

"We have come to present you with a little gift, Rosco," said Zeppa, unrolling the bundle and holding up to view a couple of curious machines.

"Wooden legs!" exclaimed Rosco with something between a gasp and a laugh.

"That's what they are, Rosco. We have been grieved to see you creeping about in such a helpless fashion, and dependent on Ebony, or some other strong-backed fellow, when you wanted to go any distance, so Orlando and I have put our heads together, and produced a pair of legs."

While he was speaking the on-lookers gazed in open-eyed-and-mouthed expectancy, for they did not feel quite sure how their footless friend would receive the gift.

"It is kind, very kind of you," he said, on recovering from his surprise; "but how am I to fix them on? there's no hole to shove the ends of my poor legs into."

“Oh! you don’t shove your legs into them at all,” said Zeppa; “you’ve only got to go on your knees into them—see, this part will fit your knees pretty well—then you strap them on, make them fast, and away you go. Let’s try them.”

To the delight of the women and children, Rosco was quite as eager to try on the legs as they were to see him do it. The bare idea of being once more able to walk quite excited the poor man, and his hands trembled as he tried to assist his friend in fixing them.

“Keep your hands away altogether,” said Zeppa; “you only delay me. There now, they’re as tight as two masts. Hold on to me while I raise you up.”

At that moment Tomeo, Buttchee, Ebony, Ongoloo, Wapoota, and Orlando came upon the scene.

“What a shame, father,” cried the latter, “to begin without letting us know!”

“Ah! Orley, I’m sorry you have found us at it. Marie and I had planned giving you a surprise by making Rosco walk up to you.”

“Never mind,” cried Rosco impatiently; “just set me on my pins, and I’ll soon walk into him. Now then, hoist away!”

Orley and his father each seized an arm, and next moment Rosco stood up.

“Now den, don’ hurry him—hurrah!” cried Ebony, giving a cheer of encouragement.

“Have a care, friends; don’t let me go,” said Rosco anxiously, clutching his supporters’ necks with a convulsive grasp. “I’ll never do it, Zeppa. I feel that if you quit me for an instant, I shall go down like a shot.”

“No fear. Here, cut him a staff, Ebony,” said Zeppa; “that’ll be equal to three legs, you know, and even a stool can stand alone with three legs.”

The staff was cut and handed to the learner, who, planting it firmly on the ground before him, leaned on it, and exclaimed, “Let go!” in tones which instantly suggested “the anchor” to his friends.

The order was obeyed, and the ex-pirate stood swaying to and fro, and smiling with almost childlike delight. Presently he became solemn, lifted one leg, and set it down again with marvellous rapidity. Then he lifted the other leg with the same result. Then he lifted the staff, but had to replace it smartly to prevent falling forward.

“I fear I can only do duty as a motionless tripod,” he said rather anxiously.

“Nebber fear, massa—oh! Look out!”

The latter exclamation was caused by Rosco falling backwards; to prevent which catastrophe he made a wild flourish with his arms, and a sweep with his staff, which just grazed the negro’s cheek. Zeppa, however, caught him in his arms, and set him up again.

“Now then, try once more,” he said encouragingly.

Rosco tried, and in the course of half-an-hour managed, with many a stagger and upheaval of the arms and staff to advance about eight or ten yards. At this point, however, he chanced to place the end of the right leg on a soft spot of ground. Down it went instantly to the knee, and over went the learner on his side, snapping the leg short off in the fall!

It would be difficult to paint the general disappointment at this sudden collapse of the experiment. A united groan burst from the party, including the patient, for it at once became apparent that a man with a wooden leg—to say nothing of two—could only walk on a hard beaten path, and as there were few such in the island, Rosco’s chance of a long ramble seemed to vanish. But Zeppa and his son were not men to be easily beaten. They set to work to construct feet for the legs, which should be broad enough to support their friend on softish ground, and these were so arranged with a sort of ball-and-socket joint, that the feet could be moved up and down. In theory this worked admirably; in practice it failed, for after a staggering step or two, the toes having been once raised refused to go down, and thus was produced the curious effect of a man stumping about on his heels! To overcome this difficulty the heels of the feet were made to project almost as much behind as the toes did in front somewhat after the pattern of Ebony’s pedal arrangements, as Rosco remarked when they were being fitted on for another trial. At last, by dint of perseverance, the wooden legs were perfected, and Rosco re-acquired the art of walking to such perfection, that he was to be seen, almost at all times and in all weathers, stumping about the village, his chief difficulty being that when he chanced to fall, which he often did, he was obliged either to get some one to help him up, or to crawl home; for, being unable to get his knees to the ground when the legs were on, he was obliged to unstrap them if no one was within hail.

Now, during all this time, Betsy Waroonga remained quite inconsolable about her husband.

“But my dear, you know he is quite safe,” her friend Marie Zeppa would say to her, “for he is doing the Master’s work among Christian men.”

“I knows that,” Betsy would reply, “an’ I’m comforted a leetle when I think

so; but what for not Zeppa git a canoe ready an' take me to him? A missionary not worth nothing without hees wife."

Marie sympathised heartily with this sentiment, but pointed out that it was too long and dangerous a voyage to be undertaken in a canoe, and that it was probable the mission ship would revisit Ratinga ere long, in which case the voyage could be undertaken in comfort and safety.

But Betsy did not believe in the danger of a canoe voyage, nor in the speedy arrival of the mission ship. In fact she believed in nothing at that time, save in her own grief and the hardness of her case. She shook her head, and the effect on the coal-scuttle, which had now become quite palsied with age and hard service, was something amazing, insomuch that Marie's sympathy merged irresistibly into mirth.

The good woman's want of faith, however, received a rebuke not many weeks later.

She was hastening, one afternoon, to an outlying field to gather vegetables in company with Zariffa, who had by that time grown into a goodly-sized girl.

The pace induced silence, also considerable agitation in both bonnets. When they had cleared the village, and reached Rosco's hut near the entrance to the palm-grove, they went up to the open door and looked in, but no one was there.

"He's hoed out to walk," observed Zariffa with a light laugh; "awful fond o' walkin' since he got the 'ooden legs!"

"What was you want with him?" asked Betsy, as they resumed their walk.

"Want to ask 'bout the Bibil lesson for to-morrow. Some things me no can understan', an' Rosco great at the Bibil now."

"Yes," murmured Betsy with a nod, "there's many things in the Bibil not easy to understand. Takes a deal o' study, Ziffa, to make him out. Your father always say that. But Rosco's fuss-rate at 'splainin' of 'em. Fuss-rate—so your father say. Him was born for a mis'nary."

At that moment a cry was heard in the distance. They had been ascending a winding path leading to the field to which they were bound.

"Sounds like man in distress," said Betsy, breaking into a run with that eager alacrity which usually characterises the sympathetic.

Zariffa replied not, but followed her mother. The cry was repeated, and at once

recognised as being uttered by the man who was “born for a mis’nary,” but had mistaken his profession when he became a pirate! When they reached the spot whence it had apparently issued, the mis’nary, or ex-pirate, was nowhere to be seen.

“Hooroo! whar’ is you?” shouted Betsy, looking round.

“Here!” cried a half-smothered voice from somewhere in the earth.

“Oh! look!” exclaimed Zariffa in a sort of squeal as she ran towards a spot where two strange plants seemed to have sprung up.

“Rosco’s legs!” said Betsy, aghast.

And she was right. The venturesome man had, with his accustomed hardihood, attempted that day to scale the mountain side, and had fallen into a hole by the side of the track, from which he could by no means extricate himself, because of its being a tightish fit, his head being down and his legs were in the air.

“Oh, Betsy, pull me out lass! I’m half-choked already,” gasped the unfortunate man.

But Betsy could not move him, much less pull him out, although heartily assisted by her daughter.

“Run, Ziffa, run an’ fetch men!”

Ziffa ran like a hunted deer, so anxious was she for the deliverance of her Bible instructor. On turning sharp round a bend in the track, she plunged into the bosom of Ebony.

“Ho! hi! busted I am; why, what’s de matter, Ziffa? you travel like a cannon-ball!”

As he spoke, Zeppa and his son, who had been walking behind Ebony, came up. The panting child only replied, “Rosco—queek!” and ran before them to the fatal spot. Need we say that in a few moments the “born mis’nary” was drawn like a cork out of a bottle, and set down right end up? Then they carried him to a clear space, whence the sea was visible, condoling with him as they went; but here all thought of the accident and of everything else was banished, for the moment by the sight of a ship on the horizon!

It turned out to be the mission-vessel with supplies, and with a young native missionary, or Bible-reader; and thus, in a few days, not only Betsy Waroonga, but Ongoloo and Wapoota, with Lippy and her mother and Orlando, were enabled to return to Sugar-loaf Island.

The joy of the Sugarlovians at the return of their chiefs and friends is not to be described, for, despite the assurances of Waroonga, they had begun to grow uneasy. Neither is it possible to describe the condition of the coal-scuttle bonnet after it had been crushed in the reckless embrace of Betsy's spouse, nor the delight of the uncles, aunts, brothers, cousins, nieces, and nephews of Lippy, when they got her safe back again, though awfully disguised by the miniature coal-scuttle and flaming petticoat.

By that time the Mountain-men and the Raturans had rubbed noses, intermingled, intermarried, broken bows and spears, buried the war-hatchet and otherwise made up their minds, like sane creatures, to dwell in peace; for savages come to this condition sometimes—civilised nations never do! Great, therefore, was their satisfaction when their mourning, at the prospect of losing Waroonga, was turned into joy by the decision of the young native teacher, who volunteered to take his place and remain with them as their permanent instructor in the way of Righteousness.

A dance was proposed by some of the chiefs as an appropriate way of expressing their joy and getting rid of superfluous energy; but as their only dance was a war-dance, it was thought better to celebrate the occasion by a grand feast which, being preceded by games—wrestling, jumping, and running, etcetera—served the purpose equally well—if not better.

Thus was an island won from heathenism in those far off southern seas!

And now, what shall we say in conclusion? Time and space would fail us, were we to continue the history of Ratinga island down to the present time. We can only add that Waroonga and Betsy returned home, that a stalwart son of Tomeo went in after years, to Sugar-loaf Island, and carried off Lippy as his bride, along with her mother; that a handsome son of Ongoloo took revenge by carrying Zariffa away from Ratinga, without her mother; that regular and frequent intercourse was set up between the two islands by means of a little schooner; that Ebony stuck to his master and mistress through thick and thin to a good old age; that Orlando went to England, studied medicine, and returned again to Ratinga with a fair daughter of that favoured land; that Wapoota's morals improved by degrees; that Buttchee became more reconciled to European dress as he grew older; and that the inhabitants of the two islands generally became wiser and happier—though of course not perfect—through the benign influence of that Gospel which teaches man to do to others as he would have others do to him.

Time, as usual, continued to work his marvellous changes as the years flew by, but of all the transformations he wrought none was so striking as that

produced in two men of Ratinga, who daily sat down, side by side, in front of their cottage by the sea, to watch a host of children of all ages, sizes, and complexions, which gambolled merrily on the sands. These men were old and somewhat feeble, with hair like the driven snow, but their gentle expressions and ready smiles told of eternal youth within. As the one sat with his colossal frame still erect though spare, talking softly to his comrade, and the other sat slightly bent, with eyes gazing sometimes at the children, and sometimes at his wooden toes, how difficult how almost impossible, to believe that, in former days, the one had been the madman, and the other the pirate!