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JOHN FREWEN, SOUTH SEA WHALER

From "Chinkie's Flat And Other Stories"

By Louis Becke

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Captain Ethan Keller, of the *Casilda* of Nantucket, was in a very bad temper, for in four days he had lost two of the five boats the barque carried—one had been hopelessly stove by the dreaded “underclip” given her by a crafty old bull sperm-whale, and the other, which was in charge of the second mate, had not been seen for seventy hours. When last sighted she was fast to the same bull which had destroyed the first mate's boat; it was then nearly dark, and the whale, which was of an enormous size, although he had three irons in his body and was towing the whole length of line from the stove-in boat as well as that of the second mate, was racing through the water as fresh as when he had first been struck, three hours previously. Then the sun dipped below the sea-rim, and the blue Pacific was shrouded in darkness.

“Why in thunder couldn't the dunderhead put a bomb into that fish before it came on dark?” growled the skipper to his other officers, as they sat down to a harried sapper in the spacious, old-fashioned cabin of the whaler.

No one answered. Frewen, the missing officer, was as good a whaleman as ever drove an iron or gripped the haft of a steer-oar, and his half-caste boatsteerer Randall Cheyne was the best on the ship. But there was bad blood between young Frewen and his captain, and Cheyne was the cause of it.

“If they cut and lose that whale,” resumed Keller presently, “I'll haze the life out of them—by thunder, I will, if I break my back in doing it! Why, that is the biggest fish we've struck yet. If I had been in that boat, I'd have had that whale in his flurry two hours ago. Why, it appears to me that Frewen got too soared to even try to haul up and give him a bomb, let alone giving him the lance—which was easy enough.”

Just as he spoke, one of the boatsteerers entered the cabin and reported that some of the hands thought that they had heard the second mate's bomb gun.

“All right,” growled Keller, “tell the cooper to burn a flare.”

“I guess Frewen won't lose him,” said Lopez, the first mate. “He told me long ago that he never yet had to out, and I don't think he'll do it now—unless something has gone wrong. That must have been his gun.”

“Huh!” sneered Keller, as he viciously speared a piece of salt pork with his fork, “we'll see all about that when daylight comes. You'll find Mr. Firwen and that yaller-hided Samoa buck back here for breakfast, but no whale.”

None of the men made any reply. They knew that Frewen would be the last man to lose a fish through any fault of his own, and only after carefully “drogueing” his line would he part company with it, and that only if the immense creature emptied the line tubs and “sounded.” Then, to save the lives of those in the boat, he would have to cut.

“Guess we'll see that whale to-morrow, anyway, whether Mr. Frewen is fast to him or not,” said the third mate to the cooper, as they met on deck; “he's got a mighty lot of line hanging to him, and, just after the second mate got fast I saw him shaking his flukes and trying to kick out one of the two irons the mate hove into him.”

“Well, that is so; I hope we shall get him. The old man is pretty cranky over it. He hasn't a nice temper even

when he's in a good humour, and there will be blue fire blazing if Mr. Frewen does lose the fish after all."

For four hours the barque made short tacks to the eastward, in which direction the boat had been taken by the whale. The night was fine but dark, the sea very smooth, and the flares which were burnt at intervals on board the barque would render her visible many miles away, and a keen look-out was kept for the boat, but nothing could be discovered of it.

Towards midnight the light air from the eastward died away, and was succeeded by a series of rather sharp rain squalls from the south-west, and Keller, fearing to miss the boat by running past her, hove-to till daylight.

The dawn broke brightly, with a dead calm. Forty pairs of eyes eagerly scanned the surface of the ocean, and in a few minutes there came a cheering cry from aloft.

"Dead whale, oh! Close to on the weather beam."

"Can you see the boat?" cried Lopez.

"No, sir," was the reply after a few seconds silence. "Can't see her anywhere."

"Look on the other side of the whale, you bat!" growled the skipper.

"She's not there, sir," was the reply.

"Lower away your boats, Mr. Bock and Mr. Lopez," said Keller in more gracious tones to the third and first officers; "the second mate can't be far away, but why in thunder he didn't hang on to the whale last night I don't know. Take something to eat with you. You will have to tow that whale alongside—this calm is going to last all day."

Five minutes later the two boats pushed off, and then, as they sped over the glassy surface of the ocean and the huge carcass of the whale was more clearly revealed, Bock called out to his superior officer that he could see a whift {*} on it.

** A wooden pole with a small pennon; used by whalers' boats as a signal to the ship.*

Lopez nodded, but said nothing.

They pulled up alongside, and the mate's boatsteerer stepped out on to the body of Leviathan and pulled over the whift pole, which was firmly embedded in the blubber.

"There's a letter tied round the pole, sir," he said to his officer, as he got back to the boat again and passed the whift aft.

The "letter" had been carefully wrapped in a strip of oilskin, and then tied around the whift pole by a piece of sail twine. It was a sheet of soiled paper with a few pencilled lines written on it. Lopez read it:—

"For the information of Ethan Keller, Haser: This whale was struck, for the sake of his shipmates' lays, by Randall Cheyne, the 'yaller-hided Samoan,' who has struck more whales than old Haser Keller ever saw. If Haser Keller wants us he will find us at Savage Island, where we shall be ready for him.

(Signed) "R. Cheyne, Boatsteerer, "Casilda."

"Where is Mr. Frewen, sir?" inquired the boatsteerer anxiously.

"Gone for a picnic," replied the mate laconically. "Now, look lively, my lads. We've got to tow this fish to the ship and 'cut in' before the sharks save us the trouble."

CHAPTER II

The quarrel between Keller, a rough, blasphemous-mouthed, and violent-tempered man, and his second officer had arisen over a very simple matter.

Frewen, one of the six sons of a struggling New Hampshire farmer, had received a better education than his brothers, for he was intended for the navy. But at sixteen years of age he realised the condition of the family finances, and shipped on a whaler sailing out of New London. From "foremast hand with hayseed in his hair," he became boatsteerer; then followed rapid promotion from fourth to second officer's berth, and at the age of five-and-twenty he was as competent a navigator and as good a seaman and boatheader as ever trod a whaleship's deck. For like many a country-bred boy he had the sea instinct in his bones, inherited perhaps from his progenitors, who were of a seafaring stock in old Devonshire, in that town made for ever famous by Kingsley in "Westward Ho!"

When Frewen joined the *Casilda*, Keller had taken a great fancy to the young man, whom he soon discovered was a very able officer, and who proved his ability as a good whaler so amply during the first twelve months of the cruise by never losing a whale once he got fast, that Keller, who was as mean as he was brutal to his crew, relaxed his "hazing" propensities considerably. The *Casilda* was always known as a "hard" ship and Keller as a "hazer"; but, on the other hand, she was also a lucky ship, and Lopes, the chief mate, who had sailed in her for many years, was a sterling good man, though a strict disciplinarian, and did much for the men to compensate them for Keller's outbursts of savage fury when anything went wrong. So Lopez, Frewen, and his fellow-officers "worked" together, and the crew "worked" with them, and the *Casilda* became a fairly happy ship, as well as a lucky one, for Keller, after long years, began to realise that it was bad policy to ill-treat a willing crew who would give him a "full" ship in another six months instead of deserting one by one or in batches at every island touched at in the South Seas.

And Frewen was a mascotte, and his half-caste boat-steerer was another, for whenever a pod of whales were sighted the second mate's boat was invariably the first to get fast, and on one glorious day off Sunday Island Frewen's boat killed three sperms—a bull and two cows—and the four other boats each got one or two, so that for over a week, in a calm sea, and under a cloudless sky of blue by day and night, “cutting in” and “trying-out” went on merrily, and the cooper and his mates toiled like Trojans, setting-up fresh barrels; and the smoke and glare of the try-works from the deck of the *Casilda* lit up the placid ocean for many a mile, whilst hordes of blue sharks rived and tore and ripped off the rich blubber from the whales lying alongside waiting to be cut-in, and Keller shot or lanced them by the score as he stood on the cutting-in stage or in one of the boats made fast to the chains on the free side.

Fourteen months out, as the *Casilda* was cruising northward, intending to touch at one of the Navigator's Islands (Samoa) to refresh, the first trouble occurred. Cheyne, Frewen's boatsteerer, who was a splendidly built, handsome young fellow of twenty-four years of age, received a rather severe injury to his right foot whilst a heavy baulk of timber was being “fleted” along the deck. Frewen, who was much attached to him, dressed his foot as well as the rough appliances on board would allow, and then reported him to the captain as unfit for duty.

Keller growled something about all “darned half-breeds” being glad of any excuse to shirk duty.

Frewen took him up sharply: “This man is no shirker, sir. He is as good a man as ever 'stood up' to strike a whale. Did you ever see a better one?”

Keller looked at his second officer with fourteen months' repressed brutality glowering in his savage eyes.

“I'm the captain of this ship. Just you mind that. I reckon I can't be taught much by any college buster.”

Frewen's hands clenched, but he replied quietly, though he was inwardly raging at Keller's contemptuous manner—

“Just so. You are the captain of this ship, and I know my duty, sir. But I am not the man to be insulted by any one. And I say that my boatsteerer is not fit for duty.”

Keller's retort was of so insulting a character that in another moment the two men—to the intense delight of the crew—were fighting on the after-deck. Lopes and the cooper, as in duty bound, sprang forward and seized their fellow-officer, but the captain, with an oath, bade them stand aside.

“I'll pound you first,” he cried hoarsely to Frewen, “then I'll kick you into the foc'sle.”

The fight lasted for fifteen minutes, and then Lopes and the third mate forced themselves between and separated them. Both men were terribly punished.

“That will do, sir; that will do, Frewen,” said the mate; “do you want to kill each other?”

Keller had some good points about him and a certain amount of humour as well.

“Haow much air yew hurt, Frewen?” he inquired. “I can't exactly see” (both his eyes were fast closing).

“Pretty much like yourself,” replied the officer; then he paused and held out his hand. “Shake hands, sir. I'm sorry we've had this turn.”

“Wa'al, it's mighty poor business, that's a fact,” and Keller took the proffered hand, and then the matter apparently ended.

Early in the morning on the following day whales were raised. There was a stiff breeze and a choppy sea. Three boats, of which Frewen's was one, were lowered. Cheyne, although suffering great pain, insisted on taking his place, and twenty minutes later his officer called out to him to “stand up,” for they were close to the whale—a large cow, which was moving along very slowly, apparently unconscious of the boat's presence.

Then for the first time during the voyage the half-caste missed striking his fish. Unable to sustain himself steadily, owing to his injured foot and the rough sea, he darted his iron a second or two too late. It fell flat on the back of the monstrous creature, which at once sounded in alarm, and next reappeared a mile to windward. For an hour Frewen kept up the chase, and then the ship signalled for all the boats to return, for the wind and sea were increasing, and it was useless for them to attempt to overtake the whales, which were now miles to windward. Neither of the other boats had even come within striking distance of a fish, and consequently Keller was in a vile temper when they returned, and the moment he caught sight of the half-caste boatsteerer he assailed him with a volley of abuse.

The young man listened with sullen resentment dulling his dark face, then as he turned to limp for'ard the captain bade him make haste and get better, and not “try on any soldiering.”

He turned in an instant, his passion completely overmastering him: “I'm no 'soldier,' and as good a man as you, you mean old Gape Cod water-rat. I'll never lift another iron or steer a boat for you as long as I am on this ship.”

Five minutes later he was in irons with a promise of being kept on biscuit and water till he “took back all he had said” in the presence of the ship's company.

“I'll lie here and rot first sir,” he said to Lopez; “my father was an Englishman, and I consider myself as good a boatsteerer and as good a man as any one on board. But I do not mean any disrespect to you, sir.”

Lopez was sorry for the man, but could not say so. “Keep a still tongue between your teeth,” he said roughly, “and I'll talk the old man round by to-morrow.”

“Do as you please, sir. But I won't lift an iron again as long as I am in this ship,” he replied quietly.

He kept his word. On the following morning he was liberated, and in a week's time he had recovered the use of his foot. Then, when the barque was off the Tonga Islands, a large “pod” of whales were sighted. It was a clear, warm day. The sea was as smooth as a lake, and only the faintest air was ruffling the surface of the water. Three miles away were two small, low-lying islands, clad with coco-palms, their white belting of beach glistening like iridescent pearl-shell under the glowing tropic sun.

As the boats were lowered he said to Frewen, “You know what I have said, sir. I won't lift a harpoon again on this cruise; so don't ask me.”

Frewen did not believe him. “Don't be a fool, Randall. We'll show the old man something to-day.”

"I will, sir, if it costs me my life."

Five minutes later he was in his old place on the for'ard thwart, pulling stolidly, but looking intently at Frewen, whom he loved with a dog-like affection.

Frewen singled out a large bull whale which was lying quite apart from the rest of the "pod" sunning himself, and sometimes rolling lazily from side to side, oblivious of danger. In another five minutes the boat would have been within striking distance.

"Stand up, Randall," he said.

The half-caste peaked and socketed his oar, and looked at the officer.

"I refuse, sir," he said quietly.

"Then come aft here," cried Frewen quickly, with hot anger in his tones.

"No, sir, I will not. I said I would neither lift iron nor steer a boat again," was the dogged reply.

There was no time to lose. Giving the steer oar to the man pulling the "after-tub oar," the officer sprang forward and picked up the harpoon just in time, Randall jumping aft smartly enough, and taking the tub man's oar. Ten seconds later Frewen had buried his harpoon up to the socket in the whale, and the line was humming as the boat tore through the water. Then, still keeping his place, he let the whole of one tub of line run out, and then hauled up on it and lanced and killed his fish quietly. Cheyne apparently took no notice, though his heart sank within him when Frewen came aft again, and looked at him with mingled anger and reproach.

Some one of the boat's crew talked of what had occurred, though Frewen said nothing; and that night Cheyne was placed in irons by Keller's orders. At the end of a week he was still manacled and almost starving, but he steadfastly refused to do boatsteerer's duty. Then the captain no longer placed any check on himself, and he swore that he would either make the half-caste yield or else kill him. And he did his best to keep his word.

Nearly a month passed, and then, at Frewen's suggestion, all the officers waited on the captain and begged him to release the unfortunate man; otherwise there was every prospect of the crew mutinying.

"Is he willing to turn to again?" he asked.

"Not as boatsteerer," replied Frewen.

"Then he shall stay where he is," was the savage retort.

Five or six days later Frewen went to Cheyne, who was now confined in the 'tween decks, and implored him to give in.

"Very well, sir. To please you I will give in. But I mean to desert the first chance."

"So do I. I am sick of this condition of things. There are three other men besides yourself in irons now."

"Who are they, sir?"

"Willis, Hunt, and Freeman." (The two latter belonged to his own boat, and had been ironed because they had refused to eat some bad beef. Frewen himself had told Keller that it was uneatable, and again angry words passed between them.)

Cheyne was released and resumed his old place in Frewen's boat, and the officer then sounded the rest of his men, and found they were eager to leave the ship. So he made his plans, and he and Cheyne quietly got together a small supply of provisions and a second breaker of water.

They waited till the ship was well among the Friendly Group, and Upolu Island was three hundred miles to the north, and then were given the needed opportunity—when the mate's boat was destroyed by the big bull whale, which was then struck by Cheyne.

"Boys," shouted Frewen to his crew, as the boat tore through the water, "I'm not going to kill this whale awhile. He'll give us a long run, and is taking us dead to windward, away from the ship. But before it gets dark I'll give him a bomb."

He successfully carried out his intention. Just as darkness was coming on he hauled up on his line and fired a bomb into the mighty creature; it killed it in a few seconds. Then they lay alongside of the floating carcass, spelled half an hour, had something to eat, and then Cheyne, who had a sense of humour, wrote the scrawl to Keller and tied it round the whift pole.

"Now, lads," cried Frewen, "up sail! It is a fine dark night, and we should be forty or fifty miles away by daylight."

And so, whilst the *Casilda* burnt flare after flare throughout the night, the adventurers were slipping through the water merrily enough, oblivious of the cold rain squalls which overtook them at midnight, as they headed for Samoa.

CHAPTER III

When Frewen allowed Cheyne to write the pencilled note to Captain Keller, he did so with a double purpose, for he and Cheyne had carefully thought out and decided upon their plans. In the first place, the dead whale would convince the ship's company that he and his boat's crew had "done the square thing," by killing and leaving for their benefit the best and largest whale that had yet been taken, and that although they were deserting (and consequently losing their entire share of the profits of the cruise so far, which would be divided with their former shipmates) the rich prize they were leaving to the ship would prove of ten times the value of the boat in which they had escaped. In the second place he wished to put Keller on a false scent by naming Savage Island (or Nine, as it is generally known) as their destination; for Keller knew that

the island was a favourite resort of runaway sailors, but that a suitable reward offered to the avaricious natives would be sure to effect the capture and return to the ship of any deserters from the *Casilda*.

Cheyne's father was an English master mariner, who, tired of a seafaring life, had settled as a trader in the beautiful island of Manono in Samoa. He there married a daughter of one of the leading chiefs, and himself attained to some considerable influence and property, but lost his life in an encounter with a rebellious clan on the island of Upolu. He left two children: Randall, a lad of sixteen, and Marie, a girl two years younger. The boy went to sea in a whaler, and at the age of twenty-four had an established reputation as one of the smartest boatsteerers in the Pacific. Only once after four years' absence, had he returned to his native country, when he found that his sister, who had just arrived from Australia, where she had been educated, was about to be married to one of the few Europeans in the country—a well-to-do planter and merchant, named Raymond, and that his mother had also married again, and settled in New Zealand.

Satisfied as to his sister's future happiness, he saw her married, and again turned his face to the sea, although Raymond earnestly besought him to stay with and help him in his business. He made his way to Honolulu, and there joined the *Casilda*, then homeward bound, and, as has been related, he and the second officer soon became firm friends.

At the south-east point of the island of Upelu, there is a town named Lepâ, and for this place the boat was now steering. The principal chief of the district was a blood relation of Cheyne's mother, and he (Cheyne) knew that every hospitality would be given to himself and Frewen for as long a time as they chose to remain at Lepâ.

"After we have seen Mana'lio" (the chief) "we shall consider what we shall do," said the boatsteerer to Frewen. "I expect he will not like letting us leave him, but will be satisfied when he knows that you and I want to go to my sister's place. These big Samoan chiefs are very touchy in some things."

On the afternoon of the third day out, the land was sighted, and just as the evening fires were beginning to gleam from the houses embowered in the palm-groves of Lepâ, the boat grounded on the white hard beach, and in a few minutes the village was in a pleasurable uproar, as the white men were almost carried up to the chief's house by the excited natives, who at once recognised the stalwart Cheyne.

Mana'lio made his relative and Frewen most welcome, and treated them as very honoured guests, whilst the rest of the boat's crew were taken possession of by the sub-chiefs and the people of the town generally, carried off to the *fale taupule* or "town hall," and invited to a hurriedly prepared but ample repast.

On the following morning, Frewen called the whole of his boat's crew together, and told them it would be best for them to separate. "Each of you four men say you don't want to go to sea again—not for a long time at any rate. Well, Mana'lio, the chief here, wants a white man to live with him. He will treat him well, and give him a house and land. Will you stay, Hunt?"

"Yes, sir," was the instant reply.

"Right. And you, Freeman, Chase, and Craik, can stay here in Lepâ, and decide for yourselves which towns you will live in. In less than forty-eight hours half the chiefs on the island will be coming to Mana'lio for a white man. Cheyne here will give you some good advice—if you want the natives to respect you, and to get along and make money and a honest living, follow his advice."

"Ay, ay, sir," assented the men.

"Now, here is another matter. Cheyne and I wish to be mates, and we want the boat."

"Well, I guess *we* have no claim on her, sir," said Hunt, turning to the others for confirmation of his remark.

"Oh, yes you have—she is as much yours as she is mine. Anyway we all have a good right to her, as we have given the ship a whale worth a dozen new boats; and, besides that, by deserting we have forfeited our 'lays' and have put money into Captain Keller's pocket as well as into those of the crew. Now, I have a little money with me—two hundred dollars. Will you four men take a hundred and divide it, and let Cheyne and me have the boat?"

"Ay, ay, to be sure," they cried out in unison.

That evening Frewen and Cheyne bade Mana'lio and the seamen goodbye, and accompanied by four stalwart and well-armed natives, stepped into the boat, hoisted her blue jean main-sail and jib, and amidst a chorus of farewells from the friendly people set off on a forty miles trip along the coast, their destination being the town of Samatau, at the extreme north-west of the island.

For here, so Mana'lio had told them, Mrs. Raymond and her husband were living, the latter having purchased a large tract of land there which he was preparing for a cotton plantation.

CHAPTER IV

The boat sailed gently along the outer or barrier reef which fringed the coast of beautiful verdured Upolu, and then, as the sun sank, there shone out myriad stars upon the bosom of a softly heaving sea, and only the never-ceasing murmur of the surf as it beat against the coral barrier, or the cry of some wandering sea-bird, disturbed the warm silence of the tropic night.

Leaving the boat to the care of their native friends at eight o'clock, Frewen and his comrade laid down amidships and were soon fast asleep, for the day had been a tiring one, and they needed more rest to recover from the effects of the three days they had spent on the open sea.

Soon after daylight they were awakened by the steersman, who pointed out a large, lofty-sparred vessel. She was about five miles away, and being head on, Frewen was uncertain as to her rig, till an hour later, when he saw that she was a full-rigged ship.

"Not the *Casilda*" he said to his comrade, and neither of them gave the strange vessel any further thought, especially as the wind had now died away, and, the sail being lowered, the crew bent to the oars under an already hot and blazing sun.

Shortly before noon, the boat rounded a low headland and entered a lovely little bay, embowered in thick groves of coco-palms and breadfruit trees. The new house which Raymond had built was not visible from the bay, but there were some thirty or forty native houses clustered under the shade of the trees, a few yards up from the beach, on which they noticed a ship's longboat was lying.

The moment Frewen's boat was seen, a strange clamour arose, and a number of natives, armed with muskets and long knives, rushed out of their houses, and took cover behind the rocks and trees, evidently with the intention of resisting his landing, and Frewen and Cheyne heard loud cries of "*Lèmonte! Lèmonte!*"

"Back water!" cried Cheyne in his mother tongue to the crew; then he turned to Frewen: "There is something wrong on shore. 'Lèmonte' is my brother-in-law's name, and they are calling for him." Then he stood up and shouted out—

"Friends, do you not know me? I am Randall. Where is my sister and her husband?"

A loud cry of astonishment burst from the natives, many of whom, throwing down their arms, sprang into the water, and clambering into the boat greeted the young man most affectionately; and then one of them, commanding silence, began talking rapidly to him.

"We must get ashore quickly," said Cheyne to Randall. "My brother-in-law has a number of dead and dying people in his house. There has been a mutiny on board that ship—but come on, he'll tell us all about it."

In another minute the boat was on the beach, and as Frewen and Cheyne jumped ont they were met by a handsome, dark-faced man about forty years of age, who grasped Cheyne's hands warmly.

"I never expected to see you, Randall," he said quietly, "but I thank God that you *have* come, and at such a time, too. Where is your ship?"

"Three hundred miles away. But we will tell you our story another time. How is Marie?"

"Well. She already hears the people shouting your name. Come to the house." Then he turned to Frewen and held out his hand. "My name is Raymond, and you are welcome to Samatau."

"And mine is Frewen. I hope you will accept any assistance I can give."

"Gladly. But I will tell you the whole story presently. I have two men dying in my house, three others wounded, and two dead."

He led the way along a shady, winding path to the house, on the wide verandah of which were seated a number of natives of both sexes, who made way for them to pass with low murmurs of "*Talofa, aliia,*" {*} to the two strangers. Then in another moment Marie Raymond stepped softly out from the sitting-room, and threw her arms round her brother's neck.

* "*Greeting, gentlemen.*"

"Thank God you are here, Randall," she said, leading the way into another room. "Tom will tell you of what has happened. I will return as soon as I can."

"How is Captain Marston?" asked Raymond, as she stood for a moment with her hand on the handle of the door.

"Still unconscious. Mrs. Marston is with him." She paused, and then turned her dark and beautiful tear-dimmed eyes to Frewen: "Tom, perhaps this gentleman might be able to do something. Will he come in and see?"

Raymond drew him aside. "Go in and see the poor fellow. He can't last long—his skull is fractured."

Frewen followed Mrs. Raymond into the large room, and saw lying on her own bed the figure of a man whose features were of the pallor of death. His head was bound up, and kneeling by his side, with her eyes bent upon his closed lids, was a woman, or rather a girl of twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. As, at the sound of footsteps, she raised her pale, agonised face, something like a gleam of hope came into it.

"Are you a doctor?" she asked in a trembling whisper.

The seaman shook his head respectfully. "No, madam; I would I were."

He leant over the bed, and looked at the still, quiet face of the man, whom he could see was in the prime of life, and whose regular, clear-cut features showed both refinement and strength of character.

"He still breathes," whispered the poor wife.

"Yes, so I see," said Frewen, as he rose. Then he asked Mrs. Raymond a few questions as to the nature of the wound, and learned that in addition to a fractured skull a pistol bullet had entered at the back of the neck.

"There is no hope, you think. I can see that by your face," said Mrs. Marston, suppressing a sob.

"I cannot tell, madam. But I do think that his condition is very, very serious."

She bent her head, and then sank on her knees again beside the bed, but suddenly she rose again, and placed her hand on Frewen's sleeve.

"I know that my husband must die, no human aid can save him. But will you, sir, go and see poor Mr. Villari. Mr. Raymond has hopes for him at least. And he fought very bravely for my husband."

Villari was the first mate of the ship, and was lying in another room, together with three wounded seamen. He was a small, wiry Italian, and when Frewen entered with Raymond and Mrs. Raymond, he waved his right hand politely to them, and a smile lit up his swarthy features. He had two bullet wounds, one a clean hole through the right shoulder, the other in the thigh. He had lost a great deal of blood, but none of his high courage, though Raymond at first thought he could not live.

"I am not going to die," he said. "*Per Bacco*, no."

Frewen spoke encouragingly to him and then turned his attention to the seamen, all of whom were

Englishmen. None of them were severely wounded, and all that could be done for them had been done by Raymond and their own unwounded shipmates, of whom there were four.

"Now I shall tell you the story," said Raymond to Frewen and Cheyne, as he led the way to the verandah, on which a table with refreshments had been placed. "But, first of all, do you see that ship out there? Well, that is the *Esmeralda*. She is now in the possession of the mutineers, and has on board forty-five thousand dollars. You see that she is becalmed?"

"And likely to continue so for another three or four days, if I am any judge of the weather in this part of the Pacific," said Frewen, "I agree with you. And now, before I begin to tell you the story of the mutiny, I want to know if you two will help me to recapture her? You are seamen, and—"

Both men sprang to their feet.

"Yes, we will!"

"Ah! I thought you would not refuse. Now wait a moment," and calling to a young native who was near, he bade him go to the chief of Samatau and ask him to come to the house as quickly as possible.

"Malië, the chief of Samatau, will help us," he said to Frewen; "he has two hundred of the best fighting men in Samoa, and I shall ask him to pick out fifty. But we want a nautical leader—some one to take charge of the ship after we get possession of her."

"Now here is the story of the mutiny, told to me by poor Mrs. Marston."

CHAPTER V

"At daylight this morning, my wife and I were aroused by our servants, who excitedly cried to us to come outside. A boat, they said, was on the beach with a number of white men in it, some of whom were dead.

"I went down to the beach at once, and five minutes later had all the unfortunate wounded and unwounded people assisted to the house, for they were completely exhausted by what they had undergone, and were also suffering from thirst. Two of their number had succumbed to their wounds in the boat a few hours previously, so Villari, the mate, told me. Marston, who had been shot in the neck, was unconscious, and his wife who, as you saw, is little more than a girl, was herself wounded in the arm by a musket ball.

"We did all that we could do, and after Mrs. Marston had had an hour's rest, she and Villari told me their story.

"The *Esmeralda* is Marston's own ship, and left Valdivia, in Chile, for Manila about seven weeks ago. She is almost a new ship, only having been built at Aberdeen last year. Marston, who had just married, brought out a general cargo from London to Valdivia and other South American ports, and sold it at a very handsome profit. Whilst on the coast, fever broke out on board, and he lost his second mate and five A.B.'s, and the third mate and two others had to go into hospital. In their places he shipped a new second mate—a man named Juan Almanza—and twelve seamen, ten of whom were either Chilenos or Peruvians, and the remaining two Greeks. The former boatswain he promoted to the third mate's birth. Almanza proved to be a good officer, and the new men gave him satisfaction, though his agent at Valdivia had urged him not to take the two Greeks, who, he said, were likely to prove troublesome. Unfortunately he did not take the agent's advice, and said that he had often had Greeks with him on previous voyages, and found them very fair sailormen—much better than Chilenos or Mexicans.

"He had been paid for his cargo mostly in silver dollars, and the money was brought on board in as quiet a manner as possible, and he believed without the new hands knowing anything about it. Poor fellow; he was fatally mistaken! In all it amounted to thirty-five thousand dollars, and in addition to this there was a further sum of two thousand pounds in English gold on board—Marston, I must tell you, is, I imagine, a fairly wealthy man, for his wife told me that he had the *Esmeralda* built at a cost of six thousand pounds.

"He had been informed at Valdivia that a cargo of Chile flour, which could be bought very cheaply at Valparaiso, could be sold at a huge profit in Manila, and he thereupon bought a full cargo—six hundred tons—and sailed, as I have said, about seven weeks ago. All went well on board from the very first, although the English seamen did not much care about their foreign shipmates, who, however, did their duty after a fashion. Almanza, Mrs. Marston says, was in all respects an able and smart officer, and both she and her husband took a great liking to him—the scoundrel!

"The two Greeks—who, by the way, called themselves and shipped under the English names of John Foster and James Ryan—the Levantine breed do that trick very often—were in Almanza's watch, as were six of the Chilenos; and the mate one night, coming on deck when it was his watch below, was surprised to find Almanza and the two Greeks engaged in an earnest conversation. His suspicions were aroused, and he reported the matter to the captain, who, however, made light of it, and said that Almanza had told him that Foster and Ryan had been shipmates with him on a Sydney barque some years before, and that it was only natural that Almanza would relax discipline a little, and condescend to chat for a few minutes with men who had sailed with him previously.

"Ryan, the older of the two, had proved himself an excellent seaman, and both Marston and Villari felt sure, from the way in which he spoke to the other seamen, that he had at one time been an officer. In addition to Spanish he speaks both English and French remarkably well, and his manners and personal appearance are extremely good, and no one would take him to be a Greek. He, however, frankly admitted that his name was not Ryan and that he was a native of the island of Naxos in the Ægean Sea.

"At this time, Mr. Frewen, the *Esmeralda* was near these islands—in fact, Upolu was in sight; and Marston, knowing that there were some Europeans settled at the port of Apia, on the north side of the island, decided to put in there for fresh provisions, of which the ship was in need.

"Perhaps his decision made the scoundrelly Almanza imagine that he suspected him, and was only touching at Apia to rid himself of his second officer and his Greek and Chileno accomplices, for Mrs. Marston—who shudders when she mentions Almanza's name—says that shortly after the ship's course was altered for Apia, he went for'ard on some excuse, but in reality to talk to the Greeks in the fore-peak. He was absent about a quarter of an hour, and then went about his duties as usual.

"A little before six bells, Captain Marston was on the poop looking at the land through his glasses, Mrs. Marston was in her cabin sewing, Villari, with the boatswain and three A.B.'s (all Englishmen), were with the steward and third mate engaged in the lazzaretto overhauling and re-stowing the provisions. Suddenly the captain was felled by a blow on the head dealt him from behind, and the mate and those with him were at the same moment ordered by Almanza to come up out of the lazzaretto. He told them that he was in possession of the ship, and that they would be shot down if they attempted to resist. Villari and his men came up, and found the second mate and six of the mutineers in the cabin, all armed with pistols and cutlasses. Resistance was useless, and Almanza told Villari not to think of it. He (Villari) was then hustled into his own cabin and locked in, and the English seamen ordered on deck, where they, with the other Englishmen on board, were made to hoist out the longboat. Whilst this was being done Almanza, who had locked Mrs. Marston in her cabin, opened the door, and told her that she need feel no fear, but that she must come on deck to attend to her husband, who had been hurt. She found Marston lying where he fell, and quite unconscious, with a Chileno standing guard over him. As the English members of the crew were hoisting out the longboat, Almanza told the steward—a negro—to get some provisions and some bottles of wine from the cabin. Then the two Greeks—who from the first had seemed bent on murder—interfered, and one of them suddenly raised his pistol and shot the unfortunate steward through the heart. The Chileno seamen applauded the act, and only Almanza's frenzied protests prevented them from slaughtering the unarmed Englishmen, the Greeks declaring that they (the mutineers) were only putting ropes round their necks by sparing any one of them—including Mrs. Marston.

"For some minutes it seemed as if there was to be a conflict between Almanza and his followers, but the mutineers appeared to yield to his appeals, and assisted in getting the longboat out. The captain was then lowered into the boat, and then Mrs. Marston and all the Englishmen but two followed; when suddenly Villari, who had succeeded in forcing his door, sprang up from the cabin with a pistol in each hand, and singling out Almanza, shot him through the chest, and with the second shot wounded one of the Chilenos in the face. But in another instant he himself fell, for the Greeks and several of the gang fired at him simultaneously, and he was also given a fearful blow on the head with a belaying-pin, partly stunning him, and then thrown overboard to drown. The two men remaining on deck saved their lives by jumping overboard at the same time.

"Most fortunately for the poor mate he fell near the boat, and was rescued by one of the seamen, who sprang overboard after him. But not satisfied with what they had already done, and enraged at the fall of their leader, the mutineers now began firing into the defenceless people in the boat at such a short range that it is marvellous that any one escaped.

"Before they were able to pull out of range, the captain, third mate, and one of the seamen were mortally wounded, and two others and Mrs. Marston also were hit. Then the mutineers, evidently bent on the slaughter of the whole party, began to lower away one of the heavy quarter-boats, but although she was actually put in the water the villains changed their minds for some reason, and the longboat was not pursued."

"Ah!" said Frewen, "I expect they were afraid to leave the ship in case a breeze sprang up."

"So Villari says. However, they then began firing round shot at the longboat from the two nine-pounders on the quarter-deck—the *Esmeralda* is armed with six guns—but made such bad practice that after half a dozen shots had been fired they gave up the attempt.

"The ship at this time was in the Straits of Manono, and the boat was headed for the nearest land, which was Samatau—the four unwounded men keeping to the oars most manfully, only taking short spells every hour. As darkness came on they saw the lights of Samatau village, and came on without fear, for they knew that the natives of Samoa, though very warlike, were hospitable and friendly to Europeans. During the night the third mate and the badly wounded A.B. died, and poor Marston, who had never spoken since he had been first struck down, lay as you saw him a little while ago, without the slightest sign of returning consciousness. Villari, however, began to improve, and weak as he was, yet contrived to show one of the men how to dress Mrs. Marston's wound in a more efficient manner. He *is* a plucky little fellow.

"The boat would have reached here much sooner, only that Villari and his people could not find the passage through the reef, and several times struck on coral patches.

"Well, that is the whole of the story—and a very dreadful one it is too. I do feel so for that poor little woman. Her heart is breaking."

"Ay, indeed," said Frewen, "poor thing! She seems hardly more than a girl."

"However, please God, we shall get her husband's ship back," and Raymond's dark eyes sparkled. "Ah! here comes the chief. He will not fail us. He is one of the most renowned fighters in Samoa, is he not, Randall?"

CHAPTER VI

Malie, the supreme chief of the district, was indeed, as Raymond said, one of the most renowned fighters, not only on Upoln, but in all Samoa, and Frewen, as he shook hands with him, thought he had never seen so noble and imposing a figure. He was a man of about sixty years of age, with closely-cropped white hair and thick moustache, but so youthful was he in his carriage, and so smooth was the bright copper-red of his skin, that he seemed more like a man of thirty whose hair and moustache had become prematurely blanched. The

upper portion of his huge but yet beautifully proportioned and muscular figure was bare to the waist, around which was wrapped many folds of tappa cloth bleached to a snowy whiteness, which accentuated the startling contrast of the bright blue tattooing which reached from his waist to his knees. Depending from his neck, and falling in a long loop across a broad chest scarred by many wounds, was a simple yet beautiful ornament consisting of some hundreds of discs of gleaming pearl-shell, perforated at the sides, and strung together by a thin cord of human hair. In his right hand he carried a *fui*, or fly-wisp, made of coco-nut fibre, and Frewen noticed during the conversation that followed that he used this with the dainty grace that characterises a Spanish lady with her fan.

Accompanying the chief was a tall, thin old man, named Talitaua, who was Malië's *tulafale* or orator—a position which in Samoa is one much coveted and highly respected, for the *tulafale* is in reality a Minister of War, and on his public utterances much depends. If he is possessed of any degree of eloquence, he can either avert or bring about war, just as he chooses to either inflame or subdue the passions of his audience when, rising and supporting himself on his polished staff of office, he first scans the expectant faces of the throng seated on the ground before him ere he opens his lips to speak. On this occasion, however, Talitaua had merely come with Malië as a personal friend anxious to learn privately what he would probably have to communicate to the assembled people as soon as the discussion with Raymond was concluded. Both he and the chief had already heard full details of the mutiny from Raymond, and they guessed that the planter had something further and of importance to say to them concerning it. After the usual courtesies so rigidly observed on visits of ceremony had passed between them and Raymond, they patiently awaited him to begin, though very curious to learn what was the occasion of Frewen's and Cheyne's unlooked-for appearance. Their natural politeness, however, as well as the never-to-be-infringed-upon Samoan etiquette, utterly forbade them to make even the slightest allusion to the matter; they would, they knew, learn in good time.

Seating themselves on chairs in European fashion at one side of the table, whilst Raymond and his two companions occupied those opposite, they first made inquiry as to the wounded men and Mrs. Marston, and the planter answered their polite queries. Then after a pause Raymond began by saying—

"This *alii* {*} is named Mr. Frewen. He is an officer of a *vaa soia*,{**} and is a friend of my wife's brother, and therefore is a friend of mine—and thine also, Malië toa o Samatau,{***} and Talitaua."

* Chief-gentleman.

** A whale-ship.

*** His full title, "Malië, warrior of Samatau." The present King Malietoa of Samoa is a descendant.

The chief and his orator bent their heads, but said nothing beyond a simple *Lelei, lelei lava* ("Good, very good").

Then Raymond went to the point as quickly as possible, and asked the chief if he would assist him, Frewen, and Cheyne in recapturing the ship from the mutineers. Speaking, of course, in Samoan, he said—

"As thou seest, Malië, the wind hath died away, and the ship is becalmed, so that the murderers on board cannot escape us if we do but act soon and come upon them suddenly."

The chief thought for a few moments, then answered—

"I will not refuse thee anything in reason that thou asketh me, Lêmonti. But yet my people must be told of what is in thy mind."

"True. They shall know. But before I unfold to thee my plan to take this ship by surprise so that but little or no blood may be shed, I will pledge myself to the people of Samatan and to thee to act generously to them for the help they will give. The captain is hurt to death and cannot speak, and the lady his wife is too smitten with grief to consider aught but her husband, so on her behalf do I speak; for she is my countrywoman, and it would be a shameful thing for me did I not help her."

Then he went on, and dearly and lucidly detailed his scheme to the chief, afterwards translating his remarks into English for the benefit of Frewen, who listened with the keenest interest. Cheyne, of course, understood Samoan perfectly.

Raymond's plan was simple enough.

He proposed to take the *Casilda's* boat, and with Frewen, Cheyne, and a few natives go boldly off and board the ship, and representing himself as a trader anxious to buy European provisions, begin to work by throwing the mutineers off their guard, by warning them of the danger the ship was in through being in so close to the land during a calm, for the currents in the Straits of Manono were very strong and she would be carried on to the reef unless she was towed out of the danger limit towards which he would say (and truthfully enough) that she was drifting. The mutineers, he felt convinced, would feel so alarmed that they would listen to and accept his suggestion to let him engage the services of half a dozen native boats, whose united efforts would soon place the ship out of danger by towing her out of the danger zone. Then he and those with him would bide their time, and at a given signal spring upon the mutineers, who would be completely off their guard.

He entered into the details so minutely that not only Frewen and Cheyne, but Malië as well, expressed the warmest admiration and approval. Then he told Malië exactly what to do when he (the chief) saw the whale-boat leaving the ship to return to the shore, and Malië listened carefully to his instructions and promised that they should be carried out exactly as he desired.

Then the stalwart chief and his orator rose to take their leave, for they had to call the people together and acquaint them with what was to be done.

"Have no fear, Lêmonti, that the calm will break," he said in reply to a fear expressed by the planter that a breeze might, after all, spring up and carry the ship too far off the land for the attempt to be made. "'Tis a calm that will last for many days. Look at the mountains of Savai'i"—and he pointed out the cloud-capped summits of the range that traverses the great island of Savai'i—"when the clouds lie white and heavy and low down it meaneth no wind for many days, not as much as would stir a palm-leaf. But there will be rain at night—much rain."

"The better for our purpose," said Raymond, as the chief left the house. "Now, Randall, we must hurry along. Take half a dozen of my people, and let them catch a couple of pigs and plenty of fowls; then cut about a dozen or so large bunches of bananas and get enough other fruit—pineapples, sugar-cane, guavas, and young coco-nuts as will make a big show in the boat. Mr. Frewen and I will join you in about a quarter of an hour, and then you and he can show the natives how to stow the things, as I have suggested to the chief."

Returning to the house he sought out his wife.

"Marie, we are going to recapture that ship. Don't be alarmed, and don't say anything to poor Mrs. Marston till you see us returning; but you may tell the mate."

Mrs. Raymond never for one instant thought of trying to dissuade her husband from a mission which she felt was full of danger. She kissed him, and said, "Tell me what to get ready, Tom."

CHAPTER VII

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and the decks of the *Esmeralda* gleamed dazzlingly white under the burning rays of the Samoan sun, as she lay motionless upon a sea as calm as some sheltered mountain lake or reed-margined swamp hidden away in the quiet depths of the primeval forest. Twenty miles away to the south and east of the ship, the purple-grey crests of the mountains of Savai'i rose nearly five thousand feet in air, and, nearer the long verdant slope of beautiful Upolu stretched softly and gently upwards from the white beaches of the western point to the forest-clad sides of Mount Tofoa—ten miles distant. Still nearer to the ship, and shining like a giant emerald lying within a circlet of snow, was the island of Manono, the home or birthplace of all the chiefly families of Samoa for many centuries back. Almost circular in shape, and in no place more than fifty feet in height, it was covered with an ever-verdant forest of breadfruit, pandanus, orange and palm-groves, broken here and there by the russet-hued villages of the natives, built just where the shining beach met the green of the land. And the whole seemed to float on the bosom of the lagoon, which, completely encompassed by the barrier reef, slumbered peacefully—its waters undisturbed except when they moved responsive to the gently-flowing current from the blue ocean beyond, or were rippled by the paddle of a fisherman's canoe. A mile beyond Manono, and midway between it and the "iron-bound" coast of Savai'i, was the little volcanic isle of Apolima—once in olden times the fortress that guarded the passage through the straits, now occupied only by a few families of fisher-folk dwelling in peace and plenty in the village nestling at the foot of the long-extinct volcano. Overhead a sky of wondrous spotless blue.

On the quarter-deck of the *Esmeralda* three of the mutineers were seated together under the shade of a small temporary awning, engaged in an earnest conversation. A fourth person—Almanza—who was at that moment the subject of their conversation, was lying in the captain's stateroom, immediately beneath them; the rest of the gang were idling about on the main or fore decks smoking their inevitable cigarettes, and waiting till the Levantine "Ryan," whom they now recognised as leader, called them to hear the result of the discussion.

The Chileno, who was seated with Ryan and Foster, was named Rivas, and had recommended himself to them by reason of his ferocious and merciless disposition. Long before the mutiny occurred he, with the Greeks, had insisted upon the necessity of murdering not only the captain, first officer, steward, and all the English seamen, but Mrs. Marston as well. Almanza, however, protested so strenuously that they reluctantly consented not to resort to murder, if it could possibly be avoided; but their lust for slaughter was too great to be controlled when Villari made his gallant attempt to aid his captain.

On the top of the skylight was spread a chart, at which Ryan was looking, trying to find out as near as he could the ship's position. He could read English, and easily recognised the islands of Apolima and Manono, both of which were shown on the chart.

"That is where we are now, or about there," he said, taking a pencil in his hand and making a mark on the spot. "But we are drifting towards the reefs, and must anchor once we get into soundings—or else go ashore."

"Do you think he is going to die?" inquired Rivas, with a gesture towards the cabin.

"How can I tell, comrade?" replied the Greek with an angry snarl. "Only that we want him badly to navigate the ship, it would be best for us if he does die—for two reasons."

His fellow-scoundrels nodded assent. The two reasons they knew were, firstly, that Almanza had proved to be too timorous as regarded the taking of life, and secondly that his death would give them a greater share of plunder.

"Well, what are we to do?" asked Rivas.

"What can we do?" exclaimed Foster fiercely, as he shook his black-haired, greasy and ear-ringed head. "We must wait and see if he gets better—unless we drift ashore in the night and get our throats cut by los Indios over there," and he indicated the islands.

"Bah!" growled his countryman. "Did I not tell you that I heard the captain say over and over again that these people are not savages? But what we do want is a breeze, so that we can work off the land—for how are a few men going to tow a heavy ship like this against a two-knot current? We could not move her." Then he called out, with a sneering inflection in his tones, "Come aft, comrades, and we shall drink to our *brave* captain's speedy recovery."

The rest of the mutineers but one obeyed with alacrity, just as the man who remained, and who was standing on the topgallant foc'sle, gave a loud cry—

"A boat is coming from the shore!"

In an instant confusion ensued; but Ryan, picking up Marston's glass, angrily bade them be silent. The boat

had approached to within a mile of the ship, and Ryan saw that she was pulling four oars.

"It is not the captain's boat, *amigos*," he said, "and there seem to be only a few people in her. But be ready."

The *Esmeralda*, in addition to the six guns she carried, was plentifully provided with small-arms—enough for a crew of thirty men; and all of these, as well as the big guns, were kept loaded, for after the escape of the captain's boat the mutineers had worked most energetically to put the ship in a state of defence—both Almanza and Ryan recognising the possibility of the survivors of Marston's party reaching Apia, and there obtaining assistance to enable them to recapture the ship.

The boat came on steadily, the blades of her four oars flashing in the bright sunlight. Ryan continued to look at her, and felt quite satisfied when he saw she contained but seven persons, three of whom were Europeans, and four natives.

"It is a whale-boat," he cried; "and there are three white men in her and four natives. She is very deep in the water, and I can see a lot of green stuff in the bows." (These were the bunches of bananas, purposely stowed in a pile for'ard, so as to indicate the boat's peaceful mission.)

The mutineers—with the exception of the two Greeks—who remained on the quarter-deck, dressed in Marston's and Villari's clothes—stood in the waist. All were armed with pistols, and a number of loaded muskets were lying along the waterways close to their hands, if needed.

When within easy speaking distance of the ship Ryan went to the rail and hailed the boat.

"Boat ahoy!"

The four oars ceased pulling, and Frewen, who was steering, stood up and answered the hail.

"Good morning, captain. I've seen you since daylight. You are drifting too close in, so I've come off to warn you to tow off."

"Come on board, please," replied the Greek, who, as Frewen spoke, saw that the boat was deeply-laden with fruit; and the cackling of fowls and sudden squeal of a pig convinced him that everything was right. And then, in a few minutes, Frewen and Raymond clambered up the side and walked quickly aft to where Ryan stood on the poop.

"How do you do, captain?" said Frewen, holding out his hand. "Where are you from, sir?"

"Valparaiso to Batavia," was the glib reply, as the mutineer shook hands with his visitors. "Are you living on shore there?" and he nodded towards Samatau.

"Yes, this is my partner. We have a cotton plantation there. We have brought you off a boatload of fresh provisions. Perhaps you can spare us a cask of salt beef in exchange? Pork is the only meat we have on shore."

"Very well, I can easily do that," was the reply.

Frewen went to the side and hailed the watchful Cheyne.

"Pass up all that stuff, Randall," he said.

Aided by the Chileno seamen, Cheyne and the four natives soon cleared the boat of the livestock and fruit, whilst Ryan, who had not yet asked his visitors below, continued to talk to them on deck, although he told one of the crew, whom he addressed as "steward," to bring up refreshments.

"Now, captain," continued Frewen, speaking in the most friendly manner, "you must set to and tow your ship away from here as quietly as possible, or you will go ashore if this calm lasts. You can't anchor anywhere near here, the water is too deep."

"Perhaps you will help me? I am short-handed. Twelve of my crew took the longboat and deserted from me during the voyage, and I am in a tight place."

"Oh, well, captain, we must try and help you out of it to the best of our ability." He raised his glass. "I am glad to have met you, Captain——," and he paused.

"Ryan is my name. The ship is the *Esmeralda*."

"And a beautiful ship she is, too. You must be proud to command such a splendid vessel, sir."

"She is a fine ship," was the brief reply. "Now will you please tell me how you are going to help me?"

CHAPTER VIII

Frewen seemed to think for a moment or two ere he replied; then he looked at Raymond inquiringly.

"How long would it take to send to Falealili, {*} and ask Tom Morton, the trader, to come with his two boats and help the captain?" he asked.

** A large native town on the south side of Upolu.*

"A day at least—too long altogether with such a strong current setting the ship towards the reef."

"Ah, yes, I daresay it would," he said meditatively; then, as if struck with a sudden inspiration, he added quickly, "What about Malië? He has any number of boats—a dozen at least."

"Just the man!" replied Raymond. "He will let the captain have all the boats and men to man them that are wanted—but he'll want to be paid for it."

"Certainly," interrupted the mutineer, who little imagined how adroitly he was being meshed. "I'll pay anything reasonable. Who is he?"

"Oh, he is a big chief living quite near me, and a decent enough fellow. He has a number of large native-

built boats. The natives call them *taumualua*, which means sharp at both ends. {*} They seat from six to eight paddlers on each side. Five, or even four such boats, well manned, would make the ship move along. Three or four hours' towing will put her into the edge of the counter current setting to the south and eastward away from the land, and then she'll be out of danger, no matter how long the calm lasts."

In a few minutes it was decided that the boat should return to the shore, where Raymond was to see the chief and arrange with him to provide five or six well-manned *taunwalua*, which Frewen said should be alongside to receive the tow-lines within two or three hours.

As he (Frewen) was about to go over the side Ryan made a half apology for the ship's crew carrying arms, at which the young man smiled and said—

"Oh, a good many captains that touch at Samoa for the first time keep their crews armed, imagining the natives might try to cut them off. But the Samoans are a different kind of people to the savages of the Western Pacific; there has only been one ship cut off in this group, and that must have occurred fifty years ago."{**}

** These boats are usually built from the wood of the breadfruit-tree. Not a single nail is used in their construction; every plank is joined to its fellow by lashings of coconut fibre.*

*** A fact.*

Just as he had taken his seat beside Raymond and Cheyne, the Greek said politely—

"If there is no necessity for both of you gentlemen to go on shore again, won't one of you stay on board and have some supper?"

This was just the invitation that Frewen was looking for, but he appeared to hesitate for a moment or two.

"Thank you, captain, I think I will. There is certainly nothing for me to do on shore that my partner cannot do as well or better than myself. And I should like to hear any news from Europe that you may have to tell."

As he clambered up the side again the boat pushed off, and the stalwart native crew sent her, now she was lightened of her load of provisions, skimming through the water.

When the American returned to the quarter-deck, Ryan introduced to him "Mr. Foster, my second mate," and added that in addition to the misfortune of losing twelve of his crew when coming through the Paumotu Group, his chief officer had accidentally shot himself, and shattered his collar-bone.

"Indeed!" said Frewen, with an air of concern, instantly surmising that the injured man was either Almanza or the Chileno sailor whom Villari had shot. "Is he getting on all right?"

"Not at all well—and unfortunately I do not know anything about a fractured collar-bone."

Frewen replied, with perfect truth, that he had seen several broken collar-bones. Perhaps he might be of assistance.

"Captain Ryan" thanked him, and said he would at once go down, see how the injured man was getting on, and would send for him in ten minutes or so. Meanwhile would Mr. Frewen join Mr. Foster in a glass of wine.

The young whaling officer sat down near the skylight, and as the dark-faced, dirty-looking ruffian seated opposite passed him, with an amiable grin, a decanter of excellent sherry, wondered which of the two Levantines was the greater cut-throat of the two. Ryan, as he called himself, was somewhat of a dandy. He did not wear ear-rings; and Villari's clothes—which fitted him very well—made him look as if he had been used to dress well all his life. Foster, on the other hand, who was arrayed in poor Marston's garments, was the typical Greek seaman one might meet any day in almost any seaport town of importance. He was a fairly tall man, well and powerfully built, but his hawk-like and truculent visage inspired the American with a deeper aversion than that with which he regarded Ryan—who, however, was in reality the more tigerish-natured of the two.

As they sat talking, Frewen happened to look along the deck for'ard, and caught sight of a seaman with the lower part of his face bandaged. He was standing at the galley door talking to some one inside, but happening to see the American looking at him, he hurriedly slipped round the for'ard end of the galley out of sight.

"Ah," thought Frewen, "that is the other fellow that Villari put out of action—the man below is Almanza."

His surmise he found was correct, for at the end of a quarter of an hour, Ryan, who had been giving Almanza all the news in the interval, appeared and asked him to come below and see the chief officer. He led the way below, and entering the officer's cabin, said—

"Here is the gentleman from the shore, Mr. Almanza. Let him see your hurt."

The leader of the mutineers was evidently in great pain, and feverish as well, and Frewen in a few seconds found by examination that a splinter of the fractured bone had been driven into the muscles of the shoulder, where it seemed to be firmly embedded, although one end of it could almost be felt by gentle pressure, so close was it under the skin. The bullet itself had come out at the side of the neck.

Telling them that, although he was no doctor, he was sure that it was most important that the splinter of bone should be removed, he offered to attempt it. The fractured collar-bone, he assured them, would knit of itself if the patient kept quiet.

In those days the medicine chests of even fine ships like the *Esmeralda* were but poorly equipped, when contrasted with those to be found on much smaller vessels thirty years later, when antiseptic surgery and anæsthetics were beginning to be understood. But Almanza, who was in agony, begged the visitor to do what he could; and without further hesitation, Frewen took from the medicine chest what he considered was the most suitable knife, made an incision, and in less than five minutes had the splintered piece of bone out. Then came the agonising but effective sailor's styptic—cotton wool soaked in Friar's Balsam.

Almanza tried to murmur his thanks, but fainted, and when he came to again, he found himself much freer from pain, and the poor negro steward's successor standing beside him with a tumbler of wine and water.

"You must keep very quiet," said Frewen, as he turned to leave the room, speaking coldly, for although he

was very sympathetic with any one suffering pain, he could not but remember what the man before him had done.

Returning on deck, he found Foster and Ryan talking on the poop, whilst the crew of Chilenos were sitting about on the hatches eating pineapples and bananas, and drinking coconuts. Even a non-seafaring man would have thought that there was a lack of discipline displayed, but Frewen, whose life had been spent on whaleships where the slightest liberty on the part of foc'sle hands towards the after-guard meets with swift and stern punishment, felt as if he would have liked to have kicked them all in turn, and then collectively.

"Never mind," he thought to himself, "I trust they are all reserved for higher things—they all deserve the gallows, and I sincerely trust they will get it."

Both Ryan and Foster, he could see, had not the slightest doubt of his and Raymond's *bona-fides*, and at supper both men were extremely affable to him. At the same time he thought he could perceive that they were anxious as to what had become of the captain's boat, for they asked him casually if there was any shipping at Apia, or at any of the other ports in the group.

"Only the usual local trading vessels," he replied. "Whenever a stranger comes in—even if it is only a native craft—I get the news at my place by runners in an hour or two."

And Almanza's mind, too, was at rest, for when he was groaning in agony in his bank, and he was told that a boat from the shore was coming alongside, he had started up and reached for his pistols. But Ryan had satisfied him completely.

"We could have shot every one of them before the boat came alongside, had we wanted to, *amigo*," he said.

"Had they no arms?" asked the wounded man.

"None—not so much as a cutlass even. Diego, Rivas, and Garcia, who helped them to discharge the boat, saw everything taken out of her but the oars and sails. There was a big man—a half-caste, who was dressed like a white man—in charge of the four Samoans. I asked him to come on deck and have a glass of grog; but he said his crew did not want him to leave the boat. They were frightened, he said, because our men had pistols in their belts."

Almanza gave a sigh of relief. "And you are sure they will return and tow us?"

"Sure, *amigo*."

And just as supper was over, and Frewen and Ryan returned to the deck, a sailor called out that the whale boat and five others were in sight.

"Ah, my partner is not the man to lose time in an important matter like this, Captain Ryan," said Frewen; "your tow-line will be tautened out before the three hours we mentioned."

CHAPTER IX

Soon after Raymond and the old chief with his followers had set out for the ship, and when the swift tropic night had closed in upon the island, Captain Marston died. He was conscious when his kindly host and Randall Cheyne had returned, and before he passed away, thanked the planter sincerely for all that he had done for his wife, his crew, and himself; for he well knew that his end was near.

"I fear that nothing will ever be heard of my ship again," he said, in a whisper. "They will scuttle or burn her. My poor wife!" and he pressed her hand. "But thank God, Amy, you will not be quite penniless. Mercado" (his agent in Valparaiso) "will have about two or three thousand pounds to pay you for some cargo he bought from me. You must go there. He is an honourable man, and will not seek to evade his liabilities. I know him well."

Raymond, whose heart was overflowing with pity for the dying man, could no longer restrain himself. At first he had decided not to say a word to Marston about the intended recapture of the ship, for fear it would excite him; but now, when he saw how calmly and collectedly he spoke of her future to his wife, he changed his mind, and, bending down, said:—

"Captain Marston, I must say a few words to you and Mrs. Marston. I did not intend to do so just now, but I know that they will bring you peace of mind, and help you to recovery. I have good news for you."

Marston looked at him eagerly, and his wife, with her hands clasped, moved a little nearer to the planter, who was speaking in very low tones so as not to disturb or excite a man whom he knew was dying bodily, but whose brain was alive.

"Is it about my ship?"

"Yes. She is within six miles of this house, lying becalmed, and, before midnight, will be recaptured by some good friends of mine, and at anchor in this bay by daylight."

Marston's lips quivered, and the agonising look of inquiry and doubt in his eyes was so piteous to behold that Raymond went on more rapidly.

"You may absolutely rely upon what I say. The *Esmeralda* has been in sight since early in the forenoon. I boarded her this morning with the express purpose of seeing if it were possible to recapture her, and have only just returned. And I assure you on my word of honour that she *shall* be recaptured before midnight, without bloodshed, I trust; for the mutineers are completely off their guard, believing I am returning with fifty natives in several boats to tow the ship out of danger, purely out of kindness to their leader."

"You are indeed a good friend," murmured Marston slowly and haltingly. "My wife has told me your name... I know my time is short. If you recapture my ship... she is worth six thousand pounds, and the specie on board amounts to nine thousand. I commend my wife to your care——"

Raymond pressed his hand, and urged him not to say anything further, but Marston, whose eyes were now

lightened by that ephemeral light so often seen in the eyes of the dying, went on—

"I commend my wife to your care... and Villari—is he dead?"

"No, Harry," whispered Mrs. Marston, "he is not dead, but badly wounded."

"Poor Villari... a born sailorman, though an Italian.... Mr. Raymond, Amy... Let him command.... I should have taken his advice... And give him five hundred pounds, Amy.... You, Mr. Raymond, will be entitled to a third of the value of the ship and her cargo... You understand?"

"I will not take a penny," said Raymond, as he rose. "Now I must be going. But have no fear for the *Esmeralda*. She will be at anchor in this bay to-morrow morning."

Marston put his hand gently over towards him, and pressing it softly, Raymond withdrew.

His wife met him at the door. Her dark, Spanishlike face showed traces of tears, but she smiled bravely as he put his arms around her and kissed her.

"Tom, dear, you must not be angry. I have not been crying for fear that something may happen to you if there is a fight with those dreadful men on board the ship—for I am *sure* that you will come back to me and our little one safe and sound—but I do so pity poor Mrs. Marston, Tom, if Captain Marston dies."

"I think that there is no possible hope of his recovery, dear."

"Then she must stay with us, Tom, for some time, until she is stronger. She will need to have a woman's care soon."

Raymond kissed his wife again. "As you will, Marie; you always think of others. And I shall be very glad if she will stay with us."

Ten minutes later she walked down to the beach, and watched her husband and Maliê with his followers depart, and then she slowly returned home along a winding path bordered by shaddock trees, whose slender branches were weighted down with the great golden-hued fruit. As she reached the verandah steps a pretty little girl of four years of age ran up to her, and held out her arms to be taken up.

"Where has father gone, Muzzie?" she said in English, and then rapidly added in Samoan, "*Ua alu ia i moana?*" ("Has he gone upon the sea?")

"Yes, Loisé. He has gone upon the sea, but will soon return. Where is Mâlu?"

"Here, lady," replied a woman's voice in the soft Samoan tongue, and a pleasant-faced, grey-haired woman of fifty came down the steps, and took the child from her mother's arms, and as she did so, whispered, "The tide hath turned to the ebb." {*}

** Note by the Author.—Nearly all Polynesians and Micronesians believed most firmly that the dissolution of soul from body always (excepting in cases of sudden death by violence or accident) occurred when the tide is on the ebb. From a long experience of life in the Pacific Islands, the writer is thoroughly imbued with and endorses that belief. The idea of the passing away of life with the ebbing of the tide will doubtless seem absurd to the European and civilised mind, but it must be remembered that an inborn and inherited belief, such as this, does, with many so-called semi-savage races, produce certain physical conditions that are well understood by pathologists.*

"Ay, good Mâlu. I know it. So keep the child within thy own room, so that the house may be quiet."

Old Mâlu, who had nursed Mrs. Raymond's mother, bent her head in assent, and went inside, and her mistress sat down in one of the cane-work lounge chairs on the wide verandah and closed her eyes, for she was wearied, physically and mentally. Her nerves had been strained greatly by the events of the day, and now the knowledge that within a few feet of where she sat, a life was passing away, and a woman's heart was breaking, saddened her greatly.

"I must not give way," she thought. "I must go and see how the wounded men are doing."

But ere she knew it, there came the low but hoarse murmuring cries of myriad terns and gulls flying homewards to the land, mingled with the deep evening note of the blue mountain pigeons; and then kindly slumber came, and rest for the troubled brain and sorrowing heart.

She had slept for nearly an hour when a young native girl servant, who had been left to wait upon Mrs. Marston, came quickly but softly along the verandah and touched her arm.

"Awake, Marie, {*} and come to the white lady."

** It will doubtless strike the reader as being peculiar that an educated and refined woman such as I have endeavoured to portray in Mrs. Raymond would allow a servant to address her by her Christian name. But the explanation is very simple: In many European families living in Polynesia and in Micronesia the native servants usually address their masters and mistresses and their children by their Christian names—unless it is a missionary household, when the master would be addressed as "Misi" (Mr.) and the mistress as "Misi fafine" (Mrs.). The difference does not in the least imply that the servant speaks to the lay white man and his wife in a more familiar manner than he would to his spiritual teacher. No disrespect nor rude familiarity is intended—quite the reverse; it is merely an affectionate manner of speaking to the employer, not as an employer, but as the friend of the household generally. It is related of the martyred missionary John Williams, that a colleague of his in Tahiti once reproved a native youth for addressing Mr. Williams as "Viriamu" (Williams) instead of "Misi Yiriamu" (Mr. Williams), whereupon the pioneer of missionary enterprise in the South Seas remarked—"It does not matter, Mr. —, I infinitely prefer to be called*

She rose and followed the girl to the room where Marston lay. His wife was kneeling by him with her lips pressed to his.

Marie Raymond knelt beside her, and passed her arm around her waist.

CHAPTER X

Closely followed by the five native boats, that in which Raymond was seated with Maliê, and which was steered by Randall Cheyne, first came alongside, and the latter called out to Foster, who was standing in the waist, to pass down the end of the tow line. This was at once done, and then, as Maliê and Raymond left the boat and ascended to the deck, Cheyne went ahead with his tow line, and was soon joined by the native craft, and within a quarter of an hour the *Esmeralda* was moving through the water.

The instructions given to the half-caste by the chief and Frewen were to tow the ship to the south-east, with the land on the port hand. This would not only take her out of danger, but would prevent suspicion being engendered in the minds of the mutineers by their seeing that she was actually being taken away from, instead of towards the land. Both Frewen and Maliê had decided that she was not to be re-captured till she was well into soundings, for events might arise which would necessitate her being brought to an anchor, especially if continuous heavy rain should fall during the night.

As soon as Raymond and the stalwart chief ascended to the poop, the pseudo-captain received them most affably, complimented them on the smart manner in which the boats had gone ahead with the line, and then asked them to take some refreshment. The offer was accepted, for neither had had the inclination to eat anything on shore—they, like their men, were too eager to get possession of the ship to trouble about food.

Ryan sat at the table with them as they ate, and repeated his fiction regarding the accident to his chief officer, at which the planter politely expressed his concern. Then the mutineer, in a casual sort of a way, asked Raymond if there had been any English or American war-ships cruising about Samoa lately.

"No, not for a long time, but I did hear that the American corvette *Adams* was expected here last year, but she must have passed by here, and gone on to Fiji. There is always work for a man-of-war there at any time—the Fijians are a rough lot, and hardly a month passes without some European trader or sailor being killed and eaten, or else badly hurt. Even at the present time all the people living in the eastward islands of the Fiji Group are rank cannibals. It is a place to be avoided."

"Ah, well, I won't go near there," said the mutineer, somewhat meditatively.

"No, of course not," said the planter; "I suppose that your course for Batavia will take you to the northwest after you leave here—Fiji is six hundred miles to the south-west."

"I did think of putting in there when my mate met with his accident—thought I would find a doctor there; but now, thanks to your friend, I shall not need one for him—he is much better already."

"That is fortunate," said Raymond: "he might have died before you could reach the port of Levuka in Fiji. And besides that, I doubt if you would find a doctor living there. I have never heard of any medical man being settled in Fiji. On the other hand you could have left him on shore, where he would at least have met with good nursing from some of the English ladies there; and you could easily have obtained another mate; there are dozens of ex-skippers and mates idling about in Fiji."

Ryan had learnt all he wanted to know, and he changed the subject. He was still anxious about Almanza not living—for no one could tell what might occur to the *Esmeralda* if he died and the ship was left without a navigator. He (Ryan) and Foster would have had no objection to ridding themselves of him, were either one of them able to navigate the ship as far as the Philippine Islands. They had all three previously agreed with the rest of the crew as to their future plans, after they had disposed of Marston and those who were faithful to him. When within sight of Luzon—and abreast of Manila—the ship was to be scuttled, and the mutineers with their plunder in two boats were to make for a part of the coast where there was a village, well-known to Rivas and Garcia. Here the money was to be divided, and every man was to shift for himself—some to go to Manila, others taking passage to that den of thieves, the Portuguese settlement of Maoao, where they meant to enjoy themselves after their manner.

When Raymond and the chief returned on deck, they found the ship was making good progress through the smooth sea, the natives in the boats singing a melodious chorus as, all in perfect unison, they plunged their broad-bladed paddles in the water, and the tow line surged and shook off thousands of phosphorescent drops at every united stroke. The night was dark, but not quite starless, and presently Frewen, who was talking to Foster, remarked that some heavy rain would fall in a short time.

"Our natives won't like that," said Raymond to "Captain Ryan"; "like all Kanakas, they hate being wetted with rain, though they will spend half a day in the rivers bathing and playing games in the water."

"A few bottles of grog will keep up their courage," said Frewen, "especially some rum. Have you any to spare, captain?"

"Any amount."

"Then I'll tell Cheyne to let the boats come alongside in turn, and we'll give all the natives a good rousing nip before the rain comes."

He walked for'ard and stood on the topgallant foc'sle and gave a loud hail.

"Boat ahoy!"

The singing ceased in an instant, and then Randall's voice answered—

"Hallo! what is it?"

"Come aboard and get a glass of grog. Tell the men in the other boats they can follow in turn."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the half-caste in such loud tones that he was heard distinctly on the after-deck, "they'll be glad enough of it; we'll get plenty of cold fresh water presently outside, and some rum to put inside will be just the thing."

Both Raymond and the two Greeks laughed, and then a minute or two later Cheyne and his boat's crew were alongside, and were given a pint of rum between them. They drank it off "neat," and after lighting their pipes, went back to their boat, and let another come alongside. She was manned by a dozen natives, who were all given a stiff glass of grog. They remained but a few minutes, and then went off to give place to the third boat, in which were twenty men. They scrambled over the side, laughing and talking, and then, just as the first five or six of them had been served, the rain poured suddenly down and made such a terrific noise that the shouts of the men in the other boats could not be heard, and the ship was at once enveloped in a thick steamy mist, which rendered even objects on deck invisible.

"It will only last about ten minutes," shouted Frewen to Ryan as they, with Raymond and Maliê, took shelter in the companion-way.

"Where are all those men of yours?" asked the mutineer somewhat anxiously.

Frewen's answer reassured him. "All bolted for shelter," he said with a laugh, "without even waiting to get their grog. I hope your men will let them crawl in somewhere." Then turning to Maliê, he said in English—

"Call to them, Malië."

Maliê stepped out on the deck, and presently Ryan and the others heard him speaking. In a minute or two he reappeared with three or four stalwart natives, all dripping wet, and said something to Raymond, who translated the remark to Ryan.

"All the others have bolted like rabbits, some into the galley, and others into the foc'sle," he said.

In less than the ten minutes predicted by Frewen the rain ceased as if by magic; the natives gathered together again on the main deck, completed their grog drinking, went into their boat again, and pushed off to resume their labour.

In the course of another half an hour every one of the native boats' crews had had his small tumblerful of neat rum, and then, as their paddles plunged into the placid water, once more they sang their chorus—

"*Ala, tamaaitii, Alo foe!*" ("Pull, boys, pull!")

CHAPTER XI

Six bells struck, and then once more the stars went out, and the sky changed from blue to dull grey.

"Very heavy rain will fall again presently," said Raymond to the leader of the mutineers, "and as the ship is well now in the counter current and out of danger, the chief would like to call his men alongside for a rest. But we'll tow you for another mile or so after the rain ceases—if you wish it."

Ryan was keenly anxious to put as much distance between the land and the *Esmeralda* as possible, for he was haunted by the fear that the captain's boat had been picked up by some ship which might be sighted at any time. The further away from the land, the safer he would feel.

"I should like them to tow me along for another hour or two, after the rain is over," he said. "I will pay liberally."

Raymond spoke to the chief in Samoan and told him the captain's request, and Maliê answered in the same language.

"As you will, Lèmonti. But why toil any longer? My men are all ready and anxious. We can take the ship now at any time, once my men are here."

"And I, too, am ready, Alalia. But it was in my mind to wait and see if, when the bell strikes eight, half of the *auva'a* (ship's crew) would not go below to sleep, so that we shall have less disturbance."

"What matters it?" said Alalia with good-humoured contempt; "there are less than a score of them, and when the word is spoken they will be as easily overpowered and bound as a strong man can overpower and bind a child."

"Then let it be as you say," said Raymond in the same quiet tones; "let us call the men on board, and, when the bell is struck at midnight, we shall seize those evil men together—as the bell is struck the last time."

"Good!" said the chief, as he nonchalantly rolled himself a cigarette in a piece of dried banana leaf which he took from his tappa waist cloth. "I will tell them how to act."

"What does he say?" asked Ryan.

"He is quite willing, but he says his men are really tired now, and want a good long spell. They are not used to such work, and he does not want to give them cause for grumbling. They are very touchy sometimes. However, after the next downpour clears off, they will tow you another two or three miles." (And Raymond meant this literally, for he, Frewen, and the chief wanted to see the *Esmeralda* at anchor off Samatau by daylight.)

At a call from Raymond the boats came alongside, and as the crews clambered on deck Maliê told them how to dispose themselves about the ship so that when the signal was given the mutineers could be seized without their being afforded any opportunity of resistance. Five or six of his best men followed him aft, whilst the others mingled with the crew, most of them going down into the foc'sle. The Chilenos, however, although satisfied of the friendly intentions of their visitors, were still a little nervous, for, despite the fact that none of

the natives carried even so much as a knife, the wild appearance they presented was somewhat disconcerting to men who had never before come in contact with what they termed "savages." Fully one half of Malië's followers were men of such stature that the undersized though wiry Chilenos looked like dwarfs beside them; then, in addition to this, their immense "mops" of bright golden hair—dyed that colour by the application of lime—and their wonderfully tattooed bodies, with the first intricate lines beginning at the waist and ending at the knees, accentuated the velvety and rich reddish brown of their skins. Each of the Chileno seamen still carried a brace of pistols in his belt and a cutlass hung by his side, but the natives apparently took no notice of such a manifestation of distrust, and they and the mutineers exchanged cigars and cigarettes as if they were the best friends in the world.

Suddenly the rain fell, and all other sounds were deadened by the downpour; it continued for three-quarters of an hour, and then, as Frewen remarked, ceased with a "snap."

In the main cabin Raymond, with Malië, was seated at the table talking to Ryan; on the poop and under the shelter of the temporary awning were Cheyne, Frewen, Foster, the ruffianly Rivas, and two other of the Ghileno seamen, with three of the natives who had accompanied Cheyne and his Mend from Lepâ.

Five minutes before eight bells Foster turned to Rivas, and, speaking in Spanish, told him to go for'ard and tell the hands that there would be no watch below that night, all hands were to stay on deck till daylight.

Frewen gave Cheyne a glance, and the half-caste sauntered off after Rivas, whilst the three Samoans moved nearer towards the two Ghilenos.

"Mr. Foster" went to the skylight and looked down into the cabin at the clock, which was placed so that it could be seen by any one standing beside the binnacle. Then he looked at a handsome gold watch, which two days previously had been in Villari's vest pocket, and, stepping to the break of the poop, called out—

"Eight bells!"

The big bell under the topgallant foc'sle sent out its deep, sonorous clang, and as the last note was struck, "Mr. Foster" went over on his back with a crash, and in another five seconds Frewen had turned him over on his face and was lashing his hands behind him. The Greek was too stunned to even try to speak, and when he came to again he found lying beside him Rivas and the other two Ghileno sailors, with half a dozen Samoans standing guard over them.

Down in the cabin Raymond and Malië had been equally as quick, and when Frewen and Cheyne came below they found "Captain" Ryan, together with the Chileno who was acting as steward, tied hand and foot and lying outside Captain Maraton's stateroom door.

"Everything all right, Mr. Frewen?" inquired Raymond.

"Everything. All the gentry up for'ard are bussed up comfortably like fowls for cooking. No one has been hurt; Malië's men simply picked the mongrels up by the scruff of their necks and then tied them up. The ship is ours."

"Then you are in command, Mr. Frewen. Please give your orders."

"Very well, Mr. Raymond. But first let me see to the distinguished Senor Almanza."

He opened the door of Almanza's stateroom. The Chilean was asleep. Frewen was about to touch and awaken him but pity for a badly wounded man predominated, so he let him lie undisturbed.

"Now, Mr. Raymond, I am at your service. Will you ask Malië to man his boats, and we will start towing again."

"With pleasure. But let us first call our good men together and drink success to ourselves and the *Esmeralda*. And then, whilst we are being towed towards Samatau, we can overhaul poor Captain Marston's cabin. All the specie, so this scoundrel tells me"—and he pointed to the Chileno steward—"is still in a safe in the captain's cabin, and has not yet been touched. But it was to be divided to-morrow."

And then Randall Cheyne sprang on deck and shouted out in Samoan—

"Friends, the ship is ours! Let ten men remain on board to guard these murderers, and the rest take to the boats and tow the ship to Samatau."

The willing natives answered him with a loud "Ave!" and ten minutes later the *Esmeralda* was again moving through the water.

An hour before daylight her cable rattled through her hawse-pipe, and she swung quietly to her anchor in Samatau Bay.

END OF BOOK I

BOOK II

CHAPTER XII

Twelve months had come and gone, and Frewen, now "Captain" Frewen, was seated in the office of Ramon Mercado, the Valparaiso agent of the late captain and owner of the *Esmeralda*, which had arrived in port the previous day.

The worthy merchant—a little stout man with merry, twinkling eyes—was listening to the detailed story of the capture of the ship by the mutineers, her subsequent recapture, and of all that had occurred since she had been brought to an anchor in front of Raymond's house in Samatau Bay. Mercado himself, four months previously, had received a letter from Mrs. Marston, acquainting him with what had occurred up to the time of her husband's death, and telling him that the *Esmeralda*, as soon as a crew could be obtained, would sail under Frewen's command for Manila, and from there proceed to Newcastle, in New South Wales, and load a cargo of coal for Valparaiso. This letter had reached him by an American whale-ship which had touched at Samoa (a month or two after the *Esmeralda* had sailed for Manila), and which, after cruising among the Galapagos Islands, had, as the master had told Mrs. Marston would be very likely, called at Valparaiso to refit.

A few days after the burial of Captain Marston his wife asked Frewen to take command of the ship, as Villari would be incapacitated for some months.

Villari himself had at first strenuously, and even somewhat bitterly, protested.

"Why should Mr. Frewen, much as he has done to help you to recapture the ship, be given command?" he said excitedly to Raymond. "Does Mrs. Marston distrust me? Do I not possess her confidence as I did that of her husband? Beg her to come to me. Surely she will not give the command of the ship to a stranger! I tell you, Mr. Raymond, that I would give my life for Mrs. Marston, as I was ready to give it for her husband," and his dark eyes blazed.

"There is no reflection either upon your integrity or ability, Mr. Villari," said the planter. "But here is the situation—and I am sure your own sound sense will make you approve of Mrs. Marston asking Mr. Frewen to take charge of the *Esmeralda*. And, before I go any further, I must tell you that Mr. Frewen not only did not seek the position, but said pointedly to Mrs. Marston—only an hour or two ago—that he would be quite satisfied to sail with you as mate. He is as honest as the sun. Pray do not for one moment imagine that he has supplanted you."

"Then let him come with me as mate," urged the Italian.

Raymond shook his head. "It is quite out of the question your taking command, Mr. Villari. You will not be able to get about for some months, and I, as a business man, see the necessity of the ship proceeding on her voyage as quickly as possible. She has a cargo that will bring a large sum of money to Mrs. Marston if it is delivered in Manila in good time. But in this humid climate it would become worthless in a few months. And it was purely my suggestion to Mrs. Marston to ask Mr. Frewen to take charge. She is, as you know, almost heartbroken at the calamity which has overtaken her. And then your remaining here will, I am sure, be a source of comfort to her, for she has the very highest opinion of you."

Villari's eyes sparkled with pleasure. "What! Is not Mrs. Marston sailing in the *Esmeralda*?"

"No; it will be better for her to remain here until the youngster comes. My wife and I will be only too glad to have her with us. It would be impossible for her to go to sea now her poor husband is dead. And she knows no one in Manila. So you must be content to remain here at Samatau as my welcome guest. Frewen will take the ship to Manila, and then decide as to his future course. He thinks that after selling the cargo at Manila he should proceed to Australia for a cargo of coal for Valparaiso. I think it a very sensible suggestion, especially as he can then see poor Marston's agent there and settle up with him regarding some money due to Marston."

The Italian's face assumed a placid appearance. "You are quite right, Mr. Raymond. And I shall be content to remain here. *Per Bacco!* Mr. Frewen is a gentleman, and I wish him all good luck with the *Esmeralda*. But I should like the lady to know that I am prepared to return to the ship this moment if she so wishes it."

"She does know it, Mr. Villari. You have her full esteem and confidence—as you had that of her poor husband, who just before he died anxiously inquired about you, and said that he regretted not taking your advice concerning the two Greeks."

"Ah! Mr. Raymond," and the man raised and clenched his right hand, "I was a fool! I suspected that mischief was afoot that night when I found Almanza and the two Greeks talking together; I simply reported the matter to the captain, who thought nothing of it. Had I done my duty I should have watched, for no one can trust a Greek."

"Do not reproach yourself, Mr. Villari. I may as well tell you that poor Captain Marston, when he was inquiring about you just before he died, spoke in the highest terms of you, and asked Mrs. Marston to see that you were given five hundred pounds."

Villari raised himself on his elbow. "I swear to you, Mr. Raymond, that I do not want any money—compensation—reward—gift—call it what you will—for doing my duty as a seaman. Captain Marston was not only my captain, but my friend. And I would give my life for his wife. Tell her from me that it will hurt me if she even speaks of this money to me."

"As you will, Mr. Villari," said Raymond kindly, who saw that the Italian was excited. "I will tell her tomorrow. But I trust you will now understand that Mr. Frewen had no desire to supplant you in any way."

"I understand. Can I see him now, for there is much that I have to tell him about the ship—things that he would like to know."

So Frewen came in, and he and the Italian mate had quite a long talk about the *Esmeralda*, and when they parted they did so with a feeling of growing friendship.

Anxious to obtain a reliable crew as quickly as possible, Frewen, on the following day, sent Randall Gheyne to Lepi to see if he could persuade the men who had deserted from the *Casilda* to come and help man the *Esmeralda*. But they were all too enamoured of island life to accept the offer he made them, which was generous enough—two hundred and fifty dollars each for the voyage to Manila. So Cheyne came back disappointed, and Frewen then went to Apia in the *Casilda's* whale-boat, and succeeded in engaging ten natives of Niué, {*} who, with half a dozen Samoans, made up a sufficient complement for the ship.

* Niué, the "Savage Island" of Captain Cook. The natives

During this time Almansa and his fellow-mutineers had been confined on board the ship, guarded by a number of Malië's warriors. Then to the joy of Raymond and Frewen there came into Apia Harbour a British gunboat bound from the Phoenix Islands to Sydney, and within forty-eight hours the planter, accompanied by the unwounded survivors of the English crew of the *Esmeralda*, were on board, and related the tale of the mutiny to the captain of the man-of-war.

"I am letting myself in for a lot of trouble, Mr. Raymond," said the captain of the warship, "but I do not see how I can avoid it. I suppose that as the *Esmeralda* is a British ship and is now in distress I must be a sort of fairy godmother and take these beastly mongrels of Chilenos and Greeks to Sydney to be hanged on the evidence of these men whom you have brought. By the way, Mrs. Marston can have a passage with me if she wishes it."

Raymond thanked him, and said Mrs. Marston wished to remain at Samatau with his (Raymond's) wife for an indefinite time.

"Very well, Mr. Raymond. I should be delighted to give her a passage to Sydney, and I'm delighted she can't come. You understand me? I cannot refuse a passage to a lady in such circumstances as Mrs. Marston, but the *Virago* is a man-of-war, and—you know."

Raymond laughed. "I think I know what you mean, Captain Armitage; a lady passenger on a man-of-war would be a bit of a trial. But on Mrs. Marston's behalf I thank you sincerely."

"That's all right," said the bluff commander of the *Virago*; "now you can get home, and in a day or so I'll come round to Samatau and take these mutineering scoundrels into custody. Pity you did not get your Samoan friend Malië to hang or shoot them out of hand. It would have saved Her Majesty's Government something in food, and me much trouble."

CHAPTER XIII

"I must congratulate you, captain," said the merchant, when Frewen had finished his story; "and I trust you will always retain command of the *Esmeralda*. She is a beautiful ship, and, ever since you took charge, has proved herself a lucky one."

"I certainly have had great luck. We had a beautiful passage to Manila from Samoa, and from Manila to Newcastle I made the quickest run on record, and from there to Valparaiso we were only thirty-five days."

Some further conversation followed regarding the future movements of the ship, and it was arranged that she should load Chilian flour for Sydney, and from there proceed to Samoa for orders from her owner.

Three weeks later, Frewen bid the hospitable Meroado goodbye, and sailed for Sydney. The merchant had sold the cargo brought from Newcastle very satisfactorily, and in addition to the amount given him for this, Frewen also received from Mercado over two thousand pounds belonging to Captain Marston's estate.

The crew of the *Esmeralda* consisted of twenty men, ten of whom were either Englishmen, Americans, and Scandinavians, and ten stalwart natives of Savage Island. The first officer was a Dane named Petersen, whom Frewen had engaged at Samoa. He was an excellent seaman, and took a great pride in the ship; the second officer was Randall Cheyne; and the third, a sturdy old Yorkshireman of sixty, with the frame and voice of a bull. Frewen was as satisfied with his officers as he was with his crew, and the exceedingly good fortune which had attended him since he had taken charge at Samatau had put him in a very pleasant frame of mind, and he was eagerly looking forward to meeting Mrs. Marston and rendering an account of his stewardship. When he reached Sydney from Manila he had placed a considerable sum to her credit, and learned that Captain Armitage, of the *Virago*, who had conveyed to Sydney the specie which was on board the *Esmeralda* when the mutiny had occurred, had safely deposited it in her name in the leading bank there. He found that the mutineers had been tried and sentenced; two of them, "Foster" and "Ryan," going to the gallows, whilst Almanza and the Chileno seamen all received long terms of imprisonment. The trial had aroused considerable excitement, and so, when the *Esmeralda* arrived, she was visited by many hundreds of people. In Sydney Harbour in those days might be seen numbers of the finest sailing vessels in the world; many of them were noted "crack" passenger ships trading between London and Sydney and Melbourne, but not one of them surpassed the *Esmeralda* in her graceful lines and beautiful appearance. Then, too, the extraordinarily quick passage she had made from Manila gave her further fame, and nearly all the ship masters in port called on board, and paid Frewen many compliments. Through the manager of the bank in which he had deposited the money for Mrs. Marston, he was introduced to an excellent agent—a Mr. Beilby—who was a shipowner as well, and had for many years employed a fleet of small vessels in the South Sea Islands trade.

The voyage across the Pacific from Valparaiso to Sydney was disappointing—calms and light, variable winds being met with for nearly a month; and then between Australia and New Zealand, two weeks of savage westerly gales tried the ship's weatherly qualities to the utmost. However, after a passage of nearly seven weeks, she once more dropped anchor in the deep, blue waters of the most beautiful harbour in the southern hemisphere.

The agent at once came on board, and Frewen was glad to receive two letters from him—one from Raymond, the other from Mrs. Marston. The latter afforded him great pleasure to read, and was to the effect that she would be very glad to see him back in Samoa, as she wished to consult him in regard to a project of Mr. Raymond's.

"What the project is, he will himself explain to you in writing. I shall be very pleased if you and he come to an arrangement, especially as I have made up my mind to remain here at Samatau indefinitely with Mrs. Raymond, or somewhere near her, and as her husband may be away from her for many months at a time

(this, however, all depends upon yourself) this will be equally as pleasant for her as for me. I feel that I have a home here, and in fact I may remain in Samoa altogether. Anyway, Mr. Raymond is now in treaty with Maliê for a piece of land adjoining his own estate. If he secures it for me, I am having a house built upon it."

Raymond's letter was a voluminous one, but Frewen soon became deeply engrossed in its contents.

"My dear Frewen (let us now drop the 'Sir' and 'Captain,' for I am sure we each regard the other as a friend), I am now starting on a very long letter, and have but little time in which to finish it, for the *Dancing Wave*, by which I am sending it, leaves Apia to-morrow at daylight, and it will take a native runner all his time to cross over the mountains with it to Apia."

Then he went on to say that, about six months previously, Maliê had been approached by a German gentleman (who had just arrived from Hamburg) and asked if he would sell a large tract of land near Samatau. The chief at once consulted Raymond, who could not help feeling some natural curiosity as to the object of the German gentleman making such a large purchase of land so far away from the principal port of the group (Apia). Maliê could give him no information on the subject—all he knew was that he (Maliê) had been offered a very fair price for a tract of country that he was willing to lease, but not to sell, for on it were several villages, and the soil was of such fertility that the people would deeply resent their chief parting with it and making them remove to less productive lands.

On the spur of the moment—and feeling that there was some very good reason for the German making the chief such a substantial offer—Raymond said to Maliê—

"The German has offered you ten thousand dollars for the land, but will not lease it from you. Now I am not a rich man, and even if you were willing to sell it to me for five thousand dollars, I could not buy it. But I will lease it from you for one year. I will not disturb any of your people, but at the end of the year I will make you another offer. There is some mischief on foot, Maliê. Let you and I go to Apia and find out who this man is, and why he is so eager to buy your land."

They set out together, and at Apia gained all the information they desired. The German gentleman was the agent of a rich corporation of Hamburg merchants who wished to purchase all the available land in Samoa for the purpose of founding a colony, the principal industry of which would be cotton-growing. Cotton was bringing fabulous prices in Europe, and the corporation had already made purchases of land both in Fiji and Tahiti, and were using every effort to obtain more.

Raymond quickly made up his mind as to his course of action. He had a hurried interview with two other English planters, and a partnership of three was formed in half an hour. They had then made an agreement with Maliê and another chief to lease all the unoccupied country for many miles on each side of Samatau Bay.

"Now," the letter went on, "here is what we purpose to do. We are going to found the biggest cotton and coffee plantation in all the South Seas, and will make a pile of money. But the one all-important thing is to have plenty of labour, and that we can only obtain from other islands—New Britain, the Solomon Group, and thereabouts, and also from the Equatorial Islands. But it is risky work recruiting labour with small, weakly-manned schooners. What is required is a big lump of a vessel, well armed, and with two crews—a white crew to work the ship and a native crew to work the boats. The *Esmeralda* is just the ship. She can carry six hundred native passengers, and in two trips we shall have all the labourers we want, instead of getting them in drafts of fifty or sixty at a time by small schooners—which would always be liable to be cut off and all hands killed—especially in the Solomon Islands.

"I laid our scheme before Mrs. Marston, and, to be as brief as possible, she is not only willing to let us charter her ship, but also wishes to take a share in the venture. But she wants you to keep command of the *Esmeralda*, as I trust you will."

Then followed a long list of stores, trade goods, arms, ammunition, &c, &c, which Raymond wished Frewen to purchase in Sydney, and the letter concluded with a request for him to leave for Samatau as quickly as possible.

On a separate sheet he made mention of Villari, saying that he had thoroughly recovered from his wound and was living at Apia.

"To tell you the truth, we are all glad he has gone away from us, for he fell madly in love with Mrs. Marston, and proposed to her, and took her kindly rejection of him very badly. He then left the house, but has twice since come to see her. At last she began to get alarmed at his conduct, and finally I had to frankly tell him that he was an undesirable visitor. It stung him deeply, but he persists in writing her the most passionate letters, asking her to reconsider her decision. I am sorry for the fellow, as we all liked him. Frohmann, the new German doctor at Apia, told me that he believes the poor fellow is not 'all there' mentally."

CHAPTER XIV

Frewen showed his letters to the agent Beilby, who corroborated Raymond's statement in every particular regarding the money that could be made by growing cotton on an organised system with native labour, and with proper machinery to clean and pack it; and he also bore out the planter's remarks about the danger that attended small vessels employed in the black labour trade.

"You have seen a good deal of the natives of the South Sea Islands, Captain Frewen, and know what desperate cut-throats are those of the Western Pacific Groups. Two small trading vessels of my own have been cut off within the last five years, and every soul massacred, and the vessels looted and then burnt. It is a most difficult matter to keep a swarm of natives off the decks of a vessel with a low freeboard, all they have to do is to step out of their canoes over the rail, and if they are bent on mischief they can simply overpower a small vessel's company by mere weight of numbers. You will be surprised to hear that, even now, some of the Sydney trading craft use the old-fashioned boarding nettings, and their skippers only allow a certain number

of natives on board at a time. But with a large vessel like the *Esmeralda*, this very great source of danger—the low freeboard—is absent; and besides that, you can carry a crew large enough to squelch any attempt at a rising, if, after you get them on board, your gentle passengers took it into their heads to attempt to possess themselves of the ship.”

“Just so. And I have heard of several instances where Honolulu and Tahiti labour vessels have been captured, even though they carried large crews and were well armed.”

“Exactly! Just carelessness. You never know, when you have a hundred or so of these savages on board, what they may do. They all know that they are going to a foreign country to work on sugar or cotton plantations for three years, at the end of which they will be paid for their labour in guns, powder, beads, calicoes, &c. &c. Well, they come on board perfectly content, and all goes well for a week or two, until some of them begin to notice that the crew are not keeping such a good watch over them as they did when they first came on board. These fellows begin the mischief. ‘Why should we not kill the white men on board?’ (they will argue) ‘and help ourselves to *everything*—guns, pistols, powder, and bullets, cutlasses, grog and tobacco, and all the other riches in the ship? It is much better than working for three years for one gun and one keg of powder and bag of bullets, a knife or two, and a few other things, and then bringing them back to our own country to be despoiled of them by our relations.’ Do you understand, Captain Frewen?”

“Quite.”

“Well, they lie low and wait, and when the opportunity comes the beggars set to work with a vengeance—Only three years ago one of the Hawaiian Islands labour vessels recruited ninety Gilbert Islands natives to work on the new sugar plantations near Honolulu. They behaved themselves splendidly—for they were well treated—for about a fortnight, and the skipper of the vessel (an old hand in the island trade) allowed them to lie on deck at night, feeling sure that they would give no trouble. More than this, he even told his officers and crew to discontinue carrying their Colts’ pistols. The result was that one night, when the watch were taking in sail during a squall, the natives took possession of the brig, killed the mate and all the men of the watch who were on deck, and would certainly have slaughtered every one of the ship’s company had it not been for the captain himself; who, hearing the noise, rushed up from below armed with a whale-ship bomb gun, loaded with slugs. He fired right into the mob of natives on the main deck, killed three or four, and wounded twice as many. Then the second mate and the rest of the watch below came tumbling up, headed by a big Nova Scotian A.B. He was a tremendously powerful fellow, and had armed himself with the carpenter’s broad axe, and in a few minutes he cut down five of the natives, one of whom was the ringleader. Then the steward and supercargo turned up with nine-bore double-barrelled shot-guns, loaded with No. 1 shot, and they and the bluenose{*} practically saved the ship, or with their four shots they laid out nearly a dozen more natives, and the others bolted down to the hold and asked for quarter. Ah, Captain Frewen, there is nothing like buckshot or slugs to squash a mutiny. You must get some nine-bore guns made here to take away with you.”

* A “bluenose” is a sailor’s term for a Canadian or Nova Scotian.

“Thank you for the suggestion, Mr. Beilby. But whalers’ bomb guns—which can be easily procured in Sydney—are better still. You can load them with a small charge of powder and crushed rock salt, which won’t kill a man, but which will prevent him from doing any mischief for a long time. When I was a boatsteerer some years ago on a New Bedford whaler—the *Aaron Burr*—we had serious trouble with about thirty Portuguese negroes we picked up off the coast of Brazil. They were in two boats, and were deserters from a Brazilian man-of-war, which had gone ashore off Santos. Many of our men were down with fever of some sort, and these black gentry (who were all armed with knives), thinking that the after-guard was not able to cope with them, came aft and told our skipper that if he did not give them all the liquor they wanted they would throw him overboard, set fire to the ship, and go ashore again. He seemed to be very much frightened—he was an undersized, quiet man—and begged them to go on deck and remain there whilst he and the steward and such of the officers who were not ill with fever would get up a keg of rum from the lazzarette. Then—he spoke Spanish pretty well—he asked them not to be too hard on him. He would treat them as gentlemen, &c., and, with apparently trembling hands, he gave them boxes of cigars, and addressed them as if they were caballeros of the highest rank whom he was delighted to honour. Some of them cursed him for an Americano, but the majority were too hugely elated at the prospect of a keg of rum to say more to him than to hurry up with it.

“He did hurry up with a vengeance, for in five minutes he and the mate had each loaded a bomb gun with a heavy charge of sheet-lead slugs. They rushed on deck together, and with a warning cry to our men to get out of the way, they fired into the negroes, who were squatted about on the main hatch smoking their cigars and waiting for the rum. The effect was something terrifying, for although none of them were killed, fully half of them were wounded, and their groans and yells were something horrible. We did not give them much time to rally, for all of us who were well enough made a rush, and with belaying-pins and anything else which came to our hands drove them over the side into their boats.”

“Then get some of those bomb-guns, captain, by all means. I think I have seen one—a thing like a bloated blunderbuss without the bell mouth.”

“That’s it,” said Frewen with a laugh; “it is not a handsome weapon, but we whalemens do not go in for ‘objects of bigotry and virtue.’ A bomb-gun is made for a practical purpose—the stock is almost solid metal, and altogether it is no light weight.”

During the following two weeks both Frewen and the agent were very busy. The former, with a gang of shore carpenters, was engaged in preparing the ‘tween decks of the ship for the reception of the native passengers, and constructing two movable gratings to go across the upper deck—one for’ard and the other aft—which, whilst they would practically allow the natives the free run of the deck, would yet prevent them from making any sudden onslaught on the crew.

Beilby, whose long experience of the South Sea Islands trade especially fitted him for the task, devoted himself to the work of fulfilling Raymond’s orders as to the trade goods required, and in three weeks the *Esmeralda* was again ready for sea.

And when, under full sail, she passed down the harbour towards Sydney Heads bound for beautiful Samoa, her captain's heart swelled with pride as the crews of a score of other ships cheered, "Bravo, *Esmeralda!*"

CHAPTER XV

Under a shady wild orange-tree which grew just above high-water mark on the white beach of Samatau Bay, Marie Raymond and Mrs. Marston were seated together on a cane lounge imagining they were sewing, but in reality only talking on subjects dear to every woman's heart.

Quite near them, and seated on mats, were the old nurse Mâlu, who held Mrs. Marston's baby-girl, and Raymond's own little daughter Loisé, who was playing with a young native girl—Olivee—grey-haired old Main's assistant.

It was early in the morning—an hour after breakfast—and the two ladies had come down to the beach to watch Raymond and his partners and some hundreds of natives working at a jetty being constructed from slabs of coral stone, and which was to be carried out into deep water.

The day was delightfully bright, and the soft cool breath of the brave south-east trade wind, which rippled the blue of the ocean before them, stirred and swayed and made rhythmic music among the plumed crests of the graceful coco-palms above. And, as they talked, they heard, every now and then, Raymond's cheery voice giving orders, and the workmen's response, which was generally sung, some one among them improvising a chant—for the Samoans, like many other Polynesian peoples, love to work to the accompaniment of song.

"Marie," said Mrs. Marston, as she let the piece of sewing which she held in her hand fall unheeded to the ground and looked dreamily out upon the blue ocean before them, "you must be a happy woman."

"I am a very, very happy woman, Amy. And I shall be happier still if you decide to remain and live near us. Oh, Amy, if you only knew how I try not to think of the possibility of your going away from us—to think that when you do go, it means that I may never see you again."

"I do not want to go away, Marie. I have told you the story of my life, and how very unhappy I was in my girlhood—an orphan without a friend in the world except my aunt, who resented my orphanage, and treated me as 'a thorn in the flesh,' but I did not tell you that until I met you I never had a girl or woman friend in all my life. And now I feel that as I have found one, I cannot sever myself from her, now that my husband is dead and I and the babe are alone in the world."

Marie Raymond passed her arms around her friend's waist. "Amy, dear, *do* stay in Samoa. I, too, have no woman friend except some of my mother's people—who would give their lives for me. But I am not a white woman. My mother's blood—of which I *am* proud—is in my veins, and when I was at school in Australia, it used to cut me to the heart to have to submit to insults from girls who took a delight in torturing and harassing me because of it. One day I lost control of myself; I heard them whispering something about 'the wild girl from the woods,' and I told them that my mother could trace her descent back for five hundred years in an unbroken line, whilst I was quite certain none of them would like to say who their grandfathers were. My words told, for there were really five or six girls in the school who had the convict taint. I was called before the principal, and asked to apologise. I refused, and said that I had only said openly and under the greatest provocation what more than a dozen other girls had told me!"

"How did it end?"

"In mutual apologies, and peace was restored. But I was never happy there—I loathe the memory of my school days, and was glad to come back to Samoa."

"Neither were my English school days happy, but I even liked being at school in preference to staying with my aunt. I hated the thought of going to her for the holidays. She was a narrow-minded, selfish woman—a clergyman's widow, and seemed to take a delight in mortifying me by continually reminding me that all the money left by my father was £500, which would just pay for my education and no more. 'When you are eighteen,' she would say, 'you must not expect a home with me. Other girls go out as companions; you must do the same. Therefore try and fit yourself for the position.' Everything I did was wrong—according to her, I was rebellious, irreligious, too fond of dress, and lazy physically and mentally. The fact was, I was simply a half-starved, dowdy school-girl—often hungry for food and always hungry for love. If I had had a dog to talk to I should have been happier. My mother died when I was three years old, and my father two years later. Then, as I told you, I went out as governess to the Warrens when I was nineteen, and felt that I was a human being, for they were kind to me. Colonel Warren, a rough, outspoken old soldier with a red face and fierce-looking blue eyes under enormous white bushy eyebrows, was very kind to me, and so was his wife. I was not treated as so many governesses are treated in English families—as something between a scullery-maid and a housekeeper, for whom anything is good enough to eat, and any horrid, mean little room good enough to sleep in. When she came to say good-night to the children after hearing them say their prayers she would always ask me to come to her own room for an hour or two. I was very happy there. I was only a little over a year with them when I met and married Captain Marston." "Some day, Amy, you will marry again," "I don't know, Marie," said Mrs. Marston frankly. "I was thinking the other day that such a thing may be possible. I have no knowledge of the world, and am not competent to manage my business affairs. But there will be plenty of years to think of such a thing. I want to watch my baby grow up—I want her girlhood to be as bright and as full of love as mine was dull and loveless."

Presently a native boy came along the path carrying two letters. He advanced, and handed one to Mrs. Marston, whose cheeks first paled, and then flushed with anger as she took it, for she recognised the handwriting.

"There is another letter for thy husband, lady," he said to Mrs. Raymond, "which also cometh from the *papalagi*{*} Villari."

Mrs. Raymond directed him where to find her husband, and then was about to return to the house, but her friend, who had not yet opened the letter in her hand, asked her to stay.

"Don't go, Marie. I shall not open this letter. It is too bad of Mr. Villari to again write to me. Shall I send it back, or take no notice of it?"

"I hardly know what to say, Amy. He is very rude to annoy you in this way. Wait and hear what Tom thinks."

A quarter of an hour later, the planter came up from the beach, and sat down beside the ladies.

"I have a letter from Villari, Marie," he said, "and have brought it up to see what you and Mrs. Marston think of it."

"Amy has also received one, Tom, but would not open it nor send it back till she had your advice. I think it is altogether wrong of him to persecute her in this way."

"Oh, well, you'll be glad to know that he is sorry for what has occurred. Here is his letter to me, Mrs. Marston—please read it."

The letter was a courteously worded and apparently sincere expression of regret for having forced his attentions upon Mrs. Marston, and asking Raymond and his wife to intercede for him with her. "It will give me the greatest joy if she will overlook my conduct, and accept my sincere apologies, if she does not, I shall carry the remembrance of her just anger to the end of my life. But when I think of her past friendliness to me, I am excited with the hope that her ever-kind heart will perhaps make her forget my unwarrantable presumption, which I look back upon with a feeling of wonder at my being guilty of such temerity." Then he went on to say that Raymond would be interested to learn that he had bought a small schooner of 100 tons called the *Lupetea*, on easy terms of payment, and that he hoped to make a great deal of money by running her in the inter-island trade. "I was only enabled to do this through Mrs. Marston's generosity," he concluded—"the £500 she gave me enabled me to make a good 'deal.' I leave Apia to-morrow for a cruise round Upolu, and as I find that I have some cargo for you, I trust that you, your wife, and Mrs. Marston will at least let me set foot on your threshold once more."

"Well, the poor devil seems very sorry for having offended you so much by his persistence, Mrs. Marston," said the planter with a laugh, "and he writes such a pretty letter that I'm sure you won't withhold your forgiveness."

"I don't think I can. But I must see what he has written to me," and she opened the letter. It contained but a very few lines in the same tenour as that to Raymond, deploring his folly and begging her forgiveness.

"I'm very glad, Tom, that Amy sent him the £500, and that he had the sense not to again refuse it. It would always be embarrassing to you, Amy, whenever you met him."

"It would indeed. But I doubt if he would have accepted it if it had not been for Mr. Raymond's strongly worded letter on the subject," (The planter had sent the money to him in Apia with a note saying that whatever her feelings were towards him, Mrs. Marston would be additionally aggrieved if he refused to accept a bequest from her late husband; it would, he said, have the result of making the lady feel that his rejection of the gift was uncalled-for and discourteous.)

"So that's all right," said Raymond, as he rose to return to the beach. "I always liked the man, as you have often heard me say. And you really must not be too angry with him, Mrs. Marston. These Italians—like all Latins—are a fearfully idiotic people in some things—especially where women are concerned. Now almost any decent Anglo-Saxon would have taken his grueling quietly if a woman told him three times that she didn't want him. Frohmann thinks that that crack on the head has touched his brain a bit; and at the same time, you must remember, Mrs. Marston, that whether you like it or not, you won't be able to prevent men from falling in love with you—look at me, for instance!"

Marie Raymond threw a reel of cotton at him—

"Be off to your work!"

CHAPTER XVI

A few days later the *Lupetea* (White Pigeon) ran into the bay and Raymond boarded her. He greeted Villari in a friendly manner, and tried to put him at his ease by at once remarking that the ladies would be very glad to see him again when he had time to come up to the house. The schooner was loaded with a general cargo for the various traders and planters on the south side of the island, and that for Raymond consisted principally of about forty tons of yams for the use of the numerous local labourers already employed on the plantations.

The *Lupetea* was a rather handsome little vessel, well-fitted for the island trade, and carried besides Villari and the mate six hands, all of whom were Europeans, and Raymond at once recognised several of them as old *habitué* of Apia beach—men whose reputation as loafers and boozers of the first water was pretty well known in Samoa. The mate, too, was one of the same sort. He was an old man named Hutton, and was such an incorrigible drunkard that for two years past he had found it increasingly difficult to get employment. He had in his time been mate of some large ships, but his intemperate habits had caused him to come down to taking a berth as mate or second mate on small coastal schooners whenever he could get the position.

Before he returned to the shore the planter told Villari that he would be glad if he would come to dinner at seven o'clock.

"We are a large party now, Mr. Villari. Besides Mrs. Marston and my wife and myself there are my two partners, Budd and Meredith, and two white overseers. The latter don't sleep in the house, but they have

their meals with us."

Villari accepted the invitation, and at six o'clock landed in his boat and met Raymond and his partners, who had just finished the day's work and were on their way to the house. On the verandah they were received by the ladies, and Mrs. Marston was glad to observe that the Italian took her outstretched hand without any trace of embarrassment, asked if her baby was thriving, and then greeted Mrs. Raymond, who said she was glad to see him looking so well, and wished him prosperity with the *Lupetea*.

The dinner passed off very well. Villari made inquiries as to the whereabouts of the *Esmeralda*, and Mrs. Marston told him all that she knew, and added that if the ship had arrived in Sydney from Valparaiso about eight weeks before, as Frewen had indicated was likely in the last letter received from him, it was quite possible that he would be at Samatau within another ten or fourteen days, and then, as there was no necessity for concealment, she said it was very probable that the ship's next voyage would be to the Western Pacific to procure labourers for the new plantation.

"You have no intention, I trust, of making the voyage in her, Mrs. Marston?" queried the Italian; "the natives, I hear, are a very treacherous lot."

"No, indeed, Mr. Villari. I am staying here with Mrs. Raymond for quite a long time yet, I hope. It is quite likely, though, that before a year has gone she and I will be going to Sydney and our babies will make the trip with us. I have never been to Australia, and am sure I should enjoy being there if Mrs. Raymond were with me. I have two years' shopping to do."

Rudd—one of Raymond's partners—laughed. "Ah, Mrs. Raymond, why go to Sydney when all of the few other white ladies here are satisfied with Dennis Murphy's 'Imporium' at Apia, where, as he says, 'Ye can get annything ye do be wantin' from a nadle to an anchor, from babies' long clothes to pickled cabbage and gunpowder.'"

"Indeed, we are going there this day week," broke in Mrs. Raymond. "There are a lot of things Mrs. Marston and I want, and we mean to turn the 'Emporium' upside down. But we are not entirely selfish, Tom; we are buying new mosquito netting for you, Mr. Rudd, Mr. Meredith, Mr. Young, and Mr. Lorimer." (The two last-named were the overseers.)

"How are you going, Marie?" asked Raymond with a smile; "we can't spare the cutter, and you don't want to be drowned in a *taumualua*."

"Ah! we are not the poor, weak women you think we are. We are quite independent—we are going to cross overland; and, more than that, we shall be away eight days."

"Clever woman!" retorted Raymond. "It is all very well for you, Marie—you have crossed over on many occasions; but Mrs. Marston does not understand our mountain paths."

"My dear Tom, don't trouble that wise head of yours. I have azranged everything. Furthermore, the babies are coming with us! Serena, Olivee, and one of Malië's girls—and I don't know how many others are to be baby carriers. We go ten miles the first day along the coast, sleep at Falelatai that night; then cross the range to the little bush village at the foot of Tofua Mountain, sleep there, and then go on to Malua in the morning. At Malua we get Harry Bevere's boat, and *he* takes us to Apia. Tom, it is a cut-and-dried affair, but now that I've told you of it, I may as well tell you that Malië has aided and abetted us—the dear old fellow. We shall be treated like princesses at every village all along the route, and I doubt very much if we shall do much walking at all—we shall be carried on *fata*" (cane-work litters).

"All very well, my dear; but you and Malië have been counting your chickens too soon. Harry Revere is now in our employ, and I yesterday sent a runner to him to go off to Savai'i and buy us a hundred tons of yams; and he has left by now."

"Oh, Tom!" and Mrs. Raymond looked so blankly disappointed that all her guests laughed. "Is there no other way of getting to Apia by water?"

"No, except by *toumualua*—and a pretty nice time you and Sirs. Marston and the suffering infants would have in a native boat! On the other hand you can walk—you are bent on walking—and by going along the coast you can reach Apia in about four days. Give the idea up, Marie, for a month or so, when Malië and some of his people can take you and Mrs. Marston to Apia in comfort in the cutter."

Villari turned his dark eyes to Mrs. Raymond—

"Will you do me the honour of allowing me to take you and Mrs. Marston to Apia in the *Lupetea*? I shall be delighted."

"It is very kind of you, Captain Villari," said the planter's wife with a smile, as she emphasised the word "captain," "but when will you be sailing?"

The Italian considered a moment.

"I have some cargo for Manono, and some for the German trader at Paulaelae. I shall leave here at daylight to-morrow; be at Manono before noon; run across the straits to Paulaelae the same day, land a few cases of goods for the German, and be back here, if the breeze holds good, the day after to-morrow."

"It is very kind of you, Mr. Villari," said Raymond.

"Not at all, Mr. Raymond. It will be far easier for me to come back this way than to beat up to Apia against the trade wind and strong current on the north side."

"True. I did not think of that. So there you are, Marie—'fixed up,' as Frewen would say. The schooner, I believe, is pretty smart, isn't she, Mr. Villari?"

"Very fair, Mr. Raymond—especially on a wind. We should get to Apia in less than twenty-four hours if there is any kind of a breeze at all. And for such a small vessel her accommodation is really very good, so the ladies and children will be very comfortable, I hope."

"Yes," said Meredith, "the *Lupetea* is the best schooner in the group. I've made two or three trips in her to Fiji. She was built by Brander, of Tahiti, for a yacht, and he used to carry his family with him on quite long voyages. Took them to Sydney once."

"Well, Captain Villari," said Mrs. Raymond, "we shall be ready for you the day after to-morrow. Be prepared

for an infliction," and holding up her left hand, she began counting on her fingers: "Item, two babies; item, mothers of babies aforesaid; item, Serena, nurse girl; item, Olivee, nurse girl; item, one native boy named Lilo, who is a relative of Malië's, is Mrs. Marston's especial protégé and wants to see the great City of Apia; item, baskets and baskets *and* baskets of roasted fowls, mangoes, pineapples and other things which are for the use of the captain, officers, crew and passengers of the *Lupetea*."

Villari laughed. "There will be plenty of room, Mrs. Raymond."

An hour or so later he bade them all good-night, and went on board.

The old mate was pacing to and fro on the main deck smoking his pipe, and Villari asked him to come below.

He turned up the lamp and told Hutton to sit down.

"Will you have a drink, Hutton?"

"*Will* I? You ought to know me by now."

Villari went to his cabin and brought out a bottle of brandy. His dark eyes were flashing with excitement, as he placed it on the table together with two glasses.

"Drink as much as you like to-night," he said; "but remember we lift anchor at daylight. We must be back here the day after to-morrow. There are passengers coming on board. You remember your promise to me?"

Hutton half-filled his tumbler with brandy, and swallowed it eagerly before answering.

"I do, skipper; I'll do any blessed thing in the world except cuttin' throats. I don't know what your game is, but I'm ready for anythink. If it's a scuttlin' job, you needn't try to show me nothin'. I'm an old hand at the game."

Villari took a little brandy and sipped it slowly.

"It is not anything like that; I am only taking away a woman whom I want to marry. She may give trouble at first. Will you stand by me?"

The man laughed. "Is that all, skipper? Why, I thought it was somethink serious. You can depend on me," and he poured out some more liquor.

"Here's luck to you, Captain. I consider as that fifty pound is in my pocket already."

CHAPTER XVII

Two days later the schooner came sweeping round the western point of Samatau Bay and then hove-to abreast of the house. Villari at once went on shore, found his passengers ready to embark, and in half an hour they were all on board and the *Lupetea* was spinning along the southern shore of Upolu at a great rate, for the wind was fresh and the sea very smooth. At midnight she was nearly abreast of a beautiful little harbour called Lotofanga, and Villari, who was on deck, told the mate to haul the head sheets to windward and to lower the boat. This was done so quietly that the only one of the passengers who knew what had been done was the Samoan, Lilo—a bright, intelligent youth of about fifteen years of age. He was lying on the after-deck, and saw the mate and four hands go over the side into the boat, and then a trunk of clothing which belonged to Mrs. Raymond, and which, as the weather was fine, had been left on deck, was passed down. Wondering at this, he rose, and walking to the side, was looking at the boat, when a sailor roughly seized him by the shoulder and ordered him to go for'ard and stay there till he was called. Very unwillingly he obeyed, and then a second man told him to go below into the foc'sle, and made such a threatening gesture with a belaying-pin, that the boy, now beginning to feel alarmed, at once descended, and immediately the fore scuttle was closed and bolted from the deck. The place was in darkness except for one small slush lamp, and Lilo, taking his seat on a sailor's chest, looked round at the bunks. They were all unoccupied, and this fact increased his fears. He, however, was a courageous lad, and his first thought was to provide himself with some sort of weapon, and by the aid of the lamp he began searching the bunks. In a few minutes he found a sheath knife and belt, which he at once secured, and then again sat down to wait events.

Meanwhile Villari was speaking to the mate.

"You are quite sure you know the landing-place?" he asked.

"Course I do. Didn't I tell you I've been at Loto-fanga half a dozen times? It's right abreast of the passage, and no one couldn't miss it on a clear night like this. But it's dead low tide. Why can't I put the woman and girl on the reef, and let 'em walk to the village? Then we don't run no risks of any natives a-seein' us and coming down to the boat."

"Ha! that's a good idea. But is it quite safe? I don't want them to meet with any accident."

"There ain't no danger. The reef is quite flat, with no pools in it, and they needn't even wet their feet. I've walked over it myself."

"Very well then. Now stand by, for I'm going below. As soon as they are in the boat, push off and hurry all you can and get back. We must be out of sight of land by daylight."

The cabin, which was lighted by a swinging lamp, was very quiet as Villari, first removing his boots, descended softly and bent over the sleeping figures of Olivee and Serena, who were lying on mats spread upon the floor outside the two cabins occupied by their mistresses. He touched Olivee on the shoulder, and awakened her.

"Ask Mrs. Raymond to please dress and come on deck for a few minutes," he said quietly to the girl in English, which she understood. She at once rose, and tapped at her mistress's door, and the Italian returned on deck.

Wondering what could be the reason for such a request, Mrs. Raymond dressed herself as quickly as

possible, and was soon on deck followed by the girl Olivee.

"What is the matter, Mr. Villari?" she inquired, and then, as she looked at the man's face, something like fear possessed her. His eyes had the same strange expression that she had often noticed when he was looking at Mrs. Marston, and she remembered what the German doctor had said.

"You must not be alarmed, Mrs. Raymond," he said, "but I am sorry to say that the schooner has begun to leak in an alarming and extraordinary manner, and the pumps are choked. For your own safety I am sending you and Mrs. Marston and your servants on shore. We are now just abreast of Lotofanga, and I am going to try and work the schooner in there and run her ashore on the beach."

Mrs. Raymond, now quite reassured, was at once practical. "We can be ready in a minute, Mr. Villari. I will get little Loisé, and——"

"Do—as quickly as you can—and I will tell Mrs. Marston. I preferred letting you know first. She is very nervous, and it will allay her alarm when she finds that you are so cool. The boat is already alongside. Have you any valuables in your cabin? If so, get them together."

"Nothing but a little money. All my other things are on deck in a trunk."

"That is already in the boat; the mate told me it was yours."

"Hurry up, please, ladies," and the mate's head appeared above the rail.

"Just another minute, Hutton," said Villari, as he, Mrs. Raymond, and the Samoan girl all returned to the cabin together. The latter at once picked up the sleeping Loisé, and her mother, as she wrapped her in a shawl, heard Villari rouse the girl Serena and tell her to awaken her mistress, and presently she heard his voice speaking to Mrs. Marston telling her not to be alarmed, but he feared the schooner might founder at any moment, and that he was sending her and Mrs. Raymond on shore.

"Very well, Mr. Villari," she heard her friend say. "Have you told Mrs. Raymond?"

"Yes," he replied. "She is getting ready now—in fact, she *is* ready." Then he returned to Mrs. Raymond's door, and met her just as she was leaving the cabin with the nurse and child.

"Can I help you, Amy?" asked the planter's wife as she looked into Mrs. Marston's cabin.

"No, dear. I did not quite undress, and I'll be ready in a minute. Baby is fast asleep. Is Loisé awake?"

"No, I'm glad to say. Olivee has her."

"Please come on, Mrs. Raymond," said Villari, somewhat impatiently; "go on, Olivee, with the little girl."

He let them precede him, and almost before she knew it, Mrs. Raymond found herself with the nurse and child in the boat, which was at once pushed off and headed for the shore.

"Stop, stop!" cried the poor lady, clutching the mate by the arm. "Mrs. Marston is coming."

"Can't wait," was the gruff rejoinder, and then, to her horror and indignation, she saw that the boat's crew were pulling as if their lives depended on their exertions.

"Shame, shame!" she cried wildly. "Are you men, to desert them! Oh, if you have any feelings of humanity, turn back," and, rising to her feet, she shouted out at the top of her voice, "Captain Villari, Captain Villari, for God's sake call the boat back!"

But no notice was taken, and a feeling of terror seized her when the brutal Hutton bade her "sit down and take it easy."

As Villari stood watching the disappearing boat Mrs. Marston, followed by the girl Serena carrying her baby, came on deck.

"What is wrong?" she asked anxiously. "Why has the boat gone? What does it mean?" and Yillari saw that she was trembling.

"Return to your cabin, Mrs. Marston. No harm shall come to you. To-morrow morning I shall tell you why I have done this."

A glimmering of the truth came to her, and she tried to speak, but no words came to her lips, as in a dazed manner she took the infant from Serena, and pressing it tightly to her bosom stepped back from him with horror, contempt, and blazing anger shining from her beautiful eyes.

"Go below, I beg you," said Villari huskily. "Here, girl, take this, and give it to your mistress when you go below," and he placed a loaded Colt's pistol in the girl's hand. "No one shall enter the cabin till to-morrow morning. You can shoot the first man who puts his foot on the companion stairs."

CHAPTER XVIII

A hot, blazing, and windless day, so hot that the branches of the coco-palms, which at early morn had swished and merrily swayed to the trade wind, now hung limp and motionless, as if they had suffered from a long tropical drought instead of merely a few hours' cessation of the brave, cool breeze, which for nine months out of twelve for ever made symphony in their plumed crests.

On the shady verandah of a small but well-built native house Amy Marston was seated talking to an old, snowy-haired white man, whose bright but wrinkled face was tanned to the colour of dark leather by fifty years of constant exposure to a South Sea sun.

"Don't you worry, ma'am. A ship is bound to come along here some time or another, an' you mustn't repine, but trust to God's will."

"Indeed I try hard not to repine, Mr. Manning. When I think of all that has happened since that night, seven months ago, I have much for which to thank God. I am alive and well, my child has been spared to me, and in you, on this lonely island, I have found a good, kind friend, to whom I shall be ever grateful."

"That's the right way to look at it, ma'am. Until you came here I had not seen a white woman for nigh on twenty years, and when I did first see you I was all a-trembling—fearing to speak—for you looked to me as if you were an angel, instead of—"

"Instead of being just what I was—a wretched, half-mad creature, whom your kindness and care brought back to life and reason."

The old man, who even as he sat leant upon a stick, pointed towards the setting sun, whose rays were shedding a golden light upon the sleeping sea.

"Whenever I see a thing like that, Mrs. Marston, I feel in my heart, deep, deep down, that God is with us, and that I, Jim Manning, the old broken-down, poverty-stricken trader of Anouda, has as much share in His goodness and blessed love as the Pope o' Borne or the Archbishop o' Canterbury. See how He has preserved you, and directed that schooner to drift here to Anouda, instead of her going ashore on one of the Solomon Islands, where you and all with you would have been killed by savage cannibals and never been heard of again."

Amy Marston left her seat, came over to the old man, and kneeling beside him, placed her hands on his.

"Mr. Manning, whenever a ship does come, will you and your sons come away with me to Samoa, and live with me and the kind friends of whom I have told you. Ah, you have been so good to me and my baby that I would feel very unhappy if, when a ship comes and I leave Anouda, you were to stay behind. I am what is considered a fairly rich woman—"

"God bless you, my child—for you are only a child, although you are a widow and have a baby—but you must not tempt me. I shall never leave Anouda. I have lived here for five-and-thirty years, and shall die here. I am now past seventy-six years of age, and every evening when the sun is setting, as it is setting now, I sit in front of my little house and watch it as I smoke my pipe, and feel more and more content and nearer to God. Now, Mrs. Marston, I must be going home. Where is Lilo?"

"Out on the reef somewhere, fishing. Serena and the baby are in the breadfruit grove behind the village. I sent them there, as it is cooler than the house. I shall walk over there for them before it becomes too dark. Ah, here comes the breeze at last."

"Lilo is a good boy, a good boy," said the old man as he rose and held out his hand; "he is very proud of calling himself your *tausea*,{*} and that he 'sailed' the *Lupetea* so many hundreds of miles."

* *Protector*.

"He is indeed a good boy. I do not think we should ever have reached land had it not been for him."

As the bent figure of the old trader disappeared along the path that led to his own house, which was half a mile away, Mrs. Marston reseated herself, and with her sunbrowned hands folded in her lap, gazed dreamily out upon the glassy ocean, and gave herself up to reverie.

When, in an agony of fear, she had obeyed Villari's request to go below, she had locked herself in her own cabin, and after putting her infant to sleep, had sat up with the girl Serena, waiting for the morning. The pistol which the Italian had given her she laid upon the little table, and Serena, who knew of Villari's infatuation for her mistress, sat beside her with a knife in her hand.

"I cannot shoot with the little gun which hath six shots, lady," said the girl, "but I can drive this knife into his heart."

Half an hour passed without their being disturbed, and then they heard Villari call out to let draw the head sheets, and in a few minutes the schooner was running before a sharp rain squall from the northward. As they sat listening to the spattering of the rain on the deck above, one of the skylight flaps was lifted, and, to their joy, their names were called by the boy Lilo.

"Serena, Ami! 'Tis I, Lilo. Do not shoot at me," he cried, and at the same moment Villari came to the skylight and said—

"The boy wants to stay below with you, Mrs. Marston. I did not know he was on board till a little while ago." Then the flap was lowered, and they saw no more of him till the morning.

The delight of Lilo at finding Mrs. Marston and Serena together was unbounded, and for some minutes the boy was so overjoyed at seeing them again, that even Mrs. Marston, terrified and agitated as she was at Villari's conduct, had to smile when he took her feet in his hands and pressed them to his cheek. As soon as his excitement subsided, he told them of what had occurred after he had been put down into the foc'sle.

About a quarter of an hour after the boat had gone, the scuttle was opened, and one of the sailors who were left on board told him to come up on deck. Villari was at the wheel, and was in a very bad temper, for he angrily demanded of the two seamen what they meant by keeping him on board, instead of sending him on shore in the boat. One of the men, who was called "Bucky" and who had evidently been drinking, made Villari a saucy answer, and said that he had kept the boy below with a view to making him useful. The mate, he said, "knew all about it," and Villari had better "keep quiet." In another moment Villari knocked him senseless with a belaying pin, and then, ordering the other man to let draw the head sheets, put the helm hard up, and the schooner stood away from the land, just as a rain squall came away from the northward. As soon as Bucky became conscious, Villari spoke to him and the other seaman, cautioned them against disobedience, and said that if they did their duty, he would divide a hundred pounds between them when the schooner reached Noumea in New Caledonia. The men then asked him whether he meant to leave the mate and the other four hands behind?

"Yes, I do," he replied, "that is why I am giving you fifty pounds each. But if you try on any nonsense with me, I'll shoot you both. Now go for'ard and stand by to hoist the squaresail as soon as the squall dies away—this boy will lend a hand."

As soon as the squaresail was set, Villari told Lilo to call down the skylight to Mrs. Marston.

"He told me," concluded the boy, "that although I shall have to cook for every one on board, I was to be your servant, and that I was to always sleep in the cabin. And he himself is going to sleep in the deck house

behind the galley, for I saw that he has a lamp in there, and all his things, and he asked me to bring him some writing paper, and ink, and pens. Where shall I get them?"

Mrs. Marston found the articles for him, and Lilo at once took them to Villari, who was at the wheel.

"Put them in the deck-house," he said, "and tell one of the men to come aft, and take the wheel. Then go below again and remain there. If any one puts foot in the cabin, you can shoot him with the pistol I gave to Serena."

"Ami," said the boy anxiously, when he retained, "he is *vale* (mad), for his eyes are the eyes of one who is mad. The land is now far astern, and the ship is speeding fast away from it. What doth this mean?"

"I cannot tell thee, Lilo," she replied, speaking in Samoan, "but as thou sayest, he is mad. Let us trust in God to protect us."

She rose and went into the main cabin, and looked at the tell-tale compass, which swung over the table, and saw that the schooner was heading south-west, which would be the course for New Caledonia.

All that night the *Lupetea* swept steadily and swiftly along over a smooth sea, and then at daylight, Mrs. Marston, who had fallen asleep, was aroused by a loud cry of alarm from Lilo.

She sprang from her berth, and saw that the boy was kneeling beside Villari, who was lying dead at the foot of the companion, with a pistol in his hand.

"He hath killed himself, Ami," said the boy. "As I sat here watching, I heard two shots on deck, and then the ship came to the wind, and as I was about to go on deck, Villari came down, and standing there, put the pistol to his head and killed himself."

"Come on deck," she cried, "and see what has become of the men."

Her fears that Villari had killed the two seamen were verified—they were both lying dead, one beside the wheel, and the other on the main deck. In the deckhouse was a wildly-incoherent and unfinished letter, to her containing expressions of the most passionate devotion, and begging her to pray for his soul.

The first thing to be done was to consider how to dispose of the bodies of poor Villari and the unfortunate seamen. The land was now fifty miles distant, and Lilo, pointing to the eastern horizon, assured Mrs. Marston that bad weather was coming on, and that sail should be taken in as quickly as possible.

"Let Serena and I cast the dead men overboard," he said; "'tis better than that we should keep them on board, for we know not how long it may be ere we get to land again."

Mrs. Marston shuddered.

"As you will, Lilo. When it is done, I will come on deck again and help with the sails."

An hour later the schooner was racing under close-reefed canvas before a half-gale from the eastward.

"Let us steer to the westward," Lilo had said to his mistress. "We cannot beat back to Samoa against such a wind as this, which may last many days. And straight to the west lieth Uea, on which live some white men who will succour us."

There was no general chart on board, but Mrs. Marston knew that Uea (Wallis Island) was due west from Samoa, and distant about two or three hundred miles.

For twelve hours the *Lupetea* ran swiftly before a rapidly increasing sea, and by night time Lilo was so exhausted in trying to keep her from broaching to, that Serena came to his assistance. Neither he nor Mrs. Marston knew how to heave-to the vessel; but, fearful of running past Wallis Island in the night, they did the very thing they should not have done—lowered and made fast both mainsail and foresail, and let the vessel drive under bare poles.

Worn out with his exertions, Lilo still stuck manfully to his steering, when, looking behind him, he saw a black, towering sea sweeping down upon the schooner. Uttering a cry of alarm, he let go the wheel, and darted into the cabin after Mrs. Marston, who had just left the deck.

Then came a tremendous crash, and the *Lupetea* shook and quivered in every timber, as the mighty avalanche of water fell upon and buried her; smashing the wheel to splinters, snapping off the rudder head, and sweeping the deck clean of everything movable.

A month later the vessel drifted ashore on Anouda Island, just as Mrs. Marston was beginning to despair.

CHAPTER XIX

Darkness had fallen upon the little island, as with the girl Serena and her infant charge, Mrs. Marston was walking back to the house. Lilo had not yet returned, but as they emerged from the breadfruit grove, they heard the sound of many voices, and then came a cry that made their hearts thrill—

"*Te vaka nui, Te vaka nui!*" ("A ship! a ship!") and almost at the same moment Lilo and a score of natives came rushing along the path in search of the white lady.

"A ship! a ship!" shouted Lilo, who was almost frantic with excitement, "your ship—your own ship! The ship that came to Samatau!"

"How know you, Lilo?" cried Mrs. Marston tremblingly. "How can you tell it is my ship? And where is it?"

As soon as the boy was able to make himself heard through the clamour of his companions, he told Mrs. Marston that whilst he was engaged in fishing along the shore of an unfrequented little bay on the north end of the island, he was startled by the sudden appearance of a large ship, which he instantly recognised as the *Esmeralda*. She came around a headland with a number of her hands aloft taking in sail, and dropped anchor about half a mile from the land. Lilo waited some time to see if a boat would come on shore, and also ran out to the edge of the reef, and tried to attract the attention of the people on board, but no notice was taken of

him. Then, as darkness was coming on, he set off for the village at a run to tell his mistress.

"We must hasten on board, Lilo," said Mrs. Marston, as she walked hurriedly along beside him to the house. "Run quickly to the old white man, and ask him to send his boat here for me."

But Manning had already heard the news, and his boat had not only been launched, but, manned by half a dozen stalwart Anoudans, was at that moment coming down inside the reef. The old trader's half-caste son Joe was steering, and the moment the boat touched the beach, he sprang out and ran up to the house.

"Father sent me for you, Mrs. Marston. The old man is nearly off his head with excitement. He has sent a native out on the reef to burn a blue light so that it can be seen by the people on board the ship, who will then know that there are white people here."

"Thank you, Joe," she said, as, kissing her little Marie, and bidding Serena take her to Manning's house, and there await her return from the ship, she ran swiftly to the boat, which at once pushed off, accompanied by twenty or thirty canoes—all crowded with natives.

"Look!" cried Joe Manning, "there is the blue light!"

Half a mile away, on a projecting horn of the reef, the blue flame was shedding its brilliant light, and clearly revealing the all but nude figure of the man who held it.

"Father said, Mrs. Marston, when he took those three blue lights ashore from the wreck of the *Lupetea*, that they might come in useful some night——" and then he uttered a yell of delight as a great rocket shot high up in air and burst; the ship had seen the blue light and was answering it!

"Hurrah! she sees the blue light!" he cried, and then with voice and gesture he urged his crew to greater exertions. They responded with a will, and then, as a second rocket shot upward, a deep "*Aue!*" of admiration was chorused forth by the occupants of the canoes, which were trying hard to keep pace with the swift whale-boat.

"We'll see her as soon as we get round the north end, ma'am," said the half-caste, as he swung the boat's head towards a passage through the surrounding reef. Mrs. Marston made no reply; she was too excited to speak, as with parted lips and eager eyes she sat gazing straight ahead.

Ten minutes passed, and only the *swish, swish* of the canoe paddles and the boat's oars broke the silence; then the high north point of the island was rounded, and the *Esmeralda* lay before them, so close, that even though it was dark, figures could be seen moving about her decks, which were well lit up.

Bidding his men cease pulling, and the natives in the canoes to keep silent for a moment, the burly half-caste hailed.

"Ship ahoy!"

"Hallo, there!" cried Prewen's well-remembered voice, "we see you. Come round on the port side."

"Ay, ay, sir," shouted Manning, and then, unable to restrain himself, he expanded his mighty chest and bawled out—

"MRS. MARSTON IS HERE!"

In a moment or two there came an outburst of cheering from the ship, and then amidst the shouts and yells of the Anouda natives the boat dashed alongside, and Mrs. Marston ascended the ladder. A crowd of men were at the gangway, and almost ere her foot had touched the deck Frewen had grasped her hand.

"Thank God, we have found you at last, Mrs. Marston!"

She tried to speak, and then would have fallen, had not Randall Cheyne sprung forward and caught her.

"Carry her to the cabin, Randall," said Frewen, "the poor little woman has fainted."

Half an hour later, the chief officer ran up on the poop-deck and called out—

"All hands aft!"

As the crew—who had been eagerly listening to Joe Manning's account of how Mrs. Marston had come to the island—crowded aft, the mate cried out—

"Boys, I want volunteers to man the starboard quarter-boat to bring Mrs. Marston's baby on board."

Such a wild rush was made for the boat falls that the good-natured officer had to interfere and pick out eight men, and with Lilo as pilot and himself in charge, the boat left the ship amid further cheering.

In the cabin Mrs. Marston, now looking bright and happy, was telling her story to Frewen and Cheyne.

"And now," she said, as she concluded, "I am the very happiest woman in all the world, and oh! Captain Frewen, when I think I shall see Mrs. Raymond within a few days, I feel almost hysterical. I'm sure I won't want to go to sleep for a week."

Frewen laughed as he looked at the flashed, beautiful face. "Well, I don't think you'll get too much sleep to-night, for the men are as much excited as any one aft, and I sent word that they can have a bit of fun and make as much noise as they like until eight bells, and drink your and your baby's health seven times."

"Ah! my poor little baby. How cruel of me to forget her! Oh, please let me go for her."

"You are too late," said Frewen with a smile, "the mate has just gone, and he'll bring her to you before another hour has passed. He has taken your boy Lilo with him as pilot."

Mrs. Marston sighed contentedly, and then looked round at the familiar cabin.

"Oh, how I shall love to see Samatau again, Captain Frewen, and oh! how wonderful it is that the *Esmeralda* of all ships should be the one to find me. If only Mrs. Raymond could know I was safe and on board talking to you of her!"

"She will indeed be very happy; and yet, do you know, Mrs. Marston, that she always said you were not dead, although when month after month passed by, and a most careful search had been made of all the islands within a radius of six hundred miles, and no trace of the *Lupetea* was found, Mr. Raymond himself lost all hope."

"How long was it before Mr. Raymond knew of what had occurred on board that night off Lotofanga?" she asked.

"Mrs. Raymond herself told him on the following afternoon, when, to his astonishment, she arrived at Samatau in a native beat. It seems that after Hutton landed them—she, little Loisé, and Olivee—on the reef, they were met by a party of natives who were returning from a fishing excursion. These people at once took them to the village, where, of course, they were very kindly treated.

"Mrs. Raymond, who was half mad with anxiety for you, asked the chief to provide her with a boat to return to Samatau and tell her husband of what had happened. They left after an hour's rest and almost foundered in the same squall which overtook the *Lupetea*. However, they reached Samatau a little before sunset. Raymond at once sent Meredith and Rudd to Apia to charter two or even three local schooners to sail in search of the *Lupetea*, and for over a month whilst I was there a most unremitting search was kept up, and letters were sent all over the Pacific asking the traders at the various islands to keep a good look-out either for the schooner or any wreckage which might come ashore.

"I arrived at Samatau in the *Esmeralda* about a fortnight after Villari left there, and found Mrs. Raymond alone and distracted with fear for your safety. During the following week, one of the schooners which were out searching for you returned. Raymond was on board. He had been searching through the windward islands of the Fiji Group, but without of course finding a trace of the missing vessel. On the way back, though, they spoke a Tahitian barque, whose captain told them that the bodies of Hutton and the four men who were with him had been found on the reef at Savai'i a few days after the scoundrels had put Mrs. Raymond ashore at Lotofanga. The boat had evidently been driven ashore during the stormy weather which prevailed for three or four days afterwards.

"After remaining ashore for a day only, Raymond again sailed—this time to make a search among the Friendly Islands; and I, with Mr. Rudd and Overseer Lorimer to assist me, sailed for the Solomon Group. We decided, instead of proceeding direct to the Solomons for our cargo of black humanity, to first cruise through the New Hebrides Group, in the hope we might learn something of the *Lupetea*."

"It makes me feel as if I were a real missing princess, Captain Frewen."

"So you were—until to-night. Well, from the New Hebrides we went north to the Solomons, where we were singularly fortunate in getting five hundred natives in a few weeks without any trouble. I landed them at Samatau without losing a single man, and they are now working on the new plantation as happy as sand-boys.

"Raymond was at home when I returned, but there was still one vessel away looking for you—the cutter *Alrema and Niya*—and in fact we long since decided not to entirely abandon the search for a full year.

"I left on a second trip for the Solomons just nine days ago, and we sighted this island early this morning. I did not think that we should hear anything of the *Lupetea* so far to the westward—over a thousand miles from Samoa—but as three of our coloured crew are down with fever, I decided to anchor, leave them here in care of the natives, and also find out if any wreckage had been seen. We could not see any signs of houses on this side of the island, but did see a man making gestures to the ship from the reef; however, as I did not intend to go ashore until the morning, we did not lower a boat. You can imagine our surprise when the glare of a blue light was seen."

"Mate's boat is alongside, sir," announced the bos'un.

And in a few minutes the smiling Serena entered the cabin and placed little Marie in her mother's arms.

Shortly after dawn the merry click of the windlass pawls told Mrs. Marston that the *Esmeralda* was getting underweigh again for Samoa—for the projected voyage to the Solomon Islands was of course abandoned. Old Manning and his stalwart sons came off to say goodbye, and at Mrs. Marston's earnest request the trader consented to accept from her some hundreds of pounds' worth of trade goods from the well-filled storeroom of the *Esmeralda*.

"Goodbye, Mrs. Marston, and God bless you and the little one, and give you all a safe passage to Samoa," he cried, as he descended the side into his boat.

For many hours she remained on deck watching the green little island as it sunk astern, and thinking of the kindly-hearted old trader who had so cheered her by his simple piety and unobtrusive goodness. Then her thoughts turned joyfully to home—for the Raymonds' house was home to her—and she sighed contentedly as the gallant *Esmeralda*, with every stitch of canvas that could be set, slipped gracefully over the blue Pacific on an east-south-east course, for it was the month of November, and light westerly winds had set in.

Two weeks on such a happy ship soon passed away, and then early one morning the grey dome of Mount Tofua stood out from the mantle of mist which hid its verdant sides; and ere the sun had dried the heavy night dews on the gaily-coloured crotons and waving pampas grass which grew just above the beach, the brave ship dropped anchor once more in Samatau Bay amidst a scene of the wildest confusion. For Raymond, as he had stood on the verandah with his wife, watching her sailing in, and wondering what had brought back Frewen so soon, saw this signal flying from her spanker gaff.

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"What does it mean, Tom?" "Found. All well!" he shouted, and pitching his telescope clean over the tops of the wild orange-tree in front of the house, he rushed down to the beach, crying out the news as he ran.

Boats, canoes, and *taumualuas* by the score, all crowded with natives, who were shouting themselves hoarse, paddled furiously off to the ship; and ere her cable rattled through the hawse-pipe and the heavy anchor plunged down to its coral bed, her decks were filled with people, and Raymond, followed by the old chief Malie, was shaking hands warmly with "the missing princess" and her rescuer.

It is night at Samatau, and the two ladies are sitting on the verandah. The house is very quiet.

"Amy?"

"Yes, Marie, dear."

"Tom was asking me this morning if you have yet made up your mind to go on building that house."

"Oh, dear, Marie. I have hardly given it a thought since I came back—and I've only been back a week!"

"Amy?"

"Marie?"

"I suppose, dear, that Captain Frewen won't give up the *Esmeralda* altogether when he goes to America to see his people. He will come back, will he not?"

Mrs. Marston blushed. "I—I think so, dear. Come inside, and I'll tell you."

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK JOHN FREWEN, SOUTH SEA WHALER ***

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