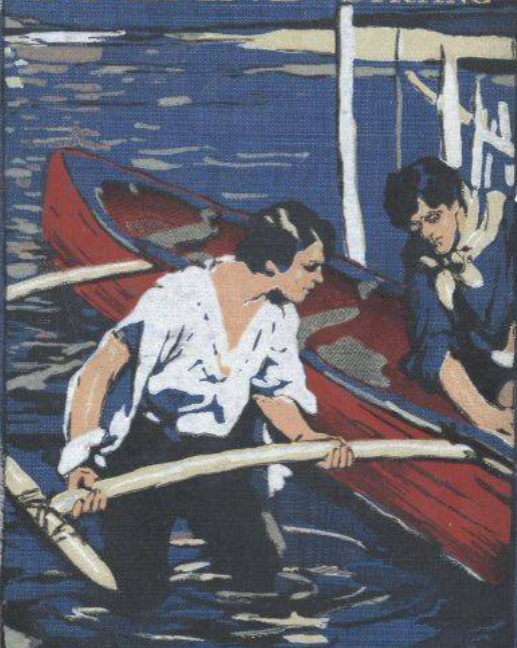


PALM TREE ISLAND: HERBERT STRANG



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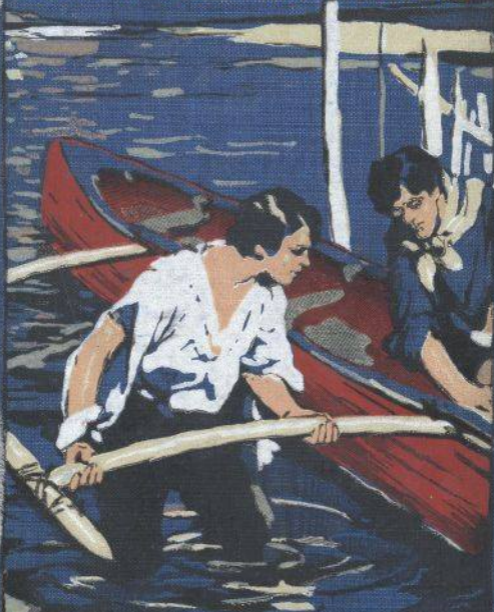
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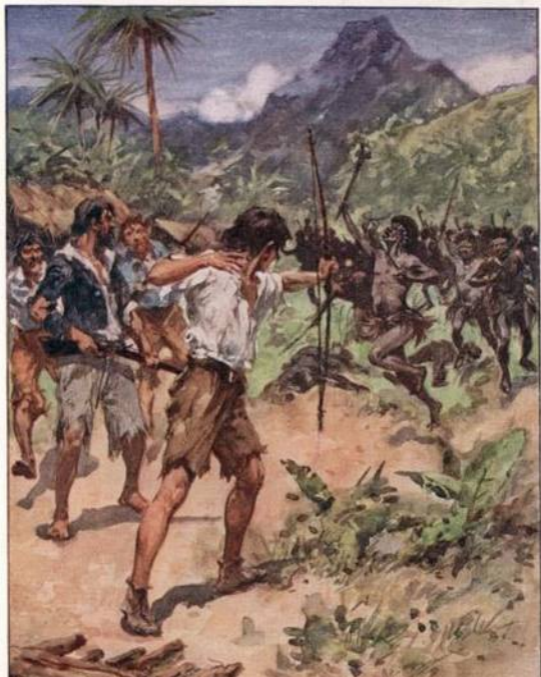
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PALM TREE ISLAND: HERBERT STRANG







"WHEN I LET FLY THE ARROW IT SPED VERY TRUE."

(See page 335.)

"WHEN I LET FLY THE ARROW IT SPED VERY TRUE." (See [page 335.](#))

PALM TREE ISLAND

BEING THE NARRATIVE OF HARRY BRENT SHOWING HOW HE IN COMPANY WITH WILLIAM BOBBIN OF LIMEHOUSE WAS LEFT ON AN ISLAND IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE, AND THE ACCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES THAT SPRANG THEREFROM, THE WHOLE FAITHFULLY SET FORTH

BY

HERBERT STRANG

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ARCHIBALD WEBB AND ALAN WRIGHT*

LONDON
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1910

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MAP OF PALM TREE ISLAND *facing p. 96*

CHAPTER THE FIRST

OF MY UNCLE AND HIS OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO
MARINERS

I was rising four years old when my parents died, both within one week, of the small-pox; and the day of their funeral is the furthestmost of my recollections. My nurse, having tied up the sleeves of my pinafore with black, held me with her in the great room down-stairs as the mourners assembled. Their solemn faces and whispered words, and the dreadful black garments, drove me into a state of terror, and I was not far from screaming among them when there entered a big man with a jolly red face, at whom the company rose and bowed very respectfully. The moment he was within the room his eye lit on me, and seeing at a glance how matters stood, he thrust one hand into his great pocket, and drew it forth full of sugar-plums, which he laid in my pinafore, and

then bade the nurse take me away.

'Twas my uncle Stephen, said Nurse, and a kind good man. Certainly I liked him well enough, and when, two or three days thereafter, he set me before him on his saddle, and rode away humming the rhyme of "Banbury Cross," I laughed very joyously, never believing but that after I had seen the lady with the tinkling toes, Uncle Stephen would bring me home again, and that by that time my mother would have returned from heaven, whither they told me she had gone.

I did not see my childhood's home again for near thirty years.

My uncle took me to live with him, in his own house not a great way from Stafford. He was an elder brother of my father's, and till then had been a bachelor; but having now a small nephew to nourish and breed up, he did not delay to seek a wife, and wed a fine young woman of Burslem. She was very kind to me, and even when there were two boys of her own to engage her affections, her kindness did not alter. So I grew up in great happiness, having had few troubles, the greatest of them being, perhaps, those that beset my first steps to learning in Dame Johnson's little school. As for my subsequent search after knowledge on the benches of the Grammar School at Stafford, the less said the better: the master once declared, in Latin, that I was "only not a fool."

The light esteem in which the pedagogue held my intellects did not give my uncle any concern. He was bad at the books himself, saving in one kind I am to mention hereafter. He was a master potter, in a substantial way of business, and held in some repute among men of his trade. Indeed, it was the belief of many in our parts that he might have become as famous in the world as Mr. Wedgwood himself, had he not been afflicted with a hobby.

I will not follow the example of the ingenious Mr. Sterne, and write here a chapter upon hobby-horses; though I do believe I could say something on that

subject, if not with his incomparable humour, yet with a certain truth of observation. Why is a man's hobby often at such variance with other parts of his character? Why did the late Mr. Selwyn, to wit, take the greatest pleasure in life in seeing men hanged, drawn, and quartered? Who that knew John Steer (I knew him well) only as he stood with knife and cleaver in his butcher's shop, would believe that 'twas his delight, after slaughtering his sheep and oxen, to solace his evenings with warbling on the German flute? My uncle's hobby was no less extraordinary. He was inland bred, and I do believe, until the year of his great adventure, had never gone above twenty miles from his native town; yet he had a wondrous passion for the sea and all that pertained to it. I am sure that he never saw the sea until he and I together looked upon it at Tilbury, and there, to be sure, the salt water is much qualified with fresh; yet, after business hours, he was for ever talking of it and reading about it and the doings of sailor men. He would pore for long hours upon the pages of the *Sailor's Waggoner*, and con by heart the rules and instructions of the *Sailor's Vade Mecum*. He was deeply learned in the *Principal Navigations* of Mr. Hakluyt; he could tell you all that befell George Cavendish in the *Desire* and Sir Richard Hawkins in the *Dainty*, and would hold me spell-bound as he recited with infinite gusto the stark doings of the Buccaneers. And when Mr. Cadell, the bookseller in the Strand in London, sent him the great volumes containing the discoveries of Commodore Byron, and those gallant captains Carteret, Wallis, and Cook in the southern hemisphere, the days were a weariness to him until he could light his candle and put on his spectacles and feast on those enthralling narratives. Many's the time, as I lay awake in my bed, have I heard my aunt Susan call down the stairs through the open door of her room, "Steve, Steve, when be a-coming to bed, man?" and his jolly voice rolling up, "Yes, my dear, I am near the end of the chapter"; and there he would sit, and finish the chapter, and begin another, and read on and on, until I might be stirred from a doze by the sound of him shuffling past in his stockings, and grumbling because there was but an inch of guttering candle left.

My uncle was a sturdy patriot, and took a great delight in knowing that the most of the navigators of those far-off seas were Englishmen. I remember how he fumed and fretted when his bookseller in London sent him the volume of Monsieur de Bougainville's voyage round the world. What had these French apes, he cried, to do with voyages of discovery? And when he read later, in Dr. Hawkesworth's book, of the trick which Monsieur de Bougainville played on Captain Wallis—how, meeting the captain on his homeward way, he sought with feigning to worm out of him the secrets of his expedition—my uncle smote the table with his great fist, and used such fiery language that my aunt turned pale and my little cousins began to blubber.

At this time I was in my seventeenth year, and had been for some months in my uncle's factory, learning the rudiments of his trade. 'Twas taken for granted that I should become a partner with him when I was of age, for the business was good enough to support both me and my elder cousin Thomas; while as for the younger, James, my aunt had set her heart on making a parson of him. But it was ordained that, in my case, things should fall out quite contrary to the intention, as you shall hear.

One fine Sunday we were walking home from church, my uncle and I, across the fields, as our practice was, when we saw that the last stile before we reached our road was occupied. A big fellow, clad in a dress that was strange to our part of the country, sat athwart the rail of the fence, with his feet on the upper step. Another man sprawled on the grass beside the fence, lying stretched on his back with his hands under his head, and a hat of black glazed straw tilted over his eyes. As we drew nearer, I saw that the man on the stile had a big fat face, his red cheeks so puffed out that his eyes were scarce visible, his mouth loose and watery, with an underhung chin, a thick fringe of black hair encircling it from ear to ear.

Seeing us approach, he began with uncouth and clumsy movements to descend from his perch; but he gave my uncle a hard look as we came up with

him, and then, spitting upon the ground, he said,

"Bless my eyes—surely 'tis—ain't your name Stephen Brent, sir?"

My uncle looked at the man in the way of one who is puzzled, and for some while stood thus, the man smiling at him. Then of a sudden his face partly cleared, and he said—

"You are never Nick Wabberley?"

"The same, sir, Nick and Wabberley, as you knowed five and twenty year ago."

"Why, man, I am glad to see you," says my uncle heartily, offering his hand, which the man took, not however before he had rubbed his own hand upon the back of his breeches.

"Same to you, sir, and very glad I am to see you so hearty. After five and twenty year at sea——"

"You have been to sea!" cries my uncle, his jolly face beaming. "Then you must come up to my house to supper and tell me all about it."

"Why, d'ye see, sir, there's my messmate," said the man, with a glance at the prone figure, which had not moved; indeed, there came from beneath the hat a succession of snores, as untuneful as ever I heard. "We're in tow, d'ye see," added the big man.

"Bring him too," says my uncle. "We have plenty of bread and bacon, thank God."

Whereupon the man went to his sleeping comrade, and neatly kicked his hat into the air, bidding him wake, with a strange oath that startled me. The sleeper

did not at once open his eyes, but his mouth being already open, he let forth a volley of curses, and demanded his hat, avouching that if he suffered a sunstroke he would "this" and "that" the other: his actual words I cannot write. My uncle's face showing his reprobation of such language, especially on the Sabbath, the big man excused his comrade, saying that 'twas only Joshua Chick's way, and he was really a good soul, and very obliging. At this the prostrate man opened his eyes, and, seeing my uncle, got upon his feet, and when he was told of the invitation to supper, he touched his forelock and said he was always ready to oblige. If the looks of Nick Wabberley did not take my fancy, still less did those of Joshua Chick, who was a small man, very lean and swarthy, and his eyes squinted so dreadfully that he seemed to be looking at my uncle and myself at one and the same time.

After a few more words we parted, the men promising to be at our house prompt at eight o'clock. And as we continued our walk home, my uncle satisfied my curiosity, telling me that the big man, Nick Wabberley, who was, as I had already guessed, the brother of Tom Wabberley, that owned Lowcote Farm some two miles from our door, had been a school-fellow of his, and the idlest boy in the whole countryside. He never got through a day without a flogging. The master birched him; his father leathered him; but neither did him any good: he remained an incorrigible dunce and truant, and no one was very sorry when one morning it was found that he had slipped out of his bedroom window during the night and run away. He had never since been heard of, but now that after twenty-five years he had returned to his native place, my uncle's heart warmed towards him because he had been to sea. Sailors were not often seen in our inland parts, and the prospect of discourse with a man who had actually beheld what he had only read about filled my uncle with delight.

Prompt on the stroke of eight Nick Wabberley arrived, accompanied by his messmate Joshua Chick. They proved to be excellent trenchermen: indeed, they prolonged the meal longer than either my uncle or my aunt liked, the former being impatient to hear stories of the sea, the latter watching with

concern the disappearance of her viands. But supper was over at last, and then my uncle bade the visitors draw their chairs to the fire, gave them each a long pipe and a sneaker of punch, and settled himself in his arm-chair to drink in the tale of their adventures. Being near seventeen I was allowed to make one of the company, to the envy of my young cousins, who hung about the room for some time, but being at last detected were bundled off to bed.

It needs not to tell how late we sat up, nor how many tumblers of brandy-punch the two sailors tossed off between them before they departed, steady enough on their legs, but a trifle thick in their speech. My uncle was abstemious himself, and held a toper to be something less than a man; at an ordinary time he would have avoided to ply his visitors with liquor, but the truth is that on this occasion his whole soul was rapt away into a kind of wonderland by Nick Wabberley's tales, so that the men were able to replenish their glasses at intervals, unperceived. I have heard many a mariner's yarn since, and know them to be works of fancy and imagination as often as not; at that time I was as credulous as a babe, and my uncle scarcely less, and I doubt not we gulped down all the marvels we heard as greedily as the trout gapes at a fly. Certainly Nick Wabberley was a masterly story-teller, spinning yarns, as they say, as easily as a spider spins her web, and never at a loss for a word. Joshua Chick took but a modest part in the conversation, being very well occupied in replenishing the glasses; but every now and again he would slip in a word to correct some statement of his comrade, Nick accepting it with great composure. I noticed that these occasional contributions of Joshua's tended most often towards embellishment, and the level tones in which he related the most astonishing marvels, at the same time fixing one eye on my uncle and the other on me (keeping his hand on the brandy-bottle), made a wonderful impression on us.

It appeared that the two sailors had been members of the company which sailed with Captain Cook (he was then lieutenant) on his first voyage into the southern hemisphere. My uncle knew by heart the story of this voyage as it is

given in Dr. Hawkesworth's book, and expressed great surprise that so many of the incidents and particulars related by Nick Wabberley were not mentioned in that worthy doctor's pages. He even ventured at one point to controvert a statement of Nick's, adducing the doctor as his authority, at which Nick waxed mightily indignant. "Why, d'ye see, warn't I there?" he said. "Warn't I there, Josh?"

"You was," says Chick firmly.

"And warn't you there?" says Wabberley, his moist lips quivering with indignation.

"I were," replies Chick, with vehemence.

"Then what the blazes has any landlubber of a doctor got to do with it, what don't know one end of a ship from t'other!"

There was nothing to be said in answer to this, and my uncle afterwards confided to me his opinion that Captain Cook's own journals contained a good many things which Dr. Hawkesworth had not seen fit to print.

My uncle was so well pleased with the conversation of the seamen that he invited them to come and see him again, and before long it became their regular custom to drop in about supper-time, much to the annoyance of Aunt Susan. She called Nick Wabberley a lazy lubber, and as for Joshua Chick, she said his eyes made her feel creepy, and he ate enough for four decent men. But my uncle was fairly mounted on his hobby, and he asked her rather warmly whether she grudged a bite and a sup to worthy mariners who had braved the perils of the deep (not to speak of the appetites of cannibals) in the service of their country. 'Twas in vain she said that she knew Farmer Wabberley wished his brother at Jericho—the great fat lubber lolloping about doing nothing but eat and drink, when there were fields to hoe, and Joshua Chick looking two

ways at once, one eye on bacon and the other on beer; 'twas a mercy he hadn't got two mouths as well, she said. My uncle would hear nothing against them; always kindly and indulgent, he reminded her that a gammon rasher and home-baked bread must be the most delectable of dainties to men who for months at a time ate nothing but salt junk and ship's biscuit.

He never tired—nor, I must own, did I—of listening to Nick Wabberley. His face fairly glowed as he heard of those favoured islands of the south where food grew without labour and wealth was to be had almost without lifting a finger. Wabberley described the ease with which pearls might be obtained in the Pacific: how he had seen the natives dive into the water and bring up oysters, every tenth of them containing a gem, so little valued by the finders that the present of a four-penny nail or a glass bead would purchase a handful of them. Wabberley heaved a great sigh as he deplored his desperate bad luck in not being permitted to trade. "The Captain, d'ye see, warn't a trader," he said; "he was always thinking of taking soundings and marking charts and discovering that there southern continent, which I don't believe there ain't no such thing, though they do say as how the world 'ud topple over if there warn't summat over yonder to keep it steady. And as often as not, when we come to a island, we was so desperate pushed for provisions, and vegetables to cure us of the scurvy, that he hadn't no thought except for stocking the ship. Oh! 'twas cruel, when we might all ha' been as rich as lords, and all vittles found in the bargain."

In those days I remarked a certain restlessness in my uncle. He would go to the door of an evening and look down the road for the two seamen, and if they did not appear, which was seldom, he would walk up and down, in and out of the house, with hands in pockets, melancholy whistlings issuing from his lips. He read even more closely than usual the pages of the *Vade Mecum*, and pored for hours on the maps that embellish Dr. Hawkesworth's volumes. For the most part he was silent and abstracted, but ever and anon he would startle me with some sudden exclamation, some remark or question addressed, it

seemed, to himself. "Tugwell is a good man; I can trust him... What will Susan say? ... A matter of a year or two: what's that? ... I haven't a grey hair in my head." I was somewhat concerned when I listened to these mutterings, and wondered whether much brooding on oversea adventures had turned my uncle's brain. And I was not at all prepared for the revelation that came one night, when, looking up from his book, which lay open on his knees, he waved his long pipe in the air and cried, "I'll do it, as sure as my name is Stephen Brent."

And then he poured out upon my astonished ears the full tale of his imaginings. He was bent on making a voyage round the world. The South Seas had cast a spell upon him. He longed to see the lands of which the sailor-men had spoken; he was athirst for discovery. Perhaps he might light upon this Southern Continent which had eluded the search of others, and if he could forestall the French, what a feather it would be in his cap, and how glorious for old England! And in these dreams he was not less a man of business. There was vast wealth to be had by bold adventurers; why should not he obtain a share of it, and amass a second fortune for his boys?

The greatness of this scheme as he unrolled it before me took my breath away. When I asked how his business would fare in his absence he swept the air with his pipe and declared that Tugwell, his manager, was sober and trustworthy, and he had no fears on that score. I spoke of the perils of shipwreck and pirates, of the Sallee rovers, of the numberless accidents that might befall; but he brushed them all away as things of no account. And then I myself took fire from his own enthusiasm and begged that I might go with him. "No, no, Harry, my boy," he said, kindly enough. "You must stay at home to look after your aunt and the boys. Tugwell is a good man, but growing old; and if anything happens to me you will be at hand to look to things; you are seventeen, and pretty near a man."

That night at supper, with much hemming and hawing, he broached his

project to my aunt. You should have heard her laugh! 'twas plain she did not believe him to be serious; she said it was all gammon, and she wondered what next indeed. But when he assured her that he meant every word of it, she was first alarmed and then angry. She talked about a maggot in his head, and asked what she was to do, a widow and not a widow, with two growing boys that would run wild without their father; and she wondered how a respectable man nigh fifty years old should think of such a thing, and there wasn't a woman in the country who would put up with such a pack of nonsense. To which he replied that Captain Cook was a respectable man with a wife and family, and if the captain's lady could part with her husband for a year or two, for the honour and profit of England, surely 'twas not becoming in Mrs. Stephen Brent to make an outcry over such a trifling matter. This made my aunt only the more angry, and, for the first time in all my knowledge of them, the good people looked unkindly upon each other.

That my uncle's mind was firmly made up was plain to us next day. Bidding me say nought of his intentions, which he wished to be kept secret, lest they came to the ears of the French, he set off for London, and was absent for a matter of ten days, much to the displeasure of Nick Wabberley and Joshua Chick, who came to the house evening after evening and went very disconsolate away, my aunt detesting them both, and refusing to feed the men to whom she attributed this mad whimsy of her husband. Her anger somewhat moderated while he was away, and after a week or so she could smile at his rubbish, declaring to me that she was sure he would think better of it: he would be like a fish out of water in London Town, and the sensible folks there would laugh him out of his foolishness, that they would. She smiled and tossed her head even when he came back and told us with great heartiness that he had bought a vessel—a north-country collier of near four hundred tons, stout in her timbers and broad in the beam, built for strength rather than speed—just such a vessel as Captain Cook had sailed in. "Go along with you, Steve," she said. "Don't tell me! You'll never go rampaging over the seas—a man of your age:

and 'tis a mercy, I'm sure, that you're a warm man and won't ruin yourself, for you won't get half what you gave for it when you sell your precious vessel again." She told me privately that she was sure, when the time came, the foolish man would never venture himself on a ship; what would *he* do on a ship, she'd like to know, when he couldn't ride a dozen miles in a coach, as he had told us, without becoming squeamish and feeling as if his inside didn't belong to him. The news that he had engaged a captain—a seasoned skipper, by name Ezekiel Corke—only made her lift her hands and cry out, "Well, did you ever see!" I am sure that her air of disbelief, and amusement mingled with it, was a sore trial to my uncle.

As for him, good man, he was in earnest, if ever a man was. One day after he returned he rode over with me to Lowcote Farm, where we found those two mariners, Chick and Wabberley, gloomily sucking straws on a five-barred gate, and idly looking on at a busy scene of sheep-shearing. Their dull faces brightened at the sight of him, and when he told them what he had been doing, and asked if they would join his crew, they smote each other on the back and swore lustily for very joy. They asked him many questions about the ship and the captain, talked very knowingly of spars and armaments and the various articles it behoved to carry for trading with the natives, and offered to go at once to London—my uncle paying their coach fares—and seek out old messmates who should form the finest crew that ever foregathered in a foc'sle. My uncle showed great pleasure at their willingness, and arranged that they should accompany him when he next went to London to make his preparations for the voyage.

The news of my uncle's enterprise soon spread through our town, and it became a nine days' wonder among our neighbours and the townfolk. His friends accosted him in the streets; some poked fun at him for entering on a new branch of business at his time of life; others, with the best intentions in the world, addressed to him the most solemn warnings, taking him by the buttonhole and expatiating on the risks he was about to run, doubting whether

any money was to be made at sea, and advising him very earnestly to stick to the clay. He bore their pleasantries and their counsels with great good nature, declaring that he knew what he was about, and they would see if they lived long enough. But I could not help feeling sometimes that he was not quite so confident as he liked to appear, and that the drawbacks and dangers he had shut his eyes to in the first flush of his enthusiasm were now looming larger in the prospect. Yet, whatever his qualms may have been, he pushed on his preparations with vigour. He spent another fortnight in London, collecting a crew with the aid of Wabberley and Chick, purchasing stores, and laying in a cargo, and then he returned to take leave of his family and friends.

All this time I was beset with a great longing. The making of pottery in a quiet town seemed to me a very tame and spiritless occupation: I felt an immense stirring towards a life of activity and adventure, and wished with all my heart that my uncle would change his mind and take me with him. Against this, however, he was resolute, and the utmost he would concede was that I should accompany him when he departed finally from Stafford, and see the vessel in which he was to sail forth. Accordingly, one fine August day ('twas the year 1775), I took passage with him in the London coach. All Stafford had gathered to speed him. He parted from my aunt and his boys at the inn door: up to the very last she had held to the belief that he would draw back; and even when he left her side and mounted into the coach she whispered to me, "don't believe it. I won't believe it! He'll never go. He never will!" But the coach rumbled off, the crowd cheered, some one flung an old shoe after us for luck, and I had never a doubt that before the month was out my uncle would be afloat on the wide ocean, fairly committed to his wonderful adventure in the southern seas.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

OF THE VOYAGE OF THE *LOVEY SUSAN* AND OF MY CONCERN THEREIN; ALSO THE DISTRESSFUL CASE OF WILLIAM BOBBIN

The *Lovey Susan*—for so my uncle had named his vessel—lay at Deptford, and as we walked from our inn, the *Cod and Lobster* in Great Tower Street, to see how her fitting out was proceeding, I was amazed (this being the first time I had come to London) at the smells and the noises of the narrow streets, and at the number of rough seamen whom we met. How much greater was my amazement when we came to the docks, and I saw the multitude of shipping—the forests of masts, the great black hulls, the crowds of lighters that moved in and out among them. I remember the fond air of pride with which my uncle pointed to his vessel, and the smile upon his face when the captain spied him and touched his hat. Captain Corke did not in the least resemble the idea I had formed of a sea-captain. He was a little man, with lean cheeks, and a brown wig a world too small for his head, so that I could see the grey stubble of his own hair showing beneath it. My uncle presented me to him and to the first mate, Mr. Lummis, whose hand, when I shook it, left a strange pattern of tar on mine. Mr. Lummis was a rough-looking man, with a square face and a tight mouth, who broke off his talk with us very frequently to roar at one or other of the crew as they went to and fro about their duties. The captain took us over the vessel, which was all very strange to a landsman, and showed me his own quarters in the round house, and when we came to my uncle's cabin, which was certainly not so big as Aunt Susan's larder, nor half so sweet, I thought of what she had said, and for the first time I felt some pity for my uncle, and wondered how he would endure the being cooped up in so narrow a compass. I was presented also to Mr. Bodger, the second mate, who seemed a very shy and timid fellow, always looking away when he spoke. I did not see either Wabberley or Chick, but learnt by and by that they were on

shore beating up for a few men to make up the ship's full complement.

Things were in a very forward state, and the captain said that the *Lovey Susan* would be ready to set sail in a week's time. We spent that week in going to and fro between the ship and our inn. I own I should have liked to see the sights of London, but my uncle was so much in love with his vessel that he could not bear to be away from her, and he would not let me go sight-seeing alone, saying that London was a terrible wicked place for a boy. The utmost he would consent to was to ride out to Tilbury and ride in again, which was a very paltry expedition. When the end of the week came, there were still some berths vacant, a number of the men having been seized for the king's ships, the press being then very active. This put my uncle in a desperate state of annoyance. He declared it was monstrous that his men should be stolen when he was embarking on an adventure which might bring great honour to the country. Since it was plain that his departure must be delayed, he said it was sinful for me to waste any more time in London when I might be useful at the works, and so took passage for me in the coach and dispatched me home. Knowing that the business would not suffer a jot by my absence, I wondered whether my uncle dreaded a scene of parting; and for my part I was so sore at not being allowed to accompany him that I thought it would save me an extra pang if I did not take my farewell of him at the ship's side.

I found my aunt wonderfully cheerful. She smiled when I told her of the hindrances my uncle had met with, and declared that we should even yet see him give up his whimsy and return to his proper business. This opinion, however, I scouted, and when, after about a week, we received a letter from him, I felt sure as I broke the seal that it was a last message penned on the eve of sailing. It proved otherwise, being a brief note to say that the crew was complete, through the good offices of the obliging Chick, but that the departure was once more delayed, my uncle being confined to his room at the *Cod and Lobster* by a slight attack of the gout. My aunt was for starting at once to attend upon her husband, but this I dissuaded her from, saying that by the time

she arrived in London the attack might have passed and the ship sailed, and she would have made the long journey for nothing, besides wasting money. However, within three days comes another letter, in which my uncle wrote that he was much worse, and desired me to come to him post haste. This letter gave my aunt much concern, but on the whole pleased her mightily, for she was sure I had been sent for to bring my uncle home, and she went about with that triumphant look which a good lady wears when she sees events answer to her predictions.

I set off by the coach next morning. When I opened the door of my uncle's room he fairly screamed at me: "Take care! for mercy's sake take care!" I stepped back and looked about me in alarm, seeking for some great peril against which I must be on my guard. But I saw nothing but my uncle sitting in a big chair, with one leg propped on a stool, and his foot swathed in huge wrappings of flannel. "Take care!" he cried again with a groan as I approached. "Mind my toe! Keep a yard away; not an inch nearer, or I shall yell the house down." At that time I was astonished beyond measure at my uncle's vehemence; but having since then suffered from the gout myself—'tis in our family: my grandfather was a martyr to it, I have been told—I know the terror which a movement, even a gust of air, inspires in the sufferer.

My uncle told me, amid groans, that his heart was broken. The *Lovey Susan* was ready; he had as good a captain and crew as any man could wish to have, but he himself would never make the voyage. Three physicians, the best in London, were attending him, and their opinion was that not only might he be some considerable time in recovering of it, but that, being of a gouty habit of body, a new attack might seize him at any moment and without warning. "Suppose it took me on the voyage, Harry!" he said, groaning deeply. "Suppose I was like this on board! You saw my cabin; no room to swing a kitten. What if a storm blew up! What if I was tossed about!" Here he groaned again. "No doctors! No comforts! I must go home to Susan, my boy—if I can ever stand the journey—— Oh!" he shouted, as a twinge took him. "A

thousand plagues! Give me my draught, Harry; take care! Mind my toe!"

I was distressed at my uncle's pitiful plight. 'Twas plain that his agony of mind was as great as that of his body, because of his disappointment in the check to his cherished design. For some while he did nothing but groan; presently, when he was a little easier, he announced the resolution he had come to, which was a great surprise to me, but a still greater joy. 'Twas nothing less than that I should take his place. He could not abide that his plans should be brought to nought. He had weighed the matter carefully as he lay awake o' nights; I was seventeen and nearly a man, and though no doubt I had gout in my blood, I need not fear that enemy for some years to come. Being sober-minded (he was pleased to say), and well acquainted with his purposes, I could very well represent him, and though this responsibility was great for one of my years, yet it would teach me self-reliance and strengthen my character. He spoke to me long and earnestly of the manner in which I should bear myself, with respect to the captain and kindness to the seamen; and I must never lose sight of the object of the expedition, which was to discover the southern continent, if it were the will of Providence, and so forestall the French.

I fear I paid less heed than I ought to my uncle's solemn admonitions, so overjoyed was I at the wonderful prospect opening before me. Having taken his resolution, my uncle was not the man to delay in executing it. He sent for Captain Corke, and acquainted him with his design, adjuring him to regard me in all things as his deputy, and to take me fully into his counsels. He summoned before him Mr. Lummis and Mr. Bodger, and Chick, who was made boatswain of the vessel, and addressed them in my presence very solemnly, enlarging on the service they would do their country if they assisted Captain Corke and me to bring the expedition to a successful issue. And then, having dismissed them, he bade me fall on my knees (at a yard's distance from his toe), and besought the blessing of the Almighty on the voyage. A lump came into my throat as I listened to his prayer, and when at its conclusion I muttered my "Amen!" it expressed my earnest desire to do all that in me lay to fulfil my

uncle's behests, and, in God's good time, to give him an account of my stewardship which should bring him comfort and happiness.

Next day, it being Friday the 22nd of August and a fair day, we loosed our moorings at four o'clock in the morning and fell down with the tide. We were lucky in encountering a favouring breeze when we came out into the broad estuary of the river, and rounding the Foreland, we set our course down channel. The movements of the sailors in working the ship gave me much entertainment, and the gentle motion of the vessel, the sea being calm, caused not the least discomfort, though it was the first time I had sailed upon the deep.

About eight o'clock in the evening, the time which mariners call eight-bells, I was standing beside the captain on the main deck, and he was pointing out a cluster of houses on the shore which he told me was the fishing village of Margate, when we were aware of a commotion in the fore-part of the vessel. I distinguished the rough voice of Mr. Lummis, shouting abuse with many oaths that were new and shocking to my ears. Presently the first mate comes up, hauling by the neck a boy of some fifteen years, a short and sturdy fellow in dirty and ragged garments, and with the grimmest face I ever did see. Up comes Mr. Lummis, I say, lugging this boy along, cuffing him about the head, and still rating him with the utmost vehemence. He hauls him in front of the captain, and, shaking him as a terrier shakes a rat, says, "Here's a young devil, sir, a —— stowaway. Found him on the strakes in the bilge, sir, the —— little swipe."

The captain looked at the boy, who stood with his shoulders hunched to defend his head from the mate's blows, and then bidding Mr. Lummis loose him, he asked him in a mild voice what he did aboard the vessel. The boy rubbed his hand across his eyes, thereby spreading a black smudge, and then answered in a tearful mumble that he didn't know.

"What's your name?" says the captain.

"Bobbin, sir," says the boy.

"Bobbin what?" says the captain.

"William, sir," says the boy.

"Bobbin William?" says the captain.

"William Bobbin," says the boy.

The captain looked sternly on William Bobbin for the space of a minute or two, but I do not remember that he said anything more to him at that time. Mr. Lummis lugged him away and set him to some task, the captain telling me that he would either put him ashore at some port in the Channel or keep him if he gave promise of making himself useful. I may as well say here that Billy Bobbin, as we called him, was not sent ashore when contrary winds made us put in at Plymouth. It had come out that his father was a blacksmith, of Limehouse, and the boy had run away from the cruelties of his stepmother, and being strong of his arms, and with some skill in smith's work, he proved a handy fellow. I often wondered whether his stepmother used him any worse than he was used aboard our vessel. The crew, as I was not long in finding out, were a rough set of men, and seemed to look on Billy, being a stowaway, as fair game. He was a good deal knocked about among them, and the officers, so far as I could see, did nothing to defend him from their ill-usage. When I spoke of it to the captain, he only said that was the way at sea; and, indeed, Mr. Lummis himself was very free in cuffing any of the seamen who displeased him, and once I saw him fell a man to the deck with a marlin-spike, so that it was not to be wondered at, when the men were thus treated, that they should deal in like manner with the boy. I did speak of it once to Wabberley, thinking he might perhaps put in a word for Billy, and he promised to speak to Chick, who would do anything to oblige; but I never observed that anything came of it.

We had fair weather for a week or more, with light breezes, and I was not the least incommoded by the motion of the vessel, whereby I began to think that I should escape the sea-sickness of which I had heard some speak. But when we had passed the Lizard the wind freshened, and the ship rolled so heavily that I turned very sick, and lay for several days in my bunk a prey to the most horrible sufferings I ever endured, so that I wished I was dead, and did nothing but groan. During this time I was left much to myself, the captain coming now and then to see me, and ordering Clums the cook to give me a little biscuit soaked in rum. However, the sickness passed, and when I went on deck again the captain told me that I had now found my sea-legs and should suffer no more, a prediction which to my great thankfulness came true.

We proceeded without any remarkable incident until the 14th of September, when we came to an anchor in Madeira road. The captain sent a party of men on shore to replenish our water-casks, Mr. Lummis going with them carrying three pistols stuck in his belt. I supposed that he went thus armed for fear of some opposition from the natives of that island, but the captain told me 'twas only to prevent the men from deserting, it being not uncommon for such incidents to happen. We sailed again on the 17th, and for two months never saw land, until the 6th of November, when we anchored off Cape Virgin Mary in the country named Patagonia. There we perceived a great number of people on the shore, who ran up and down both on foot and on horseback, hallooing to us as if inviting us to land. This the captain was resolved not to do, somewhat to my disappointment, for I should have liked to see the Indians more nearly, especially as I had heard many things about them from Wabberley when he related his voyages to my uncle. I had to content myself with gazing at them through the captain's perspective glass, and observed that all were tall and swarthy, and had a circle of white painted round one eye, and a black ring about the other, the rest of the face being streaked with divers colours, and their bodies almost naked. One man, who seemed to be a chief, was of a gigantic stature, and painted so as to make the most hideous appearance I ever

beheld, with the skin of some wild beast thrown over his shoulders.

The captain questioned whether we should proceed through the Straits of Magellan or attempt to double Cape Horn. He decided for the latter course, and having heard somewhat of the violent storms that were to be encountered in that latitude, I was not a little apprehensive of our safety. However, having taken in water at a retired part of the coast, we doubled the Cape after a voyage of rather more than two months, having sustained no damage, and the *Lovey Susan* sailed into the South Sea. Here the calm weather which had favoured us broke up, and for several weeks we had strong gales and heavy seas, so that we were frequently brought under our courses, and there was not a dry place in the ship for weeks together. Our upper works being open, and our clothes and beds continually wet, as well from the heavy mists and rains as from the washing of the seas, many of the crew sickened with fever, and the captain kept his bed for several days. On the first fair day our clothes were spread on the rigging to dry, and the sick were taken on deck and dosed with salop, which, with portable soup boiled in their pease and oatmeal, and as much vinegar and mustard as they could use, brought them in a fair way to recovery.

We proceeded on our voyage, the weather being variable, and I observed that many strange birds came about the ship on squally days, which the captain took for a sign that land was not far off. He was anxious now to make land, for the men began to fall with the scurvy, and even those who were not seized by that plague looked pale and sickly. We were greatly rejoiced one day when the man at the masthead called out that he saw land in the N.N.W., and within a little we sighted an island, which approaching, we brought to, and the captain sent Mr. Lummis with a boat fully manned and armed to the shore. After some hours the boat returned, bearing a number of cocoa-nuts and a great quantity of scurvy-grass, which proved an inestimable comfort to our sick. Mr. Lummis reported that he had seen none of the inhabitants, who had all fled away, it was plain, at the sight of our vessel. It being evening, we stood off all night, and in

the morning the captain sent two boats to find a place where the ship might come to an anchor. But this was found to be impossible, by reason of the reef surrounding the island. The captain marked it down on his chart, and called it Brent Island after my uncle; but I learnt many years afterward that it had already been named Whitsun Island by Captain Wallis, having discovered it on Whitsun Eve. We sailed away, hoping for better fortune. There was none of us but longed to stretch our legs on the solid earth again, and I think maybe it had been better for us if the captain had permitted the men to stay for a while at Cape Virgin Mary or some other spot on the coast of Patagonia, for the being cooped up for so many months within the compass of a vessel of no great size must needs be trying to the spirits even of men accustomed to it.

However, within a few days of our leaving Brent Island we made another, that afforded a safe anchorage. Here we went ashore by turns, and the native people being very friendly, we stayed for upwards of a fortnight among them. It was an inestimable blessing, after living so long on ship's fare—salt junk and pease and hard sea-biscuit (much of it rotten and defiled by weevils)—to please our appetites with fresh meat and fruits, and these the natives very willingly provided in exchange for knives and beads and looking-glasses and other such trifles. It was now I tasted for the first time many vegetable things of which I had known nothing save from the reports of Wabberley and Chick and the books I had heard my uncle read—yams (a great fibrous tuber that savoured of potatoes sweetened), bananas (a fruit shaped like a sausage and tasting like a pear, though not so sweet), and bread-fruit, a marvellous fruit that grows on a tree about the size of a middling oak, and is the nearest in flavour to good wheaten bread that ever I ate. As for flesh meat and poultry, we had that in plenty, the island being perfectly overrun with pigs (rather boars than our English swine) and fowls no different from our own, except that they were more active on the wing. In this place, I say, we stayed for a fortnight or more, and were marvellously invigorated by the change of food, so that our men recovered the ruddy look of health, and the scurvy wholly left us.

During this time the captain and I lodged in a hut obligingly lent us by the chief of the island. We talked frequently of the main purpose of our adventure, the discovery of a southern continent, the captain intending, when we left the island, to sail southwards by west, into latitudes to which his charts gave him very little guide. After we had spent some time in diligent search, whether we made the discovery or not, he proposed sailing north again, and visiting Otaheite and other islands whereon Captain Cook had landed, for another part of my uncle's purpose, though lesser, was to find what opportunities for trading there were in these seas. It was the first part that engaged my fancy the most, pleasing myself with the thought of my uncle's pride if we should succeed where so many navigators before us had failed.

When we left the island and sailed away, I remarked that the crew were very loath to quit this land of ease and plenty. Indeed, when we mustered the crew before embarking, we found that Wabberley and Hoggett the sailmaker were amissing, and the captain in a great rage sent Mr. Lummis with a party to find them. Chick offered to lead another party, so as to scour the whole island (which was only a few miles across) more expeditiously; but this the captain would not permit, for what reason I knew not then, though I afterwards had cause to suspect it. Half-a-day was wasted before the truants were brought back, and though they pretended that they had lost their way in the woods that covered the centre of the island, they looked so glum when they came that I conceived a notion that Wabberley, a lazy fellow at all times, would not have been much put about if we had sailed without him. It came into my head that in the play of *The Tempest*, when the sailors are cast upon an island, one of them proposes to make himself its king and the other his minister, and I was amused to think how Wabberley and Hoggett would have disputed about the allotment of those dignities, even as Stephano and Trinculo.

We took on board a good store of the fruits of the island, and sailed for many days without dropping our anchor, though we passed several islands both large and small. Then on a sudden the wind failed us, our sails hung idle,

and for many days we lay becalmed, the vessel being so close wrapt about by mist that we could not see beyond a fathom line. This had a bad effect on the temper of the men, who, being perforce idle, had the more time for quarrelling, which is ever apt to break out, even among good folk, when there is little to do. Some lay in a kind of sullen stupor about the deck; others cast the dice and wrangled with oaths and much foul talk; and when they tired even of this, they took a cruel delight in tormenting poor Billy Bobbin in many ingenious ways. So long did the calm endure that our store of fresh provision gave out, and the men were put on short allowance, at which, although the need of it was plain, they murmured as much as they dared. Having always in mind my uncle's counsel to deal kindly with them, I had been treated hitherto with respect; but I now observed that some of them looked askance at me as I went about the ship, and once or twice after I had passed I heard a muttering behind me, and then a burst of coarse laughter. To make matters worse, the captain again fell sick of a kind of calenture, and took to his bed. For all he was a quiet man, he exercised a considerable authority over the crew, much greater than Mr. Lummis, though the first mate was rougher, and sparing neither of oaths nor of blows. With the captain always in his cabin the men became the more unruly, and I longed very fervently for a breeze to spring up, so that the need for work might effect a betterment in their tempers.

One day when I was in the fore part of the ship, I heard a great hubbub in the forecabin, and looking down through the scuttle, I saw a big ruffian of a fellow—it was that same Hoggett whom I have mentioned before—I saw him, I say, very brutally thrashing Billy Bobbin, dealing him such savage blows on the bare back with a rope-end that his flesh stood up in great livid weals, the rest of the men laughing and jeering. The boy was so willing and good-tempered that I knew there could be no just cause for such heavy punishment, and he was withal of a brave spirit, bearing the stripes with little outcry until one stroke of especial fierceness caused him to shriek with the pain. I had a liking for Billy, and when I saw him thus ill-used I could no longer contain myself, but

springing down through the scuttle, I seized Hoggett's arm and so prevented the rope from falling. Hoggett held the boy with his left hand, but when I caught him and commanded him to cease, he loosed Billy and turned upon me, dealing me a blow with the rope before I was aware of it, and demanding with a string of oaths what I meant by interfering, and crying that I had no business in the fore-castle. At this I got into a fury, and without thinking of the odds against me I smote him in the face with my fist, an exceedingly foolish thing to do with a man of his size. In a moment I lay stretched on the deck, with the fellow above me, belabouring me with his great fist so that I was like to be battered to a jelly, and I doubt not would have been but that Mr. Lummis chanced to come by. Seeing what was afoot he sprang down after me and immediately felled Hoggett with a hand-spike. I was very much bruised, and felt sore for a week after, and withal greatly distressed in mind, for none of the men, not even Wabberley, who was among them, had offered to help me, and I could not but look on this as a very clear proof that a dangerous spirit was growing up among the crew. True, I was not an officer of the ship, and was not in my rights in giving orders, as Hoggett said when Mr. Lummis sentenced him to the loss of half his rum for the week. But being nephew of the owner of the vessel, I considered, and justly, that my position was as good as an officer's; and as for my striking the man, Mr. Lummis did as much every day.

It was on the day after this that Billy Bobbin came to me with a tale that disturbed me mightily. He had been for some time uneasy in his mind, he said, but owned that he would still have kept silence but for my intervention in his behalf. He sought me after sunset (in those latitudes it falls dark about seven o'clock), when the men were at their supper, and he might talk to me unobserved. He said that the men had been grumbling ever since we left the island where we had stayed. They had a hearty dislike to the purpose of our expedition, and a great scorn as well, deeming the search for a southern continent to be merely a fool's quest. I own it caused me vast surprise to learn that Wabberley was the most scornful of them all, saying that, having been with

Captain Cook on his first voyage, he knew there was no such continent, or the captain would have found it, and telling the others dreadful particulars of the tribulations they suffered: how some of them spent a night of terror and freezing cold (though 'twas midsummer) on a hillside of Tierra del Fuego, and how, out of a company of eighty, the half died of fever or scurvy. And in contrast to these ills he told us of the lovely island of Savu, and of Otaheite, where there was everything that man could wish for—a genial climate, the earth yielding its fruits without labour, or at least with the little labour that a man might demand of his wives (for he could have as many wives as he listed); in a word, a paradise where men might live at their ease and never do a hand's turn more. Furthermore, Billy told me (and this was the most serious part) that he had overheard the men talking, a night or two before, of deserting in a body when we next went ashore (provided the island was one of the fruitful sort, for there were some barren), and leave the officers to navigate the vessel as best they might. Great as my surprise had been to hear that Wabberley was one of the moving spirits of this conspiracy, still greater was it when Billy told me that this purpose of deserting was mooted by Joshua Chick the boatswain. I had never been drawn to that obliging person; nay, his very obligingness had annoyed me, just as sometimes I am nowadays annoyed by a person over-officious in handing cups of tea; and when I came to put two and two together, I could not doubt that this scheme had been in the man's mind from the first. In short, he and Wabberley had taken advantage of my uncle's hobby to beguile him upon setting this expedition on foot, for no other reason than to find a means of returning to these southern islands, where they might live in sloth and luxurious ease.

Bidding Billy to be silent on what he had told me, I went to the captain, who, as I have said, was ill in his bunk, and acquainted him with this pretty plot that was a-hatching. He was in a mighty taking, I warrant you, and swore that he would hang the mutineers at the yard-arm, at the same time handing me a sixpence to give to Billy Bobbin for his fidelity. He called Mr. Lummis and Mr.

Bodger into council, and could hardly prevail on the former not to fling the ringleaders into irons at once. Mr. Bodger, whom I had always regarded as a man of mild disposition, suggested that they should be put ashore among cannibals, and so be disposed of in the cook-pot (the natives, for the most part, boiling their meat), which led Mr. Lummis to declare, with a volley of oaths, that if the calm lasted much longer they would want food aboard the vessel, and Wabberley would cut up well. I own such talk as this seemed to me very ill-suited to the occasion, though when it came to the point the officers were not barren of practicable schemes for dealing with the mutineers, as will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

OF THE NAVIGATION OF STRANGE SEAS; OF MUTTERINGS AND DISCONTENTS, OF DESERTION, OF MUTINY AND OF SHIPWRECK.

We lay becalmed for several days longer, during which time there was no further outbreak among the men, for the captain bestirred himself and came on deck, though in truth he was not fit for it. His mere presence seemed to make for peace and quietness. He had counselled the officers to alter nothing in their conduct, yet to be watchful; and I think he never feared a mutiny on board the ship, expecting no danger until we should set foot to land again.

At length the mist cleared, the sails once more filled, and we set our courses again towards the south-west. The men went about their duties at first cheerfully, for the mere pleasure of action after so long idleness; but when, after about a week, they perceived that the captain held steadily on his course, without offering to touch at any of the islands we sighted, their looks fell gloomy again, and there was some grumbling, though subdued. Though our fresh food was now all gone, we still had great stores of the common victuals—biscuit and pease and oatmeal, besides salt junk, a sufficiency of rum, and water for two months. This was sparingly used, every man of us washing in salt water, which made my skin smart very much until I was used to it.

Day by day, as we approached the high latitudes, the air became sensibly colder, and in the morning we sometimes saw icicles on the rigging. The sky was for the most part gloomy; showers of sleet and hail beat upon us, and I own I felt a pity for the sailors at these times, having to spend so many long hours below decks in darkness and stench. For days at a stretch we crept through thick fogs, and by and by came among icefloes, and then among

icebergs, against which we ran some risk of being shipwrecked, so that we had to keep a very careful look-out. When I marked the growing discontent of the men, I feared lest they should rise in mutiny and take the navigation of the vessel into their own hands, and I verily believe we were only saved from this by the captain's change of mind. He made it a point of honour to fulfil the desires of my uncle so far as he might, and would have continued the search for the southern continent against all risks; but when the ice grew constantly thicker, and our fresh water began to lie perilously low, he concluded that it was folly to try any more for that season, and so steered north.

Our men were greatly rejoiced at this resolution, and their cheerfulness was such that I began to lose my fear of untoward happenings. When I said as much to the captain, however, he observed that our particular danger would arise when we came to a land of plenty. It was his ill hap again to be seized with sickness at this time, and he seldom left his bunk in the roundhouse.

The South Seas

One fair day—I think it was about a year after our sailing from Deptford—we sighted an island which did not appear on our chart, but which, on our nearer approach, gave promise of furnishing that refreshment of which we were in need. It was very well wooded, and we knew while still a great way off that it was inhabited, seeing through our perspective glass a good number of canoes about its shore. When we came within a little distance of it some of the canoes put off towards us, and a crowd of people stood on the beach, inviting us as well by their gestures as their loud cries to land. The captain, who had come out of the roundhouse and sat on a stool by the door, considering that the fertility of the place and the friendliness of the natives favoured us, ordered the vessel to be hove to, and a boat to be made ready, with casks for bringing back a supply of water. He then appointed a dozen of the crew to man the boat, calling them before him, and commanding them very strictly that they should not stray far from the neighbourhood of the beach, but fill their casks at

the nearest spring or freset, and purchase what vegetables and fruit they could in exchange for such trifles as I have before mentioned. I observed that the captain had not chosen Wabberley and Hoggett, or any other of the men whom we certainly knew to be disaffected: indeed, both Hoggett and Chick, with several more, were then sick of the scurvy. The captain set Mr. Bodger over the boat's crew, and he went with a cutlass and two pistols in his belt, but the men were without arms.

As soon as they set off, being accompanied by two canoes which had by this time reached our vessel, Mr. Lummis, at a word from the captain, commanded the men that remained on board to collect all the arms that were in the ship and bring them into the roundhouse. It was plain from their looks that they were amazed and confounded at this order, which they obeyed very sullenly, Mr. Lummis having in sight of them all stuck a pistol in his belt. As they went to and fro they eyed the captain suspiciously, and cast many a glance towards the shore, where their fellows were beginning their task amid a great uproar of the natives. It had been arranged between the captain and Mr. Lummis that this precaution regarding the arms should be taken when the crew was thus divided, so that we should have the means of coping with any mutinous outbreak. The captain also insisted that I should take a pistol, which I was loath to do, having never fired one in my life.

The arms had all been bestowed in the roundhouse before the boat returned with its first cargo. When the men came aboard they began to tell their messmates of the exceeding richness of the island, as far as they had seen it, but they had gone but a little way in their tale before the other men broke in with an account of what had been done in their absence, which made them dumb with astonishment. Being conscious of their guilty designs, they perceived that we knew them too, though they were not able in their first surprise to divine the means by which we had obtained our knowledge. However, it was not a time to take counsel together, with the officers about them, and as they had performed but a small part of their task on shore, they went back into the

boat with as meek a look as ever I saw.

Mutterings

When they came again to the island, they set about their work as before, though more sluggishly; but having filled a cask or two, and brought them to the boat, I observed them, all but one, go up the strand again without another cask to be replenished. I supposed that they were now going to procure vegetables, but Mr. Lummis, who was standing at my side, suddenly let forth a great oath, bidding me observe that the men went empty-handed. And then we saw Mr. Bodger, who had been left at the boat, hastily following them, and though we were too far off to hear any words distinctly (besides, the native people still made a great clamour), we could tell by his motions that the mate was calling after them, and we saw two or three of them turn round and laugh at him, and then go on up the island amid a concourse of the natives. Mr. Lummis cried out to him to use his pistol on the mutinous dogs, but he could not hear, and indeed he was a timid man, besides being apprehensive, perhaps, that the natives, many of whom had long spears, would turn upon him if he offered any violence. This notion of ours had some colour when we saw him return hastily to the boat, and endeavour, with the only man of them all that was left, to launch her. This, however, they were unable to do, the boat being beached high on the sand, and heavy with the full casks already laid in her.

Mr. Lummis went into the roundhouse, whither the captain had retired, to acquaint him with these proceedings. They thought, and so did I, that the men were putting in act the plot of which Billy Bobbin had told us, though it seemed to me strange that they should have gone without the ringleaders, who were still on board the vessel. We were considering of this when Mr. Lummis, with another great oath, cried out that he saw through the rascals' plan, which was, he said, to tempt us to send another boat's crew after them, and then, having both the mates ashore, to overpower them, as they would easily do with the aid of the natives, in spite of the pistols. But he swore that he would prove one

too many for them, and having trained on the beach one of the six swivel guns we carried, he commanded two of the men to lower the dinghy, and then to come to the roundhouse for the captain's orders.

This being done, and the men coming in, the captain looked very severely upon them, and said that he was about to send them with Mr. Lummis to bring off the boat with Mr. Bodger in it, and that if they should attempt to join the rascals on shore, who had flatly disobeyed orders, Mr. Lummis would shoot them instantly. This he said in a very loud tone of voice, so as to be heard by the rest of the crew, who had sneaked up out of curiosity to learn what was toward. The two men with Mr. Lummis then descended into the dinghy, Mr. Lummis taking with him a large piece of bright-coloured cloth, two small looking-glasses, and a new sailor's knife.

When they came to the shore, Mr. Lummis stepped out and waved the cloth above his head, at which a number of the people came running to him, making strange and uncouth cries. I had afterwards, as will be seen, to learn how hard it is to communicate with men who have no common speech with us; but even as the beasts are able to hold converse with their kind, so the great Creator of all things has given to man the power to make his thoughts plain to folk sundered in speech by the iniquity of Babel. Mr. Lummis contrived to make these poor savages understand his wishes, and when, with the aid of them and of the seamen, the large boat was launched, and was rowed back to the ship, taking the dinghy in tow, one of their canoes came also, with some of their chief men in it.

At the invitation of Mr. Lummis, the savages came aboard our vessel, and then, with much pains, he acquainted them further with his desires. He pointed to the seamen who were gathered on deck, and then to the island, with gestures signifying that the men of their kind who had first landed must be brought back. He made them understand that a price would be paid for each man that was recovered, either a piece of cloth, or a knife, or a looking-glass

like those he showed to them. And then, bethinking him that it were profitable to impress them with a sense of his power, he ordered the gun to be fired with a blank charge, at whose roar the savages fell flat upon their faces, and lay for some while quaking in a great fear. After this they made haste to get into their canoe and paddle to the shore, which was now deserted, all the people having fled away at the sound of our gun; and they ran very fleetly up into the wooded country and disappeared from our view.

We saw nothing more of them or of our seamen that day; but early the next morning, almost as soon as it was light, we heard a great commotion on the shore, and soon perceived a vast throng flocking to the beach, with our men among them. There they were cast with some roughness into three of the canoes, and I perceived by the manner of their falling, like as sheep when they are cast into a cart, that their limbs were tied, which, without doubt, sorely ruffled their tempers, being Englishmen. When the canoes came alongside our vessel, the natives shouting and yelling like mad things, Mr. Lummis let down a sling over the side, in which our men were hoisted one by one to the deck. It was as much as I could do to keep from laughing, so sorry was their look, their faces being scratched and bruised, and their garments very much tattered, and indeed on one or two hanging mere shreds. Mr. Lummis heartily cursed each one as he came up, with many quaint derisive observations which mightily vexed them. We had taken seven or eight aboard when Mr. Lummis, looking over those that were left in the canoes, perceived that there were only ten in all, when there should have been eleven, the party having numbered twelve at the first, of whom one had returned with Mr. Bodger. Mr. Lummis flew into a rage at this, supposing that the natives had kept back one man, with a design to chaffer for a higher price; but when he demanded of the rest where Wilkins was (that being the name of him who was missing), they answered sullenly that he was dead, for he had offered a stout resistance when the savages attempted to tie his hands, and had the temerity to fell the chief himself with his fist. This spirited act, which was in truth worthy of a true-born Englishman, cost him his

life, for he was instantly thrust through with spears. I doubt not his death was the means of saving the lives of the rest, for seeing what had befallen their comrade, and being unarmed, they submitted (though surely with an ill grace) to be bound, and were so brought back to their vessel, as I have said. The savages having received the presents promised them returned to the island, where they immediately fell a-quarrelling about the apportionment of their wages, and we saw that the strip of coloured cloth was very soon torn into a hundred little pieces.

Mutiny

As for the seamen, they were by the captain's orders immediately put into irons and laid in the hold. Though we had not taken aboard near as much water or provision as we intended, yet the captain would not risk the sending of another crew to the island, albeit he might safely have done so, I think, the men being for the time sufficiently tamed. We had to wait the best part of the day for a breeze; then we weighed anchor and stood away to the north. While the island was still in sight, the wind suddenly shifted its quarter, and blew first a gale and then a hurricane, so that we had to shorten canvas. While this was a-doing the sea was lashed to a fury, prodigious waves sweeping over the deck and buffeting the vessel so heavily that her timbers shook, and we feared the masts would go by the board. With ten men in irons and about as many weakened by the scurvy, the crew were pretty hard pressed, and though they worked with a will, since their very lives depended on it, they railed without measure against the captain and Mr. Lummis, heedless of what punishment might be dealt to them when the storm abated. Presently a cry arose that the vessel had sprung a leak, and since none of those above could be spared to man the pumps, Mr. Lummis ordered the men in irons to be brought up, and made them work at the pumps in turn. The storm rather increased than diminished in fury, and the seamen were seized with a fear that the vessel would founder, and I heard them mingle prayers and curses in a breath, reviling the captain for taking them from the hospitable island, and crying out "Lord,

have mercy on us!" again and again. Darkness fell upon us while we were still battling with the storm, which added to our terrors, for the vessel would not obey the helm, and we knew not but we might be cast upon some coral reef, such as abound in those regions, and there be clean broken up. In this extremity of peril I own I was dreadfully afraid, and prayed very fervently that we might be saved, thinking too of my uncle and aunt, and the happiness I had enjoyed with them, casting my mind back over many things in my past life, almost as a drowning man does, at least I have heard so.

I was inexpressibly relieved when at last the violence of the tempest abated, in the wind first, for it was long before the turbulence of the sea was sensibly diminished. About the middle of the night, however, we were able to stand once more upright on the deck without clinging to the shrouds or other things for support, and then, being utterly worn out, we sought repose, but not before the leak had been discovered and stopped, which took a long time, and the unruly seamen who were in irons once more confined in the hold. I gave hearty thanks to God who had so mercifully delivered us, and went to my bunk in as peaceful a frame of mind as if it were my bed at home.

I was awakened, how long afterwards I know not, by Mr. Bodger breaking into my cabin, which was on the maindeck, and calling on me to come instantly to the quarterdeck, and bring my pistol, for the crew had risen in mutiny, and having made a rush to the hold had liberated the men in irons. I sprang up and cast my coat, which was still dripping wet, about me, and seizing my pistol, followed the man up to where Mr. Lummis and the captain stood in front of the roundhouse. But a moment after I joined them we were aware that the crew were advancing to attack us, judging by the sounds of their shouting, for the night was so black that we could see but little, the men having put out the sole lantern. We were in a very desperate case, being but four against the whole crew, saving some few who were sick, not one of the men having come to our side; the captain, moreover, being very feeble from his illness. But we had all the firearms at our command, and Mr. Lummis trusted by means of these to do

such execution among the mutineers that they would lose heart, and while the worst of them would be cowed, the better-disposed would yield to authority. Thus we four stood side by side, and as the men drew near Mr. Lummis called to them in a loud voice, warning them that we had weapons which we would use upon them if they did not instantly return to their duty. There was silence for a space; the shuffling of bare feet on the deck ceased; then a voice called out (I think it was Hoggett's) that the captain should return to the island we had lately left, and let 'em rest and recruit themselves, they being dead sick of sailing without end. He finished by saying that if the captain did not consent to this course, they would slit his weazand and cast him to the sharks, and serve all of us the same, and we had best make our choice without delay. Mr. Lummis, to whom the captain left all this matter, roared out a string of oaths and commanded the men to seize that rascal who had the insolency to order the captain's goings. There was a great laugh, very horrid to hear, being rather the sound that wild beasts would make than men; then there was again silence, or rather we heard the low murmurs of the men talking among themselves. Mr. Lummis cursed again, but this time under his breath, and muttering "They mean mischief," he bade Mr. Bodger in a whisper put out the lantern that swung from the roof of the roundhouse behind us, and so made a light against which our forms, as we stood on the threshold, could be distinctly seen by the men. This was no sooner done than there came a single shrill blast on the sea-pipe, and the men rushed up towards us with fierce shouts that made my flesh creep.

"Fire!" cried Mr. Lummis loud enough to be heard above all the din. As I have said before, I had never in my life fired a pistol, and what with excitement and flurry, my finger fumbled a little at the trigger, so that I was a thought behind the others; but even in that little moment I heard terrible screams as the bullets from the officers' pistols flew among the crew; and though I fired mine immediately after, I could not tell whether 'twas pointed up or down, or in what direction soever, and I was seized with a fit of shuddering when the thought came to me in a flash that peradventure I had slain a fellow-creature. You may

think I was a coward, and perhaps I was; but yet I think I was not, but only new at such kind of work, because I do not recollect that ever I felt the same way again when I had to defend myself, as will appear in order.

This first discharge of our weapons caused the mutineers to draw back, and we instantly seized other pistols which Mr. Lummis had laid in readiness within reach. He called out, "Have ye had enough, you dogs?" and from the silence I really thought they had, especially as Mr. Bodger whispered that he heard no groans, and so believed that the men who were hit must be dead. But all of a sudden, without any kind of warning, except a slight whistling in the air, and then it was too late, there was a crash a little to the left of me, where the captain stood, and looking round I saw him lying in a heap against the wall of the roundhouse, and heard him groan. "Fire!" shouted Mr. Lummis again, but I was on my knees beside the captain, who told me very faintly that he had been struck on the head by something; and, indeed, when I felt along the deck with my hand I found the marlin-spike which had done the mischief. He bid me stand and help the officers, whose shots I had again heard; but scarce had I risen to my feet when Mr. Lummis staggers against me and cries that his arm is broken. At the same moment there was a great crash of breaking glass, which made us know that another missile had smashed the skylight of the roundhouse; and then, when there came a perfect clatter of heavy things, belaying pins and the like, striking the timbers of the roundhouse, Mr. Lummis said that we must withdraw into that place, or we should be battered to pieces. Accordingly Mr. Bodger and I, we dragged the captain within the sliding door and shut it fast, and taking the table and bench we drove them against the door as a barricado, which we had scarcely done before the men, guessing by the cessation of our fire what had happened, came outside and hammered on the wood, shouting with triumph and derision. "Send a bullet through the door, sir," cries Mr. Lummis, which I did, and there was a howl of pain, and the men scuttled away, for being without firearms they were still at a disadvantage against us.

Mr. Bodger having relit the lantern, we saw that the captain had fainted

clean away, and there was a great cut in his head from which the blood was flowing. While I dashed some water upon his face and poured a little rum between his lips, Mr. Bodger looked to the hurts of the chief mate, who was roaring as much with fury as with pain. It proved that his arm was indeed broken, as he had said, and I never heard anybody howl as he did when Mr. Bodger made shift to set it and bind it up. Meanwhile the captain had come to, but his face was ghastly pale, and I feared the worst from the enfeebled state in which he was.

I was already aware, from the altered motion of the vessel, that her course had been changed, and could not doubt that the mutineers were purposing to sail back to the island we had quitted. In this matter we were wholly at their mercy, but I thought it a very hazardous proceeding in the blackness of the night, especially as they had no chart and could not have the least notion of how to set the course truly. It would have been at least the act of reasonable men to heave to and wait for morning light; but I had already observed that seamen have little forethought, being like children in that respect, and they were so eager to attain the haven of their desires as to be ready to brave the perils of striking a reef or running aground on a shoal. We talked together of what we should do if the vessel arrived at an island, Mr. Bodger saying he feared they would murder us or maybe hand us over to the savages, for though we were secure against them while we remained in the roundhouse, 'twas clear that we must needs issue forth some time, or starve for want of food.

Shipwreck

Some time had passed, I know not how long, when we became aware of a marvellous perplexing change in the atmosphere. I felt a strange tingling in my fingers; Mr. Bodger declared he was all pins and needles, and Mr. Lummis cried out with an oath, without which indeed he seldom spoke, that some one was walking over his grave. Almost as the words left his lips a tremendous shock, as of an immense wave striking the vessel, sent us all spinning to the

deck, and immediately afterwards there was a mighty crash, and Mr. Lummis cried that the mainmast had gone by the board. The vessel had so listed that we expected she would instantly founder; but she righted herself, and then we heard a great hubbub outside, the men calling one to another in accents of affright and dismay. It being plain that the vessel was in a desperate case, I thought the seamen would be too intent on saving their own lives to have any notion of taking ours; so with Mr. Bodger's help I pulled away our barricado and opened the door. By the light of the lantern I saw the seamen most frantically cutting away the wreckage, in the midst of which there came a great shout that the leak had opened again, only much bigger than before, and that water was pouring into the hold. Instantly there was a cry to lower the boats; none thought of manning the pumps, which indeed would have been vain, as we saw pretty soon. We had three boats aboard, but one of these had been smashed by the fall of the mast, and the men were cutting the lashings of the other two, some also casting into them whatever things they could lay hands on, never stopping to consider whether they were useful or no. They lowered the boats over the side, not without great danger, for the vessel was rolling heavily, and then began to jump into them. I could not believe that they would be so heartless as to leave their officers to go down with the ship, though they had proceeded hitherto without so much as a look towards us; and rushing among them, I cried out that the captain and Mr. Lummis were severely hurt, begging them to wait just so long as to rescue them. But they thrust me away, and Chick with a brutal laugh shouted that the officers might drown for all he cared, and when I still urged him he dealt me such a buffet that I fell sprawling among the wreckage.

When I rose to my feet, having lain stunned for a space, there was not a man to be seen. I was for a little while like one demented, running to the side of the vessel—which had no bulwarks, but only a timber railing—with the intent to fling myself into the boat, and so escape. But then I thought of the officers, and could not bring myself to desert them in their extremity, and so ran back to

the roundhouse, to see if by any means we could devise a raft of spars sufficient at least to keep us afloat. I found Mr. Lummis stretched on the deck, having, it seemed, stumbled over some of the wreckage and hurt his arm again, so that he fainted. There was a figure standing by the door, which I at first took to be Mr. Bodger, but on running up to ask him concerning that matter of the raft, I perceived with amazement that it was not the second mate at all, but Billy Bobbin. I looked around, but no Mr. Bodger could I see; I called aloud for him, but there was no answer, nor could I tell whether he had fallen overboard or been taken away among the men. I rushed again to the side, hoping that even at the last the seamen might have repented; but it was all one blackness; the boats were clean gone.

I went back, and seeing both Mr. Lummis and the captain still lying motionless on the deck, I was well-nigh overcome with the horror of our situation, and sat me down on a coil of rope and buried my face in my hands. But in a moment I sprang up; I could not consult with the officers, but there was Billy Bobbin, whom I supposed the men had refused to take with them—I learnt afterwards that he had not offered to go, but had remained of set purpose to stand by me who had treated him kindly. He told me, too, that Mr. Lummis had not fainted, but had been thrown down by the men, who came rummaging in the roundhouse for arms, of which they took several, and powder and shot. I cried to Billy to help me build a raft, for, little of a seaman though I was, I perceived that the vessel was already beginning to settle down. We had but a single lamp to assist us, and to add to our trouble, a great storm of wind and rain beat upon us, causing the ship to labour so heavily that we could scarce keep our feet. I was fairly at my wits' end. If it had been daylight, and calm, we might have heaved some spars and planks overboard and lashed them together, but that was impossible in the darkness. Moreover, if we made a raft strong enough to hold us four, we could not by any means, Billy and me, lift it and launch it from the deck. All that we could do was to lash together what spars and planks we could find there on the deck, and trust that when the

vessel foundered we might contrive to cling to it, though how we were to fasten the helpless officers to it I was not any way able to see.

While these perplexities were tossing in my brain my hands were not idle; indeed, I wrought so desperately, and Billy too, that the skin was torn from our fingers, though we did not know it until the dawn showed them to us all sore and bleeding. It was growing misty light, and we had finished our raft, a poor makeshift thing, but the best we could do, and were considering of how to fasten the officers to it, when all of a sudden the ship gave a great lurch, and while we were endeavouring to save ourselves from being cast into the sea, the deck beneath us was riven asunder with a noise as of a great gun. Of what happened then I know nothing; but when I had again possession of my senses, I found myself struggling in the sea, in desperate straits for breath. For some while I could see nothing, in such confusion was I; but presently, breathing more easily, and keeping myself afloat, I perceived that the ship had totally disappeared, and I was amid a strange assemblage of all manner of small objects bobbing up and down on the surface. In a little I spied our raft, and near by it the wreck of the mainmast, which had been cut almost clear by the seamen before they took to their boats; but never a sign was there of Mr. Lummis or the captain or Billy. I struck out for the raft, wondering within myself whether I had strength to reach it, for I was marvellously exhausted, having, as I came to think afterwards, been drawn down to a great depth by the sinking vessel. All at once I saw a head rise above the further edge of the raft, and a moment after Billy scrambled on to it, and flung himself down as utterly spent. I strove to strike out more lustily, feeling a great joy that one at least of my comrades was saved; but my strength was so far gone from me, and the sea so disturbed, that I made scarce any progress, and in an extremity of despair, gasping as I was, I raised my head above the water and shouted Billy's name. He lifted himself and looked about him amazedly; then spying me at a distance of six fathoms or more, as I guessed, he leaped into the sea and came swimming towards me. I was at the point of sinking when, with

inexpressible joy, I felt his arm placed beneath me, and thus sustained by him I plied my limbs again, though with great effort, and came at length to the raft, which I seized eagerly, and rested a while until I should recover strength enough to clamber upon it as he had done. However, when I made the essay, the side of the raft sank beneath my weight, and I know not what I should have done had not Billy bid me still cling to it while he swam round to the other side, and then, both heaving ourselves up at the same moment, we contrived to get aboard of it, and sank utterly fordone at either end, and Billy burst into tears.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

OF THE MEANS WHEREBY WE CHEATED NEPTUNE AND CAME
WITHIN THE GRIP OF VULCAN; AND OF THE INHUMANITY OF
THE MARINERS

We sat, or rather crouched, on the raft, and 'twas a mercy the sea was not now so tempestuous, for had it been, I am sure we should have had no strength to battle with it. The rain had ceased, but a white mist lay over the water, and, dripping wet as I was, I shivered and my teeth chattered and I felt desperately sick. All around us floated sundry bits of wreckage—planks and spars, a hencoop, some pots and pans and empty barrels, and near at hand a something that caused me a sharp pang at heart: it was Captain Corke's wig, and I thought of that good seaman, and of Mr. Lummis too, both gone to their long account. For a time, as I contemplated the flotsam by which we were surrounded, I gave never a thought to the unhappy posture of Billy and me; but all at once it came upon me with a great shock that we were castaways on the

wide ocean, far away from land, clean out of the track of any likely vessel, and with no food, nor any means of procuring it, to be the sport of wind and wave. I was even considering whether it were not better to plunge overboard at once, before the pangs of hunger and thirst got hold upon us, when Billy, who had raised himself upon his elbow, suddenly gave a shout and stretched his hand towards me. "Land! land!" he cried. I turned myself about, so quickly that I almost lost my balance, and sure enough, through the mist I saw a long dark line, which on this waste of water could betoken nothing else but land, as Billy had said. And in that moment I blamed myself for my gloomy thoughts and stark hopelessness, considering for the first time that the good hand of God had preserved us hitherto from the dreadful fate of the officers, and might have further mercies in store.

The Island

It was impossible to guess, because of the mist, how far the land was from us, but with our hearts full of this reviving hope we took thought by what means we might propel our raft thither. We did not consider whether it was a barren or a fruitful land, or what perils we might encounter of wild beasts or wild men; all our mind was bent upon escaping from our present danger. The raft was composed of spars and staves of the boat which had been shattered on the deck of the *Lovey Susan*, lashed together with ropes. I felt in my pocket for a knife wherewith to cut one of the spars loose, designing to use it as an oar, but my pocket was empty save for one solitary button, which I remembered having put there a day or two before when it started from my breeches, intending to have it sewn on. I asked Billy if he had a knife, and he, feeling in his pockets, confessed them likewise to be empty, having left on the deck the knife we had used in making the raft; but when I told him what I had in mind, he at once fell to pulling at one of the knots with his fingers, which being hard, as a seaman's always are, he contrived in a wonderfully short time to loose the short spar, and began to thrust it into the water in the manner of paddling. To our great joy the raft moved, as I could tell by its passing some of the floating articles of

wreckage, which it did so close to some that I might have seized them by stretching forth my hand, and I wished I had when I thought of it afterwards, for they would have been of great use to us, and saved us a deal of labour, as you shall see.

We moved, I say, towards the shore, Billy keeping our course pretty straight by plying the spar now on the right side, now on the left. And then I perceived a shine upon the water, and, looking back, saw the blessed sun as a ruddy disk, but like the moon in size, glimmering through the mist behind us. Billy hailed the sunrise with a cheerful shout, which did my heart good to hear it, and cried to me that the mist was lifting, and we should soon see the land clear. And so it was, though when we did behold it, we did not much like the look of it. From the edge of the sea it rose to a considerable height, and it was of a grey colour, or rather slate, and yet not quite that either, but approaching to black. To the right the slope was covered with vegetation, and about half way-up there was what in the distance—for we were, as I reckoned, near a mile from the shore—looked to be a dense wood, as indeed it afterwards proved. Still further to the right a promontory of a reddish colour jutted out into the sea, and I perceived that the water ran right through it by an archway, which I suppose the sea had cut for itself, for I could not conceive it had been made in any other way. This promontory also was green at the top with plants and trees, and beyond it we could see a rock of the same red colour, which appeared to be of very great size, like to an immense iceberg, but much broader than any I have seen. To the left of the blackish slope that I have before mentioned there were other patches of green, and I was much exercised in my mind to know why the centre portion was thus barren when there was vegetation on either side.

We could not yet see the top of the slope, for the mist still lay upon it; but as we drew nearer a pretty gentle gale sprang up, which with the sunbeams drove the mist away, leaving only a small portion, which hovered like a thick white cloud, or a nightcap, over the dark summit. While I was gazing at it, wondering

why it stayed so constantly just there, I was amazed to see a part of this cloud shoot up to a prodigious height, and while I was still in that amazement, we heard a dull booming noise, like the discharge of a great gun far away. At this Billy ceased paddling and looked at me as one affrighted, and asked me very fearfully whether we had come to a country where the French were fighting with the native people. But I perceived now that the sea was in commotion around us, and it suddenly came into my mind that this mountain we saw before us was a burning mountain, or volcano, like to what I had read of in my lesson books, though I had thought that they sent forth fire and smoke and burning streams of lava. And then, remembering the great wave which had struck our vessel and caused the panic among the seamen, I bethought me that it was maybe due to an earthquake, which affects as well the sea as the land. I told Billy what I thought, and he was much relieved that we had not happened upon the French, but said very gloomily that we should not be much better off on land below a burning mountain than on the sea, and for his part he would sooner drown, that being, as 'twas said, an easy death, than be burned alive. However, I said that we had as yet seen no fire, and perhaps the furnace in the mountain was dying out, and we could at the least put it to the test. In short, I persuaded him to take up his paddle again, which he did, and so brought us a little nearer to the land.

But we now perceived that the raft was taken in a current, which bore us to the right hand towards the promontory I have mentioned above, but obliquely, so that we were like to be carried past it without being able to land. The wind was blowing against the current, and we hoped it might stay our course long enough for us to come at some haven; but though we loosed another spar, which I used very diligently though with little dexterity, the current gained upon us, and I saw that we should never do it. In that predicament it came into my mind that we might use our coats as a sail, and we instantly stripped them off and joined them together by the sleeves, and then we lashed them to the spar I had been plying and held it upright, Billy drawing the loose end taut by two

short lengths of rope which he fastened very quickly to the extremity of the raft. The sail made a very extraordinary appearance, as you may believe, but Billy laughed merrily when he saw it fill with the wind, and so, he working his paddle, and me holding the mast—with no little difficulty, for the wind was blowing more strongly—we drew nearer and nearer to the land.

And now, when we were, as I guessed, about two furlongs from the beach, I spied all of a sudden two boats lying close together near a small spit of land. I might have noticed them before but for being so busy with the sail. Billy saw them too, and cried out that they were our own boats, and was for steering instantly out to sea again, for he would sooner have faced a tempest than Hoggett, or any other of the men who had ill-used him. But even before I could answer him we were aware of a strange trembling of the raft beneath our feet, in no wise like the wonted heaving of the sea, and while we were in the article of wondering what it might be, the raft seemed to sink under us, as if a great gap had opened beneath it and it was falling through empty air. I was in a terrible fright, and caught at my breath, but still keeping my feet, and in a moment we heard a strange rushing behind us, and, turning about, beheld a great wall of water bearing down upon us. With one consent we flung ourselves on our faces, clutching at the ropes that bound the raft together, and had barely got a grip of them when the mountainous wave crashed upon us, and we were completely engulfed.

What happened to us then neither Billy nor I could ever perfectly tell, though we talked about it often; but I must suppose that the raft was rolled over and over, with us a-clinging to it. I had scarce got a little breath into me again, after a greater space of time even than when I had been sucked under at the sinking of our vessel, when the return wave smote upon us, and we were hurled back, and while we were still gasping after this, another green wall fell upon us from seawards, though not so high as the first, and, its force being spent, we found ourselves, sore bruised and breathless, on the landward side of a small group of rocks of about seven or eight feet high, and not above thirty

yards from the beach. We had been carried clean over it, and the raft, to which we had clung as by a miracle, was floating in two or three feet of water. This we discovered afterwards, for we were as near dead as any one could be, and, indeed, I wonder that we were not killed outright, as we should have been beyond doubt but that the raft prevented us from being dashed upon the ground. We had had battering enough as it was, but coming to our senses, and very sick from the water we had swallowed, we sprang off the raft and hauled it ashore, Billy crying out that his feet, which were bare, were cut to pieces on the beach, which was very hard and jagged, though I escaped hurt, having my boots on.

We were immediately aware of a deep rumbling from the hill above, and lifting our eyes, we beheld prodigious quantities of smoke or steam, we could not tell which, belching from the top, and then a vast torrent of water pouring down towards us, with steam rising from it in clouds. We were near paralyzed with the sight, but recovered ourselves in time to skip back to the rocks over which we had been cast, and clambered to the top of them with what haste we might, Billy's feet being all red with blood from the sharpness of the beach. The torrent spread out as it flowed downwards, and, coming straight towards us, I was in a great fear lest, even though we were perched up, we should not escape it, and we were, indeed, on the point of casting ourselves into the sea. But I was thankful we did not do it, for the stream did not rise higher than within three feet of our perch, but dashed up a great shower of spray, which was scalding hot. It also hurled our raft with great violence against the rock beneath us, breaking off a good portion of it; but it did not carry it out to sea, the rocks preventing it.

Then, as we looked up towards the summit of the hill, we saw a number of figures, very small in the distance, hastening pell-mell downwards. At first I thought they were savages, who had espied us, but within a little I knew them for seamen of our crew. They ran at the edge of the torrent, avoiding the clouds of steam, but this they could no longer do when they came to where the

water had spread over the beach, and we heard them uttering very great yells of pain, as well from the scalding water as from the jagged edges of the ground, their feet being unshod save for one or two of them. They skipped from point to point, endeavouring to find a safe way, and I recollected afterwards the strange antics of Wabberley, who, being of a ponderous shape, was very unfit for such feats of agility. The men gave no sign of having seen us but bore away towards their right and our left towards a small tract of sand which, being protected by the slope of the hill, had not been covered by the lava from the mountain top, for such I concluded to be the constitution of the hard, blackish soil of which I have before spoken.

The seamen who came first to the beach disappeared from our sight behind a number of rocks like to those upon which we sat, and immediately afterwards we heard loud cries of alarm proceeding from that quarter. Those behind hastened on with even greater expedition than before, and when they joined their comrades there arose a perfect chorus of execration, which puzzled us a good deal, until, glancing seaward beyond the rocks that hid the men from our sight, I descried the nose of a boat, and shortly afterwards made out that it was empty. Without doubt it was one of the two boats we had seen laid up on the beach, and a wave had carried it out to sea, and it was this had provoked the cries we had heard. But I did not see the second boat, and wondered why the men did not put off in this to pursue the truant instead of spending their breath in vain outcries. When some little while had passed, and the boat was still drifting out, none pursuing it, I was taken with a great curiosity to see what the reason might be, and descended from my perch to creep towards them, taking care as I went to haul our raft to a safe place on the beach. As for Billy, he refused to budge, saying that he would not go a foot nearer to the men, because he was sure they would do him a mischief, a thing which I could by no means believe, their minds being taken up with other matters. However, he would not come, so I left him there, and went on alone.

It being my purpose to see without being seen—at least, until I knew what

mind the men bore towards us—I went softly, and coming to the rocks beyond which they were, I peeped round one of them with great caution. And then I understood both why they did not pursue the boat and why they had let out so lamentable an outcry. The second of the two boats had a great hole stove in her bottom, without doubt by that huge wave which had well-nigh struck the breath out of us. The men were at their wits' end what to do, for the other boat was drifting further and further from the shore, and was at this time, as I reckoned, at least a hundred yards distant. One of them, as I looked, cried out that he would swim out to it; otherwise they were undone, for they were in peril of being boiled or burnt alive; and he plunged into the water and made a stroke or two. But immediately afterwards another of the men cried out that he saw the fin of a shark, at which the first man—his name was Pumfrey, and he was the ship's carpenter—instantly turned about and swam for the shore, splashing most vehemently with his arms and legs and bellowing like a bull, as much to frighten away the shark as from fear.

Seeing this their last hope of recovering the boat altogether dashed away, the seamen did nothing but walk to and fro in great agitation of mind, letting forth the most dreadful curses that ever I heard. As for Mr. Bodger, whom I spied among them, he sat down on a rock, being a timorous creature, as I have before said, and setting his face in his hands, groaned and sighed in pitiful fashion, as did those that were sick and wounded among them. It came into my mind—what I had not thought of before—that Billy and me, being partners with them in their unhappy situation, were no better able than they to leave this terrible place, at least with any prospect of success, for I knew very well that our raft would be a poor vessel for any voyage. And since it appeared to be our doom to live or die with them, I saw no benefit that could arise from any attempt to hide our presence. Accordingly I walked round the rock into their midst. It was Wabberley that spied me first, and when he saw me his jaw dropped and his face went green, as having beyond doubt believed me to be now at the bottom of the sea. He uttered a strange cry, which the others

hearing, they looked towards him, and at the same instant beheld me, and after a sudden brief silence came running at me, demanding with the greatest eagerness how I had come ashore. When I told them, on a raft, they shouted for joy, and Hoggett catching me roughly by the arm, cried to me to say where that same raft was, or he would dash my head against the rocks. I answered that there was no need of threats or violence, for the raft lay but a short distance away, and he might perhaps use it to overtake the boat, and at the same time I pointed to the further rocks. Without more ado he set off at a run, and spying Billy still sitting upon the rock he asked whether we had the captain and Mr. Lummis also with us. But he did not wait for an answer, running very swiftly until he came to the place where our raft lay, the other men following him in a crowd.

When he saw what a poor shattered thing the raft was, he broke out again into cursing, thinking that it would be useless for his purpose, as indeed it might have been, he being a very ponderous man. But then bethinking himself he caught hold of Billy, and, Joshua Chick coming up, swore that Billy and he, being of no great weight, should go on the raft and pursue the boat, which, as we now perceived, had come into the current that had nearly carried us past the further extremity of the shore. Billy cried out that he would not go, but Hoggett took him by the middle, and when Chick had launched the raft, he threw the boy fairly on to it, bidding Chick fling him into the sea if he made any bones about it. And then, wrenching up two of the planks of the broken boat to serve as paddles, he gave them to the boatswain and Billy, who thereupon began to ply them with the utmost vigour.

We watched them as they went further and further from the shore, the seamen shouting with excitement, and even laying wagers one against another, though, being bereft of everything save their weapons and some few articles that were in the boat, it seemed to me great folly. And when after a long chase the boat was overhauled near the archway in the red rock of which I have spoken, they fell into a perfect ecstasy of joy, clapping each other on the back

and shouting like frantic people. We saw Chick baling out the boat, Billy helping him, and as they were a long while doing this, it was plain that she held a great quantity of water and would most likely have foundered in no long time. Whilst they were at this work of baling, the raft floated away, and neglecting it they began to pull back to the beach. But they had not taken many strokes before we saw them turn again, and the men around me burst forth into horrible execrations, supposing in the first moment (so base of mind were they, as well as witless) that Chick was purposing to row away and desert them. But I told them that Billy had only remembered the raft, and so it proved, for they rowed after it, and having caught it up, fastened it by a rope to the boat's stern and so headed again towards the shore.

While they were yet some distance off, the ground beneath our feet trembled and we heard a great rumbling, and the sea was mightily troubled, whereupon the men fell into their panic again, fearing that an earthquake would swallow them ere ever they got clear away. They cried in great terror to Chick to haste, and while the boat was yet some fathoms' length from the beach, Wabberley and two or three more dashed into the sea, and wading out, scrambled into the boat, with such violence that they were not very far short of overturning it. Which seeing, all the rest of the seamen rushed to do likewise, Hoggett and some others carrying all the articles that were in the broken boat, and then I saw that the boat, being the smaller of the two, could not possibly contain us all, and indeed the men saw that too, and there was such a fight to win places that I thought the boat would fill with water and sink. As for me, I stood watching in a kind of amazement, now in the mind to rush towards the boat with the others and fight for a place, now deeming it better to wait until I saw to what issue things came.

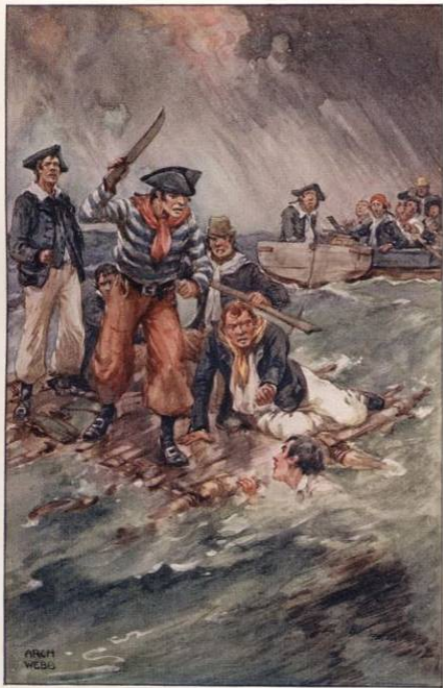
Abandoned

All this time Mr. Bodger had remained by my side, no doubt expecting that he as an officer would be given a place as of right. But now there came a

mighty roar from the mountain; more terrible than any we had yet heard, and I saw belching out of it not merely steam and water, but smoke of a lurid darkness, the sky above becoming perfectly black with a shower of ashes shot forth from the top, intermixed with fire. At this the fight about the boat waxed still more violent, and Mr. Bodger, darting from my side, sprang out into the sea. Then I saw Hoggett fling Billy out of the boat, and three or four of the weaker men who had been beaten from it mounted on to the raft, upon which also Mr. Bodger scrambled in his desperate haste. The men upon it, finding it likely to sink with the weight of them all, thrust him back again into the water, and I heard him scream with terror when, striving to regain his place, and clinging desperately to the edge of the raft, they beat upon him with their fists and sought to loosen his hold. He was on the point of being cast off when Hoggett, in the boat, which now stood some little way off, shouted "Take him aboard, you fools; we may want him," and they did as he said, though grumbling, one of them saying that Hoggett was safe himself, and had taken mighty great care not to overload *his* craft.

And then, as Billy came out of the water towards me, and I saw both the boat and the raft moving away, and knew that we were to be left alone on this dreadful shore, with the volcano vomiting forth fire—then, I say, I was shaken out of the amazement which had held me, and being perfectly frantic with terror, I rushed into the water, thinking nothing of Billy or aught else than my own safety. With desperate strokes I swam after the boat, shouting to the men to take me aboard. She was moving but slowly, being greatly overladen, and having the raft in tow, so that I was able to overtake the latter. But the men cried that there was no room on it, and commanded me roughly to sheer off, and when I still clung to it, one lifted the plank that had been used as a paddle, and aimed a furious blow at my head. The violence of his movement causing the raft to sink towards one side, he failed of his brutal design, yet not wholly; for the plank as it descended grazed the side of my head, inflicting such a cut that I was well-nigh stunned, and was forced to loose my hold. I tried to set to

swimming again, but my strength was gone from me, and in my daze I might have gone to the bottom if Billy had not swum after me. With his help I was able to reach the shore, and when we stood up on the dry land and saw that the seamen had beyond doubt abandoned us, we flung ourselves down on our faces, in all the misery of wild despair.



"ONE LIFTED THE PLANK . . . AND AIMED A FURIOUS BLOW
AT ME."

"ONE LIFTED THE PLANK ... AND AIMED A FURIOUS BLOW AT ME."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

OF CLAMS AND COCOA-NUTS AND SUNDRY OUR DISCOVERIES;
AND OF OUR REFLECTIONS ON OUR FORLORN STATE

I think I lay for a time in a kind of lethargy, for I was perfectly unconscious of anything that might be happening about me, and it seemed to me that my mind was a total blank. Whether it was the heat of the sun, which had mounted well-nigh to the zenith, or the pangs of hunger that roused me, I know not; but when I did arise I was aware of a prodigious aching in my inwards, which was very natural, seeing that I had not eaten for sixteen or twenty hours. And then I discovered that Billy had risen first; indeed he told me that he had not lain long, being not near so much overcome as I was, his harder life having indurated as well his feelings as his skin. When I beheld him he was a hundred yards or more away, sitting on a low flat rock, and eating with a great appearance of relish. Seeing me get to my feet, he called to me to come and eat likewise, and when I reached his rock I found a great array of shells beside him, some broke apart and empty, others still closed up.

Clams and Cocoa-nuts

"They ain't bad, master," he said, for so he commonly called me, "but they do make a body uncommon dry."

I was amazed, and indeed almost angry, because he seemed so comfortable, not reflecting that after the dog's life he had led aboard the *Lovey Susan* his present posture was, at least, one of ease and security, the mountain having done no harm as yet. My gorge rose when I saw him take out the slimy inhabitants of the shells and eat them raw; I had never eaten shell-fish at all, much less uncooked, and for all my famishment my stomach refused this sort of food. The horror of our situation smote upon my mind: here were we, little

more than boys, left on a strange shore with no food but what we could pick up, no clothes but what we stood in—and they were but shirt and breeches, for the coats we had used as a sail had been washed from the raft when the great wave struck us—and no implements or tools of any kind, not so much as a jack-knife. As yet we knew nothing of the land whereupon we had been cast, though I guessed it must be an island, but whether large or small, peopled or desolate, fertile or barren, all remained to be discovered. The sum of our knowledge was that we were at the foot of a burning mountain, and that was a very terrible thing to contemplate. The thought of it drew me to look aloft at the summit, where there still hung a cloud of steam, though not so large as before, and the fire and smoke had ceased, but a stream of hot water was still flowing down the side, yet not in a great volume.

The sky was now very clear, and my head being uncovered, I found the heat of the sun very discommoding, and withal my throat was parched, and I had a great thirst, though Billy's must have been greater after the salt things he had been eating. When he saw me turn from them with loathing, he got up and said that we had better find a spring of fresh water, so we walked along the hard beach, going to the right hand with the design to ascend to the woods above, where I thought we might find a spring, and certainly shelter from the sun. Billy groaned as the sharp edges cut his bare feet; nevertheless he would not suffer me to go alone, for which I was sorry, for when we had gone a little way we came to some cliffs, which rose up so straight and forbidding that we did not think fit to scale them, at least until we had sought an easier way. Accordingly we went back again, crossing the stream of hot water, which was now only trickling, and so continued until the lava ended at the strip of sandy beach. I was now minded to strike up from the shore, but was a little timid of approaching so near the course of the hot flood, not knowing but that we might meet another torrent and suffer a scalding. But, having come to the end of the sand, we arrived at more cliffs, which, though not so high as the first, were no less steep, so that we had to make a choice between scaling them and ascending by the lava slope. Taking counsel with Billy, I determined to venture on this latter, hoping that before we had gone far, we might find a means of reaching the woods either on the right hand or the left.

When we had gone a good way up, very toilsomely, I saw with great thankfulness a slope to our left hand, which seemed to lead away from the barren lava to living soil. We struck up this and found ourselves by and by on a mossy plateau, on which Billy danced, so joyful was he at feeling so soft a

carpet beneath his feet. The wood was just beyond us, not above a hundred yards away. When we came to it we were pretty well blown, and exceeding hot, having never rested nor even looked back since we left the beach. But now we bethought us to turn and gaze over the sea, having some hope—at least I had—that the seamen might even at the last have repented and put back to take us off. We saw the boat indeed, but it was a mere speck, and the raft we could not see at all, being in doubt whether it had sunk, or whether it was only the distance that made it invisible. But far beyond the boat, we saw a dark line which a landsman might have supposed to be a cloud, but which we, our eyes being accustomed to ranging over wide spaces, knew at once to be land. It did not seem likely that the seamen could yet have discovered it, since it had escaped us when we were at the sea level; I considered it to be a happy chance for them that they had directed their course so truly, though when I said so to Billy, he said he hoped they would find the land full of cannibals, who would cook and eat them all, and Hoggett first. This mention of cannibals set up an apprehensiveness in my mind, and I was chary of entering the wood, lest we came upon savages, but Billy said very sturdily, that savages or no savages, he must drink, and so went on among the trees, with me close at his heels.

We looked about us eagerly, both for water and for fruits wherewith to stay our hunger: but as for the former we saw none, and for the latter, though we saw many plants bearing berries, and some trees with fruits hanging upon them, we did not recognize at first any that we had seen on the island where we recruited, and durst not, hungry as we were, attempt anything strange lest they should be poisonous, and our first meal prove our last. At one point we were startled by a small animal leaping across our path, and Billy, crying it was a rabbit, without thinking dashed after it, a very useless thing to do; but it had this good result, that, tumbling headlong over something, he picked himself up ruefully, and then shouted with delight, the obstacle being a large cocoa-nut which had fallen from a tree. We were in a quandary at first how to break it open, having no knife or other tool to pierce the husk; but Billy bethought him of the buckles on our belts, and taking these off, we cut and scraped at the husk until we came to the inner nut, and then broke this open by hammering it very hard against the tree-trunk, finding it the more easily breakable because it was over ripe; and though we lost some of the liquid thereby, there remained enough to furnish us with a very refreshing draught.

While I was digging my teeth ravenously into the kernel, Billy shinned up the stem, which was straight like the mast of a ship, to obtain some more of this

precious fruit. Having cast down two or three at my feet, he cried out that he was going to the masthead to take a look round. He went almost to the very top, and when he came down, told me that the hill we were on was not the highest in the island, the highest being the mountain, whose peak was still covered by the cloud of steam; but except what might be hidden by this mountain, he could see all the rest of the island, which by his reckoning could not be above two miles long. He told me of the high red rock which we had seen through the archway as we approached the land, and which lay now on our right hand. On the left he discovered a little bay, with a strip of yellow sand, though he could not tell how wide this was because of the cliffs. Beyond the bay the land went to a point, and beyond this again, some distance out in the sea, were two red rocks, not very large, standing up like the posts of a gate, or, as I thought when I myself saw them, like sentinels. All the country to the left of the burning mountain—that is, to the west—was covered with vegetation, either woods or grasses, which I was very glad to hear, since there was promise of food, at least of the vegetable kind. I concluded that the streams of lava cast forth by the mountain had flowed only towards the beach at which we had landed, or at any rate had flowed no other way for a long time, since otherwise the land could not have been so fruitful. I asked Billy anxiously whether he had seen any wild beasts, or any sign of the habitation of men; but he said that he had seen neither the one nor the other, but only some birds, at which I was vastly relieved.

We sat for some while appeasing our appetites, scarcely speaking, for Billy was not a talkative boy, and I was still too much under the oppression of our lonely situation. All at once I set up a laugh, at which Billy stopped munching at his cocoa-nut and looked at me in astonishment.

"Oh, Billy," I said, "if you had caught that rabbit, what could we have done with it?"

"Why, eat it, to be sure," says Billy. "I like rabbit meat."

(We knew afterwards that there were no rabbits on the island, and thought the animal we had seen must be a rat, though it did not run like one.)

"But how could we cook it?" I said.

At that he looked startled, and felt again in his pocket, which, as I have said, was empty. He had quite forgot that we had neither flint, steel, nor tinder,

so that we had no means of making a fire. He looked very sober for a space, and then reminded me that we had seen the savages make fire at the island where we stayed, by the very rapid twirling of a stick, and he was sure he could do the like. However, there was no need of a fire at that time, for the very good reason that we had nothing to cook, and so we fell to again on our cocoa-nuts, and ate a great quantity before we were satisfied. We saw that we had come into a grove of those useful trees, and with their fruit, and the shell-fish on the shore, which if it came to a pinch I must eat raw, as Billy had done, we should be in no immediate danger of famishing. We saw about us, too, many birds which we might eat if we could only snare them and make a fire, though they were quite strange to both of us, excepting parrots. The most of them were something larger than a sparrow, but with brighter plumage, and they came flying about us very tamely, yet never near enough to catch.

Though we had no anxiety for the present in the matter of food, I was still far from easy in mind about our situation, for there might be wild beasts and men on the island, though we had not as yet seen any, and I was troubled about our utter defencelessness. So after we had eaten our fill and rested a while, I thought it behoved us to go through the wood and see what there might be on the other side. Accordingly we got up, feeling plaguy stiff from the many wettings we had had, though the sun had dried our clothes, and went on until we came to the edge of the wood, where we found another slope very much steeper than the first, fairly open, but with saplings growing here and there. Before we descended I bethought me it were well to have some weapon in our hand in case we should meet any enemy, man or beast, so Billy swarmed up a tree and broke off two branches, which, when stripped of their twigs and leaves, made very fair clubs, though to be sure of a rough appearance, and little likely to avail us much if we encountered men in any wise armed. Still they were better than nothing, and with these in our hands we descended the slope until we came to another thick wood, which stretched on our right hand half way or more to the summit of the smoking mountain. We went through this wood, which differed very little from the first, and then all at once we came upon a shining sheet of water, above two hundred yards long and near as broad, with a few ducks swimming on it. The moment Billy saw this he let forth a great shout, and bounded towards it, falling on his knees and drinking very heartily. I was as glad as he was, for the juice of cocoa-nuts is very agreeable, but not near so good as water for quenching the thirst; but I was not so quick as Billy, nor did I gulp it so eagerly, but took a mouthful and tasted it before drinking more. The water was cool and seemed to me good to drink, though it

had a taste like the sulphur water my aunt Susan always gave to us in the spring; she said it cleared our skin. I drank a few mouthfuls more, and then we went on, skirting the base of the mountain on the further side.

Wood and Water

We found the ground here very rough; indeed, nowhere on the island, as we afterwards discovered when we came to explore it thoroughly, did we find a stretch of level ground above twenty yards in length, even in the parts where the vegetation was thickest. There were not many trees growing on this side of the mountain, but we continued our journey in as near a straight line as we could, observing more woods on our right hand which I thought to examine another day. At length we came to a high cliff overlooking the sea, and when we came to the top of it, suddenly we saw towering over us the monstrous red rock of which we had already had a glimpse when we first drew near to the shore. It rose sheer out of the sea to the height of four or five hundred feet, as I guessed, and was very broad too; at least, the side that fronted us was, being full a quarter of a mile long. Between the rock and the cliff on which we stood there was a narrow strait, through which the sea rushed at a furious pace. I felt quite dizzy as I gazed down upon it from our great height, though Billy, being used to climbing to the masthead, went to the very edge of the cliff and stood there without the least tremor. Indeed, he gave me a fright by saying that he would leap across the strait to a ledge that jutted out from the rock towards our island, approaching so near to it that he declared he could do it easy; but I sprang to him and pulled him back, overcome with horror at the thought of the terrible risk he would run and his dreadful death if he missed his footing, and also of my solitude if I lost my only companion.

I now saw that his face was very pale, and I thought that he was frightened at his own daring; but he suddenly bent his body double, and when I asked him what was the matter he said that he had a very bad pain.

"That comes of eating those slimy things raw," I said. "I didn't eat any."

He made no answer, but flung himself on the ground, groaning, and I stood over him, condoling with him, and very much concerned lest he was poisoned. I had stood thus for the space of a minute or two, when all at once I felt a terrible pain myself, and soon was beside him, groaning full as loud as he. Since I had eaten none of the shell-fish, and cocoa-nuts had never done us any harm before, I concluded, when I was able to think, that our sufferings were caused

by the sulphurous water of the lake, which indeed turned out to be the true explanation; for after we had drunk of it next day we were both afflicted with the same violent colic, so that we resolved never to taste it again. Billy was worse than me, having drunk the greater quantity, and it was a good while before we were able to stand, and then we trembled so much and felt so weak that we wished for nothing but to lie down and sleep. And that put us on thinking of what we should do in the night. We had come so slowly across the island that the sun was already sinking, and we must needs find some secure place for repose before darkness fell upon us. We were both used to discomforts aboard the *Lovey Susan*, but there we had at least a bunk or a hammock and security from all but the storm, whereas here there was no shelter save the woods, and we did not know what strange perils might beset us there. And I know not whether 'twas the oncoming of the dark that made me more fearful, but certain it is that I found myself looking about me timorously, and at one point I was so sure that I saw a man that I clutched Billy hard by the arm and whispered him to look too. Which doing, he cried out in a perfectly loud voice, "Why, master, 'tis but an old stump of a tree. 'Tain't nothing to be scared on." Billy, I will say now, was never affrighted at imaginary perils so much as at real ones.

Night

We had to consider, I say, of how we should pass the night. I was not the least disposed to trudge back over the island, and indeed there was no need, for no part, so far as I knew, was better than any other; in short, we were both pretty tired, so that we determined to take shelter in a small wood on the edge of the cliff on the opposite side of the burning mountain from that where the lava had flowed. Our entrance caused a great disturbance among the birds, which flew out in great flocks and making shrill cries. We saw some brown rats, too, scuttering among the undergrowth, and these put Billy in mind of the rats in the *Lovey Susan*, which sometimes ran across the face of the seamen in the fore-castle when they slept.

"I don't like them things, master," he said, "and we'd best climb up into a tree and sleep on a bough."

But it seemed to me that a bough of a tree would be a most uneasy resting-place; I should assuredly lose my balance and topple to the ground, though Billy, being accustomed to dizzy perches in the rigging of the *Lovey Susan*,

might find it comfortable enough. Yet I had no mind for a lodging on the ground, without any defence from rats, to say nothing of wild animals, of which there might be some on the island, though we had not seen any. We talked about it for some time, and the end of it was that we set about collecting some broken branches that lay on the ground, and snapped off others that were within our reach, and so piled up a little shelter round about a thick trunk. By the time we had finished this work it was perfectly dark within the wood. We sat ourselves down on the mossy carpet, with our cudgels close to our hands, and then, bethinking us of the custom of setting watches on board ship, we determined that one of us should watch while the other slept. Being the older, I took the first watch, and Billy was soon fast asleep, and I sat very melancholy by him, thinking of our lonely situation, and of my good uncle and aunt at home, whose thoughts were, I doubt not, fondly busy about me.

There was no way whereby I might tell the time, and it might have been two hours or three had passed when, feeling my head very heavy, I waked Billy and told him to take his turn, which he did very willingly, though he rubbed his eyes and yawned in the manner of one who has not had his sleep out. In the midst of my slumber I was wakened by Billy grasping my arm, and when I sat up, he whispered to me, as if greatly affrighted, to listen. Since I heard nothing but the rustling of the wind in the trees, it having got up while I slept, I thought that Billy must have fallen into a doze and been visited by a nightmare. But all at once there came a strange howling sound, that seemed to be near at hand, and then it went into the distance, at one moment being quite low and soft, the next very loud, though it never altered in pitch. We clutched our cudgels and sat very close to each other, and Billy whispered that he felt a cold shiver running down his back, as I myself did, but I forbore to tell him so. The sound was very dreadful, as of some creature in agony, though it was not the least like any sound I had ever heard before, except once, when I heard a man tuning, as they say, the organ in our parish church; and falling upon our ears in pitchy darkness it made us very uneasy, as you may think. We were too much affrighted to rise and seek for the cause of it, even if it had been possible to find it in the dark; and so we listened to it, huddled thus together, for a very long time, as it seemed, until, being quite overcome with fatigue, we both fell asleep, and so remained until morning light without keeping any guard.

Wild Dogs

I awoke first, and was instantly aware of a scratching at some part of our

barricade of branches. I sat up, grasping my cudgel, and in a moment, it being broad daylight, I saw a little opening in the barricado, and the nose of some animal pushing through it. I lifted up my cudgel and, thrusting myself forward, aimed a blow at the intruder so well that I hit him clean upon the point of the nose. There was a sudden yelp and a snarl, and the nose withdrew itself, and when we sprang to our feet—Billy having wakened at the sound—we spied a pack of small dogs, above a score, at some little distance from our shelter. They were of a strange kind, the like of which neither Billy nor I had ever seen, being of a yellowish brown in colour, and with smooth coats, not hairy like our dogs at home. Billy roared at them, asking whether it was they that had made such uproar in the night; and when they did not budge, but only looked at him without the least alarm, we both sprang over our fence and ran towards them, brandishing our cudgels and shouting very fiercely. Then they turned tail, and ran away yelping and snarling; but as soon as we stopped, thinking that we had put them to flight, instantly they stopped also, and sitting upon their haunches, gazed at us very solemnly again.

They did not offer to attack us, and, being of a small size, we did not fear them as if they were great hounds or mastiffs; but the very number of them making us somewhat uneasy, we set forward again to drive them away. It happened as at first: they ran while we ran, but the moment we stopped, they came to a stand also and gazed upon us in the same saucy manner as before. Billy shook his fist at them, and called them by a foul name which he had learnt, I suppose, from the rough seamen of the *Lovey Susan*; but I will say this, that on my telling him it was not a pretty word, he immediately promised never to use it again, since it offended me, and I never heard it from his lips but once after, which I will speak of in course, if I remember.

But to return to our dogs: when we saw that it was useless to pursue them, though we could scare them easily enough, we determined to go on our way as if they were not there. And as you may believe, we set our course first for the cocoa-nut grove, being amazing hungry, and as we went thither we saw some trees of the bread-fruit, and Billy climbed one of them, the trunk being no more than two feet thick, and threw one fruit at me and another at the dogs, which had still followed us, dogging us, as we say. They scampered after it as it rolled down the hill, like as kittens chase a ball of worsted, which amused Billy very much. As for me, I picked up the fruit he had cast at my feet—it was near two pounds weight, I should think—and having broken the rind, not without difficulty, for it was very tough, I tasted the milky juice and afterwards the pulp,

but found them both so unpleasing that I cast it from me, very sorrowfully, for it seemed that we should never have any other food but cocoa-nuts, unless we could devise some means of cooking. We went on thence until we came to the palms, the dogs following us again, except two that found the fruit I had thrown away, and they stayed for a while sniffing at it, but finding it as unpalatable as I had done, they by and by left it and joined the pack. I observed that when Billy climbed up the cocoa-nut palm they drew in closer, as if they guessed him to be more violent than me, and supposed it no longer needful to keep at so great a distance. Indeed, when he flung down a cocoa-nut, they dashed towards it, as if he did it merely for their sport; but then I ran among them, striking at them smartly with my cudgel, though I never hit them, for they immediately fled, but came back when Billy and I sat down upon the ground to eat the fruit, and watched us with such gravity that I could not contain myself, but laughed very heartily.

When we had finished our breakfast, we went down the hill to drink at the lake, and the dogs still following at our heels, we began to feel it a persecution, and resolved to make another attempt to rid ourselves of them. The ground, as I have said before, was rough, and at one side of the lake, nearest the mountain, we saw many pieces of rock scattered about, and having collected them in a heap we began to throw them very briskly at the dogs, which kept so close together that we could not fail of hitting several. These ran yelping away, and after a while those that were not hit became aware of the discomfiture of their fellows and withdrew to a greater distance; but I observed that they went no farther than the range of our cast, from which I concluded that they were possessed of a certain intelligence. However, since their hovering was now at a more convenient distance, we paid them no further attention, and had freedom to think of other things.

We had been so much taken up with these creatures that we had given scarce a thought to our situation; but now, casting my eyes towards the summit of the mountain, I saw with great delight that the cloud of steam was altogether gone.

"See, Billy," I cried, "we are not like to be burnt alive. The mountain is quiet; yesterday's work has tired him out."

"He's only pretending, belike," says Billy.

But then I told him of what I had read in my lesson-book—I liked reading the Latin part, but did not much relish the putting the English back into Latin—about the mountain Vesuvius, that had been quiet so long as that people made great cities at its base, and lived there very merrily, the story being told very well by Plinius.

"This is a different sort, then," says Billy, "because there ain't no cities here, nor people neither."

The Mountain

I laughed at this, and then proposed that we should climb up the mountain from the place where we stood, namely, the edge of the lake, in which we had already drunk. For a great while Billy would not be persuaded, but I prevailed with him at last, and we set off up the mountain side, finding it a great toil, so steep was it, and rugged; and being shod myself, I did not think enough of the pain to Billy's bare feet, which he endured nevertheless without a murmur. There were many pieces of jagged flint lying on the mountain-side, and Billy seeing one that was flat and had a sharp edge, he picks it up and slips it in his pocket, saying that we could break open our cocoa-nuts more easily with it than by striking them against the tree-trunks or the rocks. We had not gone above half way up the mountain when we were seized with the same violent pains I have before mentioned, which made us helpless for some while, and caused us, as I have said, to forswear the water of the lake. But recovering by and by, we continued on our way, and, taking heart from the perfect stillness, there being no rumbling nor any shoot of boiling water as on the day before, we came at last to the very top, and stood at the brink of the cup, or the crater, as we say.

We were so much terrified at our own boldness that, having reached the top, we immediately ran some way down the slope, as if some dreadful monster were at our heels. But coming to our senses again, we resolutely made our way once more to the summit, and, holding each other by the hand, we crept to the edge and peeped over. I own I was very much surprised at the seeming innocence of the crater. The walls were very steep, and made of some massive sort of stone, and so jagged that we could easily have climbed down, as on steps, for a depth of two hundred feet at least. But then the sides of the crater drew in towards the centre, and we could see that it had no floor, but a hole that looked very black and terrible; and the thought that one slip might hurl

us down, we knew not how far, into the bowels of the mountain amid fire and brimstone, made us shrink back. Our curiosity was satisfied, and I do not remember that we ever looked into that yawning pit again, though we had occasion to climb the mountain more than once.

We then turned about and looked back over the island and across the sea beyond. It was a magnificent fair day, the sky of a light blue colour and very clear, and from our high perch we could see a prodigious great distance on every side. Far away, like a cloud on the horizon, and south-by-east, as we knew by the sun, was the island whereto the seamen had set their course, and the remembrance of them set Billy in a rage, and he cried out on them for taking away our raff. To the westward we spied two or three islands close together, and nearer to us, though not much, than the island to the south-east. I could not think that all these islands were uninhabited, and became again not a little uneasy in my mind, for supposing our own island had no people on it, of which I was by no means assured, yet it might be visited sometimes by savages from other islands, and it would be a fearsome thing for us if any should land and discover us. Billy scoffed when I spoke out my thought.

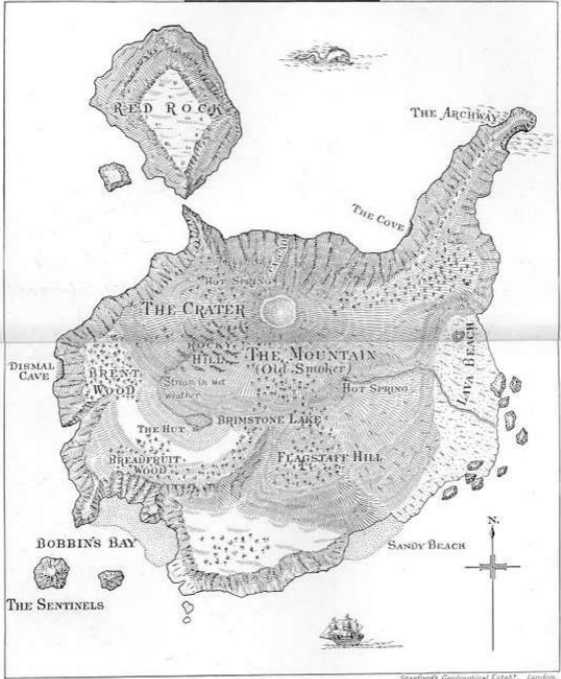
"Why," he said, "d'ye think, master, they'd be such fools as to come here to this old smoker? And water what gives you the gripes too! No, we shan't see nobody, black or white, never no more, and we shall live here for ever and ever, if we gets enough to eat and drink, and then when we're very old we'll be dead, and no one to put us away decent," and at that he burst into tears, and begged me not to die first, because he couldn't bear it. I was a good deal touched by the honest boy's trouble, but I bid him cheer up, for we were both sound and well, though I own I felt a great lump in my throat as I thought of our present solitude and of my dear friends at home. To divert his thoughts, and my own too, I pointed to the big red rock of which I have spoken before, and which seemed more monstrous still, seen from this side. There were birds sunning themselves on its bare top, and the sight of them set me thinking that there were many birds on our island, and there must also be eggs, which we could use for food, though I remembered afterwards that having no fire we could not cook them, and I could not eat them raw as I had seen some do.

We walked round about the crater, observing, but not at first with any minuteness, the many rocks and boulders of strange shape that were scattered about, having been cast up at some time, I suppose, from the depths of the mountains. Billy laid his hand on one great boulder, and immediately started

back in a fright, crying that it was burning hot, which somewhat alarmed me too, not supposing that the mountain sent forth aught now but hot water. But in a moment I saw that we had no cause for terror, for the sun was by this time high in the heavens, and the stone was made hot thereby, and by nothing else. When I said this to Billy he was in a rage with the stone for giving him a start, and shoved it very hard, and it being poised insecurely, it set off a-rolling down very fast until it struck another boulder of even greater size, and split with a mighty crash. "Serves you right," says Billy, and we both clambered down to see what had happened to it. We were surprised to see some bright streaks in the rock where it had been fractured, and Billy declared that there must be iron in it; indeed, it was of the brightness of steel. This set me on to think of the great wealth that might lie a-hiding in our island, and of the great delight it would have given my uncle if his adventure had gone as he wished; but the discovery brought no comfort to us in our helpless situation; indeed, it only made me the more sad.

We had gone but a little farther when we saw a spring of hot water bubbling out of the rock and running down in a cloud of steam. We followed its course, picking our way very slowly, for the side of the mountain was steep, until we came to a place where it dropped over a sheer cliff, and fell a perfect cascade into the sea. Then we crept round from this side of the mountain until we overlooked the long slope of blackish rock that ran down to the beach on which we had landed, and we descended slowly on the left side until we came to a strip of woodland. Here we found more bread-fruit trees, at which we were not so well pleased as if they had been cocoa-nut palms, because we had no present means of making a fire for cooking. Billy offered to make fire in the native way, but I said that he might do that afterwards, as I wished to see what this end of the island was like. So we went through the wood, and came out at the edge of a cliff, and saw below us the promontory with the archway through it, of which I have spoken. Here, too, we had another view of the monster rock, and observed that this face also was steep and straight like the others, so that it must be quite impossible to scale the rock unless its seaward face were more practicable.

PALM TREE ISLAND.



Stanford's Geographical Estab^t, London.

PALM TREE ISLAND

We had now traversed the whole of our island except the north-east corner, and having seen no living things except birds and small animals, we began to be pretty sure that we were the only human beings upon it. This, while it put away from us the present fear of being slain by savages, or despitefully used, yet brought home to us the full meaning of our loneliness. We sat down on the cliff, and looking over the sea, which stretched away without any sign of land, nor even the sail of a ship, we gave ourselves up to gloomy meditation. I knew that but few ships ever ventured into this southern ocean, and the chance that any ship would sight this tiny island was very small indeed. Still less was it likely that a vessel would draw in so close as to observe any signal that we might make. I remembered how Alexander Selkirk had lived four years on his desolate island before a friendly ship hove in sight, and that island was near the mainland, whereas ours was in the midst of a vast ocean, remote as well from populous lands as from the track of merchant ships. It seemed to me that we were doomed to a lifelong imprisonment, and though I had before bid Billy to be of good cheer, I was now myself utterly cast down, as one without hope.

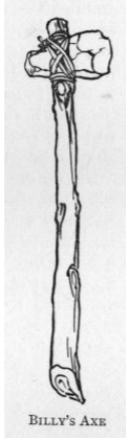
Being thus a prey to wretchedness I sat with my head in my hands, not heeding the heat of the sun, which was now beating fiercely down upon us, until I felt very sick and dizzy, and then I got up and looked for Billy, who had disappeared. But he had only gone into the wood to find food, it being nigh dinner-time. He came back and told me that there was nothing but bread-fruit, and that we could not eat, so we had to make our way to the cocoa-nut wood, which we did by descending to the beach and climbing up the slope as before. In going along the beach Billy picked up two or three shell-fish which he called clams, the purple kind, not the larger sort, which were very heavy; indeed, one of them would have made a meal for a family. We saw, too, several crabs of a very large size, some above two feet long; and Billy, idly poking his cudgel into a hole beside a rock, he could not draw it back, and when he peeped in to see what held it, he cried out that it had been seized by a great crab, and though he pulled very hard, he could not draw it out. When we came to our wood we ate cocoanuts and quenched our thirst with the juice, Billy striking them open with the sharp flint he had in his pocket; but I could not forbear wondering how we were to live without fresh water, of which we had seen none but what was in the lake, and that was a medicine we were by no means inclined to. Having appeased our hunger and thirst we were too listless to walk any more, and too

miserable to talk to each other, and so we laid ourselves down and fell asleep.

Weapons

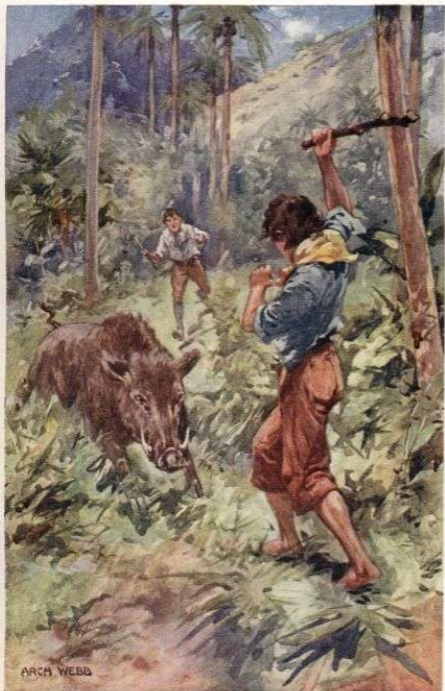
When I awoke I saw that Billy had been fashioning for himself a new club in place of that which had been seized by the robber crab, only this time he had made a better one. Having observed that the sharp flint, of which I have before spoken, had two notches on its blunt side, he had conceived the notion of binding it to his club, and so using it as an axe-head. At first he was much exercised, as he told me, how to fasten the two together, and sighed for some iron-wire, or at least some stout cord; but glancing around he spied a creeping plant with very long and slender tendrils, which he proved to be very tough, and breaking off some lengths of this with his flint, he had nearly finished binding the flint to his club.

"What d'ye think of that, master?" says he, very proud of his achievement. I told him it was a villainous, murdering instrument, and asked him what he purposed doing with it. "Why," says he, "fight, to be sure. It would kill a savage, or even a lion." At this I laughed, saying that we had seen no lions or other wild beasts, and as for savages, if we encountered them they would certainly shoot him with their arrows or pierce him with spears before ever he was near enough to strike them with his club. But he answered stoutly that a club was better than bare fists, and an axe than a club, and as for its ugliness, he would like to see me make a prettier one, on which I said no more.



I had fallen into a doze again, when I was suddenly awakened by Billy, who shook me by the shoulder and when I sat up, pointed through the trees to a little open space at the edge of the wood. I looked and saw a number of little pigs—strange little creatures, with heads very much too large for their bodies—grubbing in the ground with their snouts, and a monstrous big sow near by. Billy springs up, and whispers he will catch one of the piglets, and then he starts off and begins to steal quickly through the wood towards the family group. I got up on my feet to follow him, and seizing the club that lay nearest, found that I had taken Billy's instead of my own, he having taken mine in his excitement. Billy had just arrived at the open space when, being very simple in his nature, he gave a great shout, and instantly the pigs set off scampering away, with him hot-foot after them. However, he had gone but half-way across the clearing when I saw a great boar with monstrous curved tusks charging from the left-hand side. Billy caught sight of the beast just in time, and turning about, he brought my club down upon the beast's head very sharply; but it was not heavy enough to do any great mischief, and, indeed, though it caused the boar to turn

a little aside, it did but increase its fury. The beast wheeled about, and rushed upon Billy, who, though he smote it again, was carried off his feet and lay sprawling, the club being struck from his hand as he fell.



"THE BEAST WHEELED ABOUT, AND RUSHED UPON BILLY."

"THE BEAST WHEELED ABOUT, AND RUSHED UPON BILLY."

When I saw the unhappy posture of my companion, I ran towards him as fleetly as ever I could, being in a terrible fright lest the boar should rend him with its tusks before I could come up with him. My very speed incommoded me when, coming to the spot where Billy lay on the ground, with the boar over him, I brought the flint-headed club down upon the beast's skull, for the blow was not near as straight and heavy as it might have been had my rush not been so headlong. However, it served to make the boar turn round to spy at its new adversary; and having now come to a standstill and collected myself, I dealt it such a blow behind the ear, with a full swing of the club, that it fell over sideways, and I did not observe that it made any movement after. I picked Billy up, and saw with great trouble that the boar had rent a great hole in his breeches and made a gash in his leg, which was bleeding very freely. "That's nothing, master," says he, when I asked him if he was much hurt; "but what d'ye say about my ugly murdering axe now? Ain't it a good one?" he asked triumphantly. "Wouldn't it kill a lion or a savage?" I owned that it had proved a very serviceable instrument indeed, and said that I would certainly make one like it for myself; but first I begged Billy to bathe his wounded leg in the lake, which he did, and in a little the bleeding stopped, and we went back to the wood, Billy declaring that he would certainly make fire in the native fashion, and we should have pork for supper. But when we got back to the dead boar, we found it already surrounded by a pack of dogs, which were tearing its flesh very gluttonously. They snarled and growled savagely when we essayed to drive them away, and knowing that it is an ill matter to part a dog from his bone, I did not think it prudent to provoke the rage of such a fierce regiment, though Billy cried out valorously that he would fight them all sooner than allow them to eat his pork. However, he gave in to my entreaty, vowing that he would have pork to eat before many days were past, and as for the dogs, he would teach them a lesson, that he would.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

OF OUR SEARCH FOR SUSTENANCE AND SHELTER; WITH VARIOUS
MATTERS OF MORE CONSEQUENCE TO THE CASTAWAY THAN

This little adventure with the pigs was, I verily believe, the means of saving us from the lethargy into which we had like to have been cast by brooding on our solitude. The knowledge that there were on our island animals that might be formidable, and were certainly good for food, proved to us at once the necessity of being watchful, and of setting our wits to work to devise a means of cooking. And a thing that happened the same night showed to us that if we were to make the best of our situation, and have any comfort in our solitary life, we must take some measures for our shelter.

A Storm

This event was nothing less than a violent storm of wind and rain which sprang up suddenly in the middle of the night. We had returned to our first shelter, the make-shift hut, or rather lean-to, which we had constructed of boughs and leaves around a great tree. The wind broke this down utterly, scattering the materials of it far and wide, and the rain drenched us to the skin, or I should say, soaked us to the bone, we having no garments but our shirts and breeches. That night was the most miserable of all my life, I assure you. We huddled together for shelter under the thickest trees, listening to the howling of the wind, and sometimes hearing great crashing noises that made us fear almost to remain under shelter at all, lest the trees should fall upon our heads and kill us. Never a wink of sleep had we that night, and when daylight came, we staggered forth from the wood, two shivering miserable mortals, who would have given the world for a roaring fire and a hot posset to comfort us.

We needed not to climb trees for our breakfast, for the wind had strewed the ground with cocoanuts, and had indeed uprooted many trees, one of which had narrowly missed the very spot where we had lain. As we ate our food, very wretched, we considered how we were to construct some sort of hut, in case another storm should visit us. There was timber in plenty, but neither Billy nor I had any knowledge of sawyers' or carpenters' work; nor if we had should we have been much better off, having no tool save the rough axe of Billy's fashioning. Necessity, they say, is the mother of invention, and so it proved in our case, as will be seen more fully hereafter.

After breakfast the first thing that Billy did was to try his axe on one of the

big fallen trees. He was able after very great labour—I taking my turns when he was tired—to lop some of the branches off, but the flint was so much blunted by it that we saw it would serve us little longer. Accordingly we set off up the mountain-side to find other flints of which to make axe-heads, and on this little expedition we were followed by the pack of dogs, which watched our proceedings as if they took a great interest in them, but always remained at a reasonable distance. By midday we had collected a fair number of sharp-edged flints, small and big, and Billy having made me an axe like his own—he would not let me do it, saying that he was sure he could make a better one than me—we felt a deal more comfortable both in body and mind, being satisfied that we should not lack tools, though rough, and our clothes being dried with the sun. Indeed, we found the sun rather oppressive, especially upon our bare heads, and we wished very heartily that our hats had been spared to us; coats we could do without in the daytime, though they would have been a great solace o' nights.

Plans

Having thus furnished ourselves with axes, we had to determine the site for the hut we purposed building, and we talked very seriously about this when we had eaten our dinner.

"One thing is sure," says Billy; "we must build it a good way from the old smoker" (so he called the mountain, above which we observed that a cloud of steam had again gathered, though it had been clear yesterday). If remoteness from the mountain had been the only point to be considered, we might have been content with the wood in which we had made our lean-to; but after our experience in the storm we did not regard it as suitable for a permanent habitation when it might be shattered any day or night. It was certain we could not build on those parts of the island that were bare rock, for we could not by any means dig foundations in it, and a hut without foundations, in an exposed place, might be carried away in a hurricane, and hurled into the sea, and we in it. And then it came into my mind that if we built too high upon the island, our dwelling might be spied by the savages of the neighbouring islands of which I have spoken, for we could not doubt that they were inhabited, and the people would certainly put to sea sometimes in their canoes. This set me on thinking that it would be well to make our dwelling less a house than a fortress, in which we could take refuge in case savages should at any time land upon our island. It seemed to me, then, that we ought to seek for a remote spot, very hard of

access, and bethinking me of such a spot which I had seen in our course towards the north-east, I had almost resolved to choose that spot when I recollected all at once that there was no water in that neighbourhood, which was a very serious matter. Indeed, this lack of water gave us much concern, for as yet we had found none but what smacked of brimstone, and Billy said that we didn't need physicking every day, nor yet every week. We spent the rest of that day, therefore, in roaming over the island once more in search of fresh water, and made a more thorough exploration of the western end, in which the vegetation was wilder than in the other woodland parts. There was never a spring that we could see, and we should have had our search for nothing but for a discovery that Billy made. He had climbed a bare and very rough hillock, just beyond a patch of wood at the south-west corner of the island, and I saw him suddenly stoop, and when he rose to the erect posture he held something white in his hand, and began to caper with every token of delight. Then he came running down towards me, and shouted a word that sounded like "aig! aig!" which puzzled me exceedingly, until when he came close to me and opened his hand I saw what was certainly the likeliest to a hen's egg that I had ever beheld, and concluded that "aig!" was the manner of calling it at Limehouse. I could scarce believe it was indeed a hen's egg, for we had seen no fowls save those I have mentioned before, nor had we heard, amid the noises of the island, the clarion voice of any cock; yet it was like nothing else, and Billy declared with great positiveness that there must be roosters, as he called them, on the island, whose eggs would form an agreeable addition to our fare.

Eggs

He was not by any means cast down when I said that we had no fire for cooking, avouching that he had sucked 'em raw many a time, but added that this being the first egg we had found, it belonged by right to me as king of the island (so he called me in sport), and he would at once set about making a fire, as he had often said he would do, and roast it for me, we having no pan for boiling. When he spoke of boiling, I remembered all of a sudden the spring of hot water we had seen on the other side of the mountain, and thought it might very well serve to cook the egg; so we made all haste to that spot, Billy saying that if the water would cook an egg, it would also cook pig, and boiled pork was very good, though not so good as roast. We came to the spring, and laid the egg in the bottom of a cup-shaped hollow through which it flowed, and having neither watch nor sand-glass, Billy set himself patiently to count the

seconds as well as you could, saying that the egg must not be overdone nor underdone, but boiled just proper.

"We will give it four minutes, master," says he, "instead of three, 'cos we ain't sure the water is on the boil, not what you would call real boiling."

Accordingly, the four minutes being expired (though I think he missed count when just past a hundred and fifty), he took out the egg and, breaking the shell at one end, gave it to me to taste, which I did, but instantly spat it out of my mouth, and cast the egg down upon the rocks, bespattering them with white and yellow. I told Billy with much spluttering that the egg was addled, and indeed the taste of it was very foul, and remained in my mouth a long time, till, having returned to our wood, I cured it with a copious draught of cocoa-nut juice, the acid of which was very grateful. Billy was much cast down at this unfortunate beginning of his cookery, and wanted to go instantly and kill a sucking-pig; but since it was already growing late, and would be dark ere he could go and come and finish cooking, even if he found a pig at once and caught it without trouble, I persuaded him to return with me to the wood, where we had to rig up another shelter for the night, in place of the one that had been shattered by the storm.

I will say here that we found more eggs afterwards, always in places that were hard to get at—on ledges in the land side of the cliffs, and in hollows of rocky eminences; and though we for some time saw no fowls and were much puzzled in consequence, we discovered by and by that they roosted high up in the trees, and concluded that they did this to take refuge from the rats and dogs, and kept silence for the same reason. There were very few of them on the island, their broods being no doubt much preyed upon when young and unable to fly.

I had almost forgot to mention a strange discovery we made while we were yet on the mountain. It chanced that Billy, prodding the ground with his axe, dislodged a lump of rock which rolled down into the spring, and had no sooner touched the water than it set up a great hissing noise, and we saw a cloud of dirty yellow smoke rise up from it into the air, with such a horrible stench that we choked and coughed, and ran away to some distance until the fizzing and smoking ceased. I had never seen or heard of the like before, and as for Billy, he said that Old Smoker was worse than he thought him, carrying such poisonous stuff in his inside. This made us careful how we trod, for we did not

know but there might be rocks of other kinds, which might "go off," as Billy said, when we touched them. However, we did not find any such, and we almost forgot about the fizzy rock, as Billy called it, until a time came when we discovered a use for it.

The First Hut

To come back to the matter of our house. Having sought in vain for a suitable site in the rougher parts of the island, we went down next day to the lake-side, where we should at least be within reach of water, though unpalatable. We found that the lake was very much swelled with the recent heavy rains, and the water was not near so clear as formerly, though it was much less nauseous to the taste, and we had a good drink of it without suffering any ill effects. This quite determined us in our choice, for we supposed that it would rain very frequently, as in England, so that the lake would be constantly replenished and the sulphurous character of its water be thus qualified. We found in course of time that rain did not fall near so often as in England, though usually much heavier; and that the effect on the lake was not quite so great as we expected, at least in regard to the taste, for the many rills and rivulets that carried water from the high parts of the island ran over sulphurous soil, some of which they washed down into the lake.



OUR FLINT SCRAPER FOR
SHARPENING AXES

Being set on building a substantial house, or rather fortress, as I said, we saw that with our rude tools it would take us a very long time, and so we first took in hand to make a small hut which would shelter us while the other was a-building. This we determined to place at the edge of the wood above the lake, and we found much material in the trees which had been uprooted in the storm, and in young straight saplings which we could either pull up, the soil being thin, or cut down with our stone axes. These axes of ours soon became blunt, but we found a means to sharpen them by whetting on the hard rocks by the shore, and it became our constant practice to begin each day with bathing in the sea, and then sharpening our axes, which sharpened our appetites also, I do assure you. Having got a sufficiency of these slender poles for our walls, we stuck them in holes which we made with our axes, and held them together with tendrils of the creeping plants that grew very plentifully in the woods. We thus made walls about ten feet high, about a space twelve feet square, and it was not until the walls were up that we began to consider of how to put a roof to them, having no ladders nor any means of mounting to such a height. This made us see how needful it was to take thought beforehand, though we never succeeded in foreseeing all the difficulties that we should meet with, and I suppose no one ever did. All we could do about this roof of ours was to carry up small rocks from the shore, and pile these one on another until we made a stand high enough for us to lay saplings from wall to wall. Since it was clear that this roof would protect us but little, the rain being able to come through the interstices, we put up stands of rocks inside the hut, and supported on these

we made shift to weave grasses and creepers among the poles, finding it very hard work, and very long too, we having to take the stands down and build them up again as we moved from place to place in the hut. As for the walls, we filled up the interstices in them with earth from the hill-side above us, which we found to be of a clayey sort, and soon hardened in the sun, though after a little it began to crack and crumble. We carried this earth in our hands, a very troublesome and slow manner of doing it, but we had no vessels, nor did we at that time think of making any.

This hut took us above a week in building, at least I think so, for after the first day or two we neglected to take any account of the passage of time. It was a poor sort of thing when finished, and could not have stood against a hurricane; but the weather was very fair, and besides, the place we had chosen was not near so much exposed as our first habitation, on higher ground. We hoped it would serve us until we should have made our proposed fortress, and the building of it was exceeding useful to us, for it took up, with the getting and eating of our food, every minute of the daytime, and by keeping our thoughts busy, as well as our hands, hindered us from dwelling on our loneliness.

I had almost forgot to mention two or three things: first, that every morning and evening one or other of us went up the mountain-side, to a spot whence we had sight of the sea all around, to spy whether a sail was visible. The second thing is, that Billy went out one day, and brought back a little sucking-pig, which he had killed with his axe. We cut off its hinder legs, and carried them to the hot spring, and found that they cooked very well; and though the meat had a slight savour of brimstone, it was vastly more agreeable than the salt junk we were used to have aboard ship. Indeed, Billy said that it only wanted pease-pudding to make a meal fit for a king, and he ran all the way to the wood and back again to fetch a bread-fruit, to see if that, when boiled, would supply the place of pease; but the fruit only boiled to a pap, and when Billy tasted it, he declared that it spoiled the flavour of the pork, so we ate the meat by itself.

Failure

This failure made Billy determine again to try his hand at making fire, which we had no time for when building our little hut. He picked up a straight twig, that seemed to promise well for his purpose, and sharpening his flint axe, he peeled the twig and cut it so as to make a stick about a foot long, one end of which he brought to a point. But, finding the wood too soft for the use to which he designed it, he went prowling about to discover a tree hard enough, testing them with his axe, and after a long search, lighted upon a tree that was very hard, and whose sap was of a blood-red colour.[1] Having cut a stick of this, he sharpened one end to a point, and then took two chunks of wood, one of a soft kind, the other of the new-discovered tree, which we called redwood, and in each of these chunks he made a little hollow, one in the soft wood for the sharp end of the stick, the other for the blunt. Then, fitting the stick into these hollows, he gave me all three pieces of wood to hold, and while I held them tightly clamped together, he began to twirl the stick between his hands as fast as he could, as he had seen the savages do, though often they used a bowstring. He continued this for a good while, until his hands, hard as they were, grew sore and his face was running with sweat; but whether that the wood was damp, or that Billy was not dexterous enough, I know not, only that there was never a sign of smouldering, though the wood was hot when we felt it. Billy insisted that I should take a turn, which I did, and twirled the stick even faster, I believe, than he did, though not so long; but it was all no good, and at last we threw the wood from us, concluding that if we were to obtain fire, it must be in some other way. I do not mean that we never tried the native way again: we were not so easily discouraged; we tried more than once in the intervals of doing other things, and I think that with perseverance we might have succeeded at last, only it was not necessary, as will be seen hereafter.

Building Materials

This failure, though it annoyed us at the time, was of use to us, inasmuch as it set us on noticing

[1] This appears to have been what botanists call *Rhizophora mucronata*.
—H.S.

the differences between woods, which until that time we had thought little about, but was now become a matter of importance, with our fortress in view. We needed a hard, strong wood, yet not too hard to be worked with our clumsy tools, and we spent a day or two in testing the varieties of trees that grew on our island. The cocoa-nut palm was by far the most plentiful, and the bread-fruit tree came next: but we did not think of cutting down either of these to make posts of, because they were food trees, and, being ignorant how often they bore fruit, we did not venture at the first to diminish the source of our provision by so much as one. Besides, we found, when we tried to cut a cocoa-nut tree which had been cast down in the storm, that the wood was exceeding hard, and so heavy that it sank in water. After this testing, I say, we discovered a tree on the hill-side whose wood was neither too hard nor too soft, and as it existed in great numbers, and bore no fruit, none that was edible, at least, we determined on this as the material for our house. I never knew the name of it, but it seemed to be a kind of pine.

I had now, as I say, clean lost count of the days, and had no means of keeping a journal, even if I had had the patience. You must therefore think of us as getting up every day with the sun, and going to bed every night when it became dark. I say, going to bed, though indeed we had little that deserved the name, our couch consisting of nothing but the bare ground and such leaves and grasses as we found serviceable. It was a mercy that the climate was so even, and the nights were not at all cold, or I do believe we should have perished, our clothing being so light. Indeed it was not long before we began to look with concern upon our garments, which were much rotted already by the drenchings they had had, and were becoming rent and frayed from hard usage. We had no means either of repairing them, or of making others, and we could only think that in course of time we should have to go naked, like the savages. However, this did not trouble us at the moment, since we had so much to do and to think

about, what with getting our food, and preparing our house, and fending off the dogs, which were very troublesome, keeping at a distance, indeed, by day, but prowling around our hut at night, and scratching at the walls so that they often disturbed our sleep. Between sunrise and sunset we worked very diligently, and resting one day in seven—or it might be five, or six sometimes, since we kept no strict count; but I did not think God would be angry with us if we were not very exact in this, since we did as well as we could.

We set to work getting material for our big house, as we called it, immediately after our little house, or hut, was finished. At first we were greatly disheartened, for though we chose small trees of which to make our logs, both for easiness of felling and of moving when they were felled, we found that our clumsy axes were very poor tools. Not only did the flints need sharpening every few minutes, like a mower's scythe, but being attached to the handles only with creepers, and not very skilfully, they continually worked loose, and we had to desist in order to bind them again, which mightily exasperated us. At the end of the first day, seeing what little progress we had made, we were ready to despair. "It will take us a hundred years, master," says Billy, "and the corner posts will be rotted before we get the roof on. I don't believe in none of your Robinson Crusoes; and we'd better have been drowned; and I warrant you Hoggett and Chick and great fat Wabberley are just enjoying themselves somewhere, and I'm sick of my life."

Billy Scoffs at Romance

I have forgot to say that when we were eating our meals, or resting, I had told Billy the surprising story of Robinson Crusoe, of whom he had never heard, encouraging both him and myself with the tale of how that good mariner, after tribulations like to our own, came at length happily to his own land again. But I own I thought our case was much worse than Crusoe's, for he had clothes, and corn food, and good liquors, and firearms, and good tools, though few; and, indeed, everything he needed save company, and that came to him at last; whereas we had absolutely nothing except the fruits of the island and what

things we could make for ourselves. Yet in reckoning up our situation and his, I felt very thankful that I had a companion, for the worst of evils are tolerable if we have some one to share them, and I wonder that Crusoe did not go stark mad, being alone for so many years till his man Friday came. Billy often scoffed when I told him what I remembered of Crusoe's story, and said he wasn't near so badly off as we were, and if he—that is, Billy—only had what Crusoe had, he would do as much as he, or more, especially if he had a forge and blacksmith's tools. And in particular, when I told him of Crusoe's horror when he saw a footprint in the sand, he burst into a laugh, and asked why there was only one footprint, and made me go down to our little bit of sandy beach there and then, and showed me the prints he made with his own feet, and asked me triumphantly whether the man whose mark Crusoe saw was a one-legged man, or what.

Another thing I must mention, before I forget it, was that the first time we went down to the shore we saw that the second boat, which, being broken, the mariners had left, had been washed away. We were very much vexed at this, and wished we had had the forethought to drag it higher up, where the waves could not reach it. I do not think we could have mended it enough to make it seaworthy, but we might have tried; and it would at least have provided us with planks which we should have found useful. However, it was gone, and there was no use repining.

But to come back to our house. We were, I say, in despair at the small result of our first day's hard labour, especially as we saw no way of improving our tools, and had no other means of felling the trees. It came into my mind that if we only had fire, we might have burned them down, and we tried again for a good while to make fire with the stick and the chunks of wood. But we had no more success than before, and Billy cried out that he wished he could get some of the fire that set the mountain water a-boiling, but he supposed he would be burned alive if he tried to get any. I smiled at his simplicity, and to ease his thoughts a little, I asked him to accompany me up the mountain, it being my turn to take our nightly look-out over the sea. It chanced that as we strayed

over the mountain-side we lighted upon one of the splinters of the boulder which Billy had broken before, and the gleam of metal in it catching my eye, I said to Billy that it was desperately plaguy to be where metal abounded, and not be able to use it.

Making Fire

"Why, master," says he, "who knows as how we can't use it? We ain't tried. Why didn't we think of it afore?" And straightway he picks up the splinter, and I found a flint, and he struck them together, and fairly danced with delight when he made a spark, though he stopped dancing and howled next moment, having hurt his bare feet on the sharp rock.

I felt as great a delight as Billy, it being plain that we now had the first means of making fire, and if only we could discover anything to serve as tinder we might soon have a fire as large as we pleased. We went back to our hut by the wood very quickly, being eager to try before it was dark; but though we collected plenty of dry grass and struck spark after spark out of the flint, we could not kindle a flame, and, to our great disappointment, ate cold supper again. The next day also we were no more successful, though we neglected our work while we tried again and again, and should have been very sorry for the loss of time but that time mattered very little to us. However, in the afternoon, when we went into the wood to get cocoa-nuts, I sat myself down on the trunk of a great tree which had been thrown down by a storm, I suppose—not our storm, but earlier, for the leaves were all withered. I sat myself down, I say, but went lower than I intended, the trunk, that appeared solid, giving way under me, so that I toppled over backwards in a cloud of dust. When we looked at the tree, we saw that the inside of it was completely rotted away, with the dry rot, as we say, and we both cried out at the same moment that this might be our tinder. We immediately broke off a strip of the bark, and collected some of the dust upon it, and then striking a spark, we caught it on the tinder, which was, however, so dry that it flared up and burnt out in an instant, without kindling the bark. We remedied this very soon by mingling some dry grass,

rubbed small, with the wood dust, and this burning more slowly, it caused the bark to smoulder, from which we blew up a flame, and in a few minutes had a very pretty fire of sticks. Billy leapt around it in an ecstasy, and I could not help but liken him to a fire-worshipper, whose religion I understood better now than before, after all the trouble we had had.

"Now we can bake some bread," said I.

"And roast some pork," says Billy.

"We had better make bread first," said I.

"My mouth is watering for the crackling," says Billy.

"Bread will be the sooner done," I said.

"But the taste of pork stays in the mouth longer," says Billy.

It nearly came to a quarrel between us, as to which should be cooked first, meat or bread; but when we were in the heat of the argument we perceived that our fire was going out, and that brought us to our senses. We piled more sticks on it, and broken cocoa-nut shells, and Billy, yielding to my desire for bread, went out into the wood and soon returned with two or three fine large fruits, weighing, I should think, about three pounds apiece. We had seen the native way of cooking this fruit, paring off the rough rind and baking the inner part, between the rind and the core, in an oven; but having no oven, though we promised ourselves to build one soon, we laid the fruits as they were on a red part of the fire, turning them about as you do chestnuts, and after a while we took them up and, having broken away the rind, ate the bread hot, and I do think I had never in my life before made such a hearty meal as I now did, though, to be sure, the bread had a slight flavour of burnt wood. However, we ate a good supper, and went to bed much happier than at any time since we first came to the island.

We made our breakfast in the same way when we awoke, but finding that it took some time to get a fire, we considered whether we could not keep it constantly alive, yet without needing to replenish it too frequently with fuel, which would have been a trouble, as well as a hindrance to our work. After some thought, we devised a kind of covered-in grate, which we built four-square of stones and pieces of rock, filling up the spaces between them, where they did not fit, with the clayey earth I have before mentioned, which we moistened with water, fetched from the lake in half a cocoa-nut shell, and then worked with our hands into a kind of mortar. We made a cover to this grate with small boughs plaited with grass and smeared all over with earth, and at the bottom of the grate we left two small holes by which air might enter, not a great current, but enough to keep the fire smouldering without burning much fuel. This device answered our expectations very well. We found that by casting into the embers a quantity of dry brushwood, and blowing upon them, we could obtain a brisk fire in a very little time, and when we had no more need of it for the present, we laid on a heap of grass and twigs, not too dry, and shut down the lid, and so found that we could keep our fire alive for a whole day with no more tending. We discovered, moreover, that by making a second enclosure about our grate, and covering this in also, we had a very convenient oven, in which we could lay in the morning the bread-fruit we needed for our dinner, and at midday find it very well cooked, neither too much nor too little. I must not forget to say that our neighbours the dogs watched these proceedings very curiously, and the first time we left the grate they went to it, to investigate with their noses; but the stones being very hot, their noses were burnt, and they ran yelping away, and came to it no more except the first time we roasted some pig's flesh, and then, being in a perfect frenzy at the savoury smell, they scratched down the walls of our oven and ran away with our meat, hot as it was, so that we had none for dinner. At this Billy flew into a fine rage, I assure you, and we had to consider of some way of preserving our meat from these greedy maws, of which more in its place.

Having now fire at our command, we set about putting it to the use for which we had so greatly desired it, namely, the felling of trees for our big house. We kindled fires against the trunks of four trees of a fair size which we selected for our corner posts, at first setting the fire all round, until we saw both that the wind, which was fairly strong that morning, blew the flames all one way, and also that it would be more convenient to burn the tree on the opposite side from the direction in which we wished it to fall; then we put out the fires except on the windward side. We found it no easy matter to keep the flames at a just height, so that they did not burn more of the trunks than we desired. Every now and again we chipped away the charred wood with our axes, and so the fire ate deeper and deeper into the trees, and we cut deeper and deeper also, until by the close of this day the trees stood, as it were, but by a thread. We wished we had ropes, wherewith we might pull the trees to the ground, but having none we threw ourselves with great violence against the trunks, and so cast them all down but one, which we left for a little more burning on the morrow, and went to our hut very well satisfied with our day's work.

We were sitting at our supper when of a sudden Billy gave a jump and cried out, "What if any savages have seen our smoke!" Our fires had given a good deal of smoke, especially the damper woods with which we fed them; but I said that even the nearest island was too far off for our smoke to be easily seen from it, and as for any savages who might be cruising in canoes, they would suppose it came from the mountain. I could not doubt that our island was an object of terror to the peoples of the neighbouring islands, and I said we ought to be thankful to God that it was so, since it was better to be lonely than to be made slaves, or eaten by cannibals. This comforted Billy, though he said that we had better use the driest woods we could find for our fires, so that the smoke would be less.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

OF THE BUILDING OF OUR HUT, TO WHICH WE BRING MORE ENTHUSIASM THAN SKILL

I have not said anything about the plan of our big hut, but it must not be supposed that we began to work without any design. We often talked about it, and so made a general plan, though we forgot many things and did not foresee others. What this plan was will be made clear as I go on: if I set it down here all in one place it would be like writing the same thing twice over, which would be tedious.

Having felled the four fairly large trees we designed for our corner-posts, the next thing was to bring them down from the wood to the level plateau where we intended to build. We lopped off some of the branches and burnt off the rest, but then found that the trunks were too heavy for us to drag, even though it was downhill. Thus we were put to it to make rollers, which was not such a tedious matter as felling the trees, for there were many young trees of a shape and size fit for this use when we had taken off their branches. But when we came to place the rollers under the first of our trunks we could not at first by any means do it, the tree being so heavy that the two of us together could not raise it an inch from the ground. How to get over this difficulty puzzled us for some time; indeed, we might never have thought of a way but for what I may call an accident. We had gone down to the shore for our morning swim, and as we walked over the beach we spied a crab scuttling away under a small rock. Billy had felt a grudge against crabs ever since one had robbed him of his club: so he cries out, "We'll have this old crab for dinner, master," and with that

he takes his axe and prises up the rock, and then gives the crab a great knock, which did it not the least harm, it being large with a thick shell. However, he was not to be baffled, so, setting down the rock again, he bids me watch it, and runs off to the wood, returning presently with a long bit of creeper, in which he had made a loop or noose at one end. This noose he slips over one of the claws of the crab, and drew it tight, and then set off at a run, dragging the crab after him.

A Crab

We ate the crab for dinner, and liked it very well, but the more important matter was that seeing Billy prise up the rock gave me a notion of the right manner of moving our trees.

"We must carry two rocks up to the wood," I said, "and cut two stout poles, and then I will show you how the trees can be moved."

"'Tis desperate hard work, master," says Billy with a prodigious sigh. "We don't get on very fast. I wish we could find a cave where we could live like that old Robinson Crusoe, without any building at all."

"But he built all the same," said I.

"But not without tools," says Billy.

However, he agreed to my proposal, and we carried a rock between us, with a great deal of sweating, up to where the fallen trees lay, and then Billy says, "Ain't we fools!" and showed me that we could save a deal of labour by fastening strands of creeper to the second rock, and dragging it up instead of carrying it in our arms. This being done we cut two stout poles, which took us a long time, and then, putting the rocks one on either side of the first trunk, we took a pole each, and, resting them on the rocks, put the one end under the tree and pressed heavily on the other, and so contrived to lift the weight which our unaided strength was quite unequal to. I do not mean that we had never

seen levers before, but we might never have thought of them unless Billy had prised up the rock after that crab. The use of levers was indeed a mystery to him, I mean the explanation of them, he saying that we were no stronger than before, and there was certainly no strength in two dead poles, and when I reminded him of the pulleys and the windlass on board ship, which also helped to raise things, he said that poles were not pulleys, nor a windlass neither, and he didn't see what that had to do with it. However, there was the trunk lifted, and while I held it so with my pole, Billy slipped a roller under it, and working thus from the end towards the middle, we brought the roller along by degrees, and then found that we could slip the second roller under the other end without the help of the poles.

Then, with much pushing and hauling, we set the trunk a-moving on the rollers down the slope. It was still hard work enough, for where the earth was soft, the rollers sank into it under the heavy weight of the tree, and when we came to a part that was hard and pretty smooth, the trunk set to a-rolling so fast that it almost ran away with us, and Billy, who was in front, was very nearly sent headlong down, which would have been very terrible if he had fallen plump into our grate. We brought the other three trunks down to our plateau in the same way, and thus had the four stout posts which we intended for the corners of our house, though there was a great deal to be done to them before they could be erected. They were about the same thickness, being sixteen or eighteen inches across, but not the same length, and we had first to make them equal, which took us a long time; I think we were ten days at the work. When we had finished it, the trunks were about fourteen feet long, that being the height we had determined on for our house, allowing for some portion of the posts to be driven into the earth. We did not peel the bark off the trees, but left it on, thinking it would do no harm.

Choosing a Site

We marked out the lines of our house, on the level plateau near the lake, which was almost the only even spot on the island, and allowed us a space of

about twenty feet square, which I thought was large enough, thinking besides of the great labour we should be put to if we tried to make too big a house. But when it came to erecting our corner-posts we were in a great quandary. The ground was pretty soft, and deeper than at other parts of the island, which I guessed was due to the heavy rains washing earth down from the hill above. With spades or shovels we might have dug holes to a considerable depth, and then slipped the trunks in, and having thus disposed of a part of the dead weight of them, we might have raised them to an erect position with levers, or by pushing them up with our hands as men raise a long ladder. But with no tools save our blunt axes we saw that such excavation would demand unconscionable toil, and besides, after we should have accomplished it, we should be hard put to it to make the earth around the timber sufficiently firm and compact; so we had to consider another way, which gave us a great deal of trouble. Indeed, it baffled us for several days, in which, however, we were not idle, but occupied ourselves in other concerns.

A Flagstaff

One of these was the erecting of a signal-post. Although, when we talked matters over—as we often did, both in the daytime and especially at night before we fell asleep—when we talked things over, I say, we always concluded that there was little or no chance of being rescued, and made our plans as if we were to remain on this island for the rest of our lives; yet we thought it right to take our measures for attracting any friendly ship that might heave in sight. We must not, of course, attempt to raise any permanent signal, for such a thing would beyond question be discovered by the savages of some neighbouring island when going about in their canoes, and the last thing we could wish was to bring savages into our peaceful domain. On the other hand, unless we had some means of signalling, a ship might easily pass us by before we could communicate with it, for the island was so small that no vessel would heave to on the mere chance of finding water, since its most important river, if it had one, could not be more than a mere brook in size. Being thus decided that we ought to have some kind of signal ready, in such a case, we determined that

nothing could be better than a flagstaff, even if we should never have a flag.

As for the spot where to erect it, we had no difficulty in choosing that; no better could be found than the wooded hill above the lava bed, whither we climbed every morning and evening to take our lookout. At the top of this hill, and somewhat apart from the rest of the trees, there stood a tree very straight and tall, overtopping the others, so that it formed a very clear mark. Since our flagstaff was not to be permanently in sight, it seemed best that we should have one that we could take to pieces, and put together when it was necessary to hoist it, and I had already seen, at the edge of the lake, what I thought would serve our purpose to a marvel. This was a cluster of trees, or rather shrubs, like what is called bamboo, the stalks being tough and hollow, with joints or knuckles here and there. We cut down three or four of these stalks, choosing them all of different diameters, and having burnt out the pith inside them, for some distance from the top, we contrived to make a kind of telescope tube by fitting them together, it reaching a length of near thirty feet.

This being made, we cut, in the top of the trunk of the tall, straight tree before mentioned, a groove large enough to form a socket for the bottom end of our flagstaff, and when we had fitted it to our satisfaction, we ventured just before sunset to raise the staff, and it made a sort of topmast to the tree, standing some twelve feet above the summit.

"This is prime," says Billy. "Now all we want is an ancient or a pendant to fix to the top of it, and there you are."

"We have nothing but our shirts," said I, "and those we cannot spare."

"But we don't need to raise our flag until we see a ship over yonder," says Billy, "and if we do see one I can strip off my shirt in no time."

"But we can't fit the staff in no time," I replied, "and we must practise ourselves in that until we are very speedy in it."

We did this accordingly, several evenings in succession, always at dusk, so that our proceedings should not be seen by sharp-eyed savages; and we found in a few days that we could fit the joints of the staff together, and set it up in its socket, in the space of five minutes, as near as I could guess. We kept the several joints in the tree, so that we should not have the labour of hauling them from the ground every time, fastening them to the boughs with strands of creepers.

While on this matter of the flagstaff, I must say that it came into my mind one day that I had seen the native women making a kind of cloth out of the bark of a tree, though I had not observed what tree it was. I thought we might contrive to make a pendant in the same way, and after some trials of the bark of different trees we discovered that the bread-fruit tree was best fitted for our purpose, and by diligently beating with stones upon a broad strip of the bark, moistened with water, we flattened and stretched it until it became a sort of thin fabric, which would serve for a flag, though a makeshift one. But having made it, we could not at first devise a means of attaching it to the staff, having no nails, or anything that could be used in their stead. There did, indeed, come out of the bark as we bruised it, a sticky substance which we hoped might serve as glue, but we found that it was not sufficiently tenacious. However, after some thought I hit upon the device of stringing the flag on a strand of creeper, and then knotting the ends of this about the pole.

Our success in this particular gave us much contentment, and Billy declared that now that we knew how to make cloth we must discover a means of making needles and thread, so that we could patch our shirts and breeches, which were already miserably rent and tattered. But this was too great a puzzle for us at the moment, though we solved it afterwards, as I shall tell in its place.

Pottery

Having started to tell some of the matters that occupied us while we were pondering the means of setting up the posts of our house, I may mention here

another notion that came into my head. We had used some of the clayey earth of the hill-side to fill the interstices of our small house, and being often at a loss for vessels in which to cook our food, and also to carry water—as yet we did not drink it much, for very good reasons—I thought of trying to make some pots and pans. I had, to be sure, no turning wheel, nor could I make one, nor had I the prepared flints or the lead for glaze, such as were employed in my uncle's factory. But I had seen the native people making pottery on the island at which we touched, and that being, so to speak, my own line of business, I had taken more particular note of it than of any other of their devices.

Their manner was to put a piece of calabash, or some such thing, under a lump of clay, to make it turn freely, and then to turn it slowly, but very deftly, by hand, fashioning thereby a vessel of such regular shape that I am sure my uncle, could he have seen it, would scarce have believed it had not been thrown, as we say, on the wheel. Such vessels they first dried in the sun, then, when a group of them had been moulded, a fire was kindled round and over them, and so they were baked. I had no calabash, but I tried my prentice hand with the half of a cocoa-nut shell, and found it very serviceable. But what gave me a deal of trouble was the clay. When I had mixed a great lump of it, moistening it with water and pounding it with stones, and had moulded a sort of porringer upon the shell at first, the vessel would not keep its shape, even so long as it took me to set it upon the ground to dry. After making several trials of it, and being always disappointed, I saw that I must mix some other substance with the earth to give it consistency. This was a thing that baffled me for days, since all our scouring of the island did not bring to light any substance that would be of use, and we had no means of grinding into powder the flints which lay around in plenty. How strange is it that we may look afar for what we have at our very doors! All of a sudden it came into my head that the sand of the seashore, at the edge of the lava tract, which we trod every day in going to bathe, might be the very substance I needed, and I found, when I came to try it, that it not only gave the clay the consistency I desired, but added a glaze to it when I baked the first vessel I made with it. I soon had a row of basins

finished, not very comely in shape, but serviceable, and all of a size; and Billy, having heard me deplore that I had nothing larger than a cocoa-nut to mould them on, went a-prowling on the shore one day, and came staggering back with a great dome-shaped stone, and when he set it down in front of me, "Oh, ain't I a fool!" says he.



"What's the matter, Billy?" I asked. "'Tis the very thing I have been wanting this long time."

"I know it is, master," says he, "but what I don't know is why I was such a silly ass as to sweat myself a-carrying of it, when I might have rolled it on its edge."

"Well, you won't do it again," I said, smiling at his woebegone look.

"No, I take my davy I won't," says he.

"What is 'davy'?" I asked, never having heard that expression before.

"Why, don't you know that?" says he, opening his eyes very wide.

"No. What is it?" I said.

Then he scratched his head, and looked at the ground, and after a great

deal of consideration says: "Well, master, I can't say, not to be certain, what a davy is; but suppose I said to you, 'I eat forty cocoa-nuts at a go,' and you said to me, 'You're a liar,' and I said, 'I take my davy on it,' you'd have to believe me or else fetch me a crack on the nob: at least, that's what they do Limehouse way."

This may seem a very trifling matter, and not worthy of setting down in a serious history; but I quote the words to show that we did not pass the days without discourse, from which indeed I for my part got much entertainment.

With the round stone which Billy brought me, and others we afterwards discovered, I made several pots of different sizes, which we found very useful, more and more, indeed, as time went on. And as I became more dexterous with practice, the shape and fashion of the pottery likewise improved, so that I grew proud of my handicraft, and wished my uncle could have seen it. As for Billy, he was very jealous of my work, and lamented that he had not a forge and an anvil and the other implements of a smith's calling, and he would show me what he could do; but as he lacked these things, and so far as he could see was never like to have them, he very sensibly employed himself in helping me, and in getting and preparing our food, and the various materials needed for our house. I must not forget to mention, too, that it was Billy who first thought of using the red sap of the wood I have before spoke of, in giving a dye to my pottery, which became thereby a bright red colour, very pleasing to the eye.



SOME OF MY POTTERY

All this while we had been thinking very deeply of the matter of our big hut, and at last we hit upon a means of erecting the four corner-posts. First we drove the handle of one of the axes—the wood being hard and the earth soft, as I have said—for some distance into the ground, and then having withdrawn it, we were able to drive into the hole a somewhat thicker pole, the end of which we sharpened to a point with our axes. Then we took the first of our corner-posts, sharpened the end of it in like manner, this costing us much labour, and charred the same end with fire, both to make the driving of it into the earth easier, and to preserve it from rotting. The more serious difficulty, of raising the heavy post and driving it in, was solved in the following manner. We made three long ropes by twining strands of creepers together, and these we tied very securely to the top of our post. Having made a hole in the earth, as aforesaid, to the depth of about four feet, we brought the pointed end directly over the hole, and then raised the other end gradually with levers, propping it up continually, as we tilted it higher, with a pile of small logs and stones, which we increased moment by moment as required. I leave you to judge what a slow and tedious business this was.

Building under Difficulties

When by this means the top end of the post was raised to a considerable

height, the pointed end slid into the hole, though not straight; but the post was now tilted sufficiently for us to get under it and heave it up with our hands until it was fairly upright, and then the point of it sank some little way into the hole, but not far. Then, while I held it upright, Billy went to a distance of a few yards, and drove a wedge of wood like a tent-peg into the ground, using for hammer a long stone; and this being done, he bound one of the three ropes (so I call them) firmly about it. He did likewise with two more tent-pegs and the two other ropes, so that when he had finished, the post was held erect and stoutly supported by three ropes, the lower ends of which were so placed as to be at the angles of what is called in the *Elements of Euclid* an equilateral triangle. This work took us a whole day, reckoning in the time for our meals.

The next part of our design was to erect a scaffolding about the post. For this we chose and cut down stalks of the bamboo-like plant of which we had made our flagstaff. These we lashed firmly together with creeper ropes—or rather Billy did it, he having a seaman's dexterity in such things; and driving their lower ends into the ground, we contrived to construct a scaffolding four-square about the post, each face of it about nine feet long, and carried up a little higher than the top of the post, so as to clear the ropes that held this in position. The scaffolding being finished with a prodigious deal of labour—for having no ladder we were obliged to make standing-places of stones, which were very insecure; indeed, both Billy and I tumbled off them more than once, and grew very angry at having to collect the stones and build them up again: the scaffolding being finished, I say, we made a light platform of straight branches upon the top of it, but not quite covering it, so that the top of the post was not hidden.

"It won't bear us, that I'm sure," says Billy, when we had made the platform.

"Try," said I. "You are lighter than me: you go first."

Billy clambered on to the platform very nimbly, and though the scaffolding trembled and swayed so that I thought to see it instantly collapse, it did no such

thing, and I ventured to climb up on the other side and join Billy. I was much more clumsy than he was, and pretty nearly lost my balance, but managed to steady myself, and then we both stood on the platform, and found that it bore the weight of us both very well.

The next thing was to haul up the implement which, after much consideration, we had devised for driving in the post. 'Twas a massy stump of a tree, which, both together, we could heave about two feet above the ground—such a thing as resembled in some sort the big wooden pummet which road-menders use for hammering down the cobbles in the streets, though our pummet had no handle either at the top or the side, but must be heaved up by main force from the bottom. We tied it many times round with our creeper ropes, and, having mounted again on to the platform, we began to haul. But the weight of the pummet, and our heaving, and the being both on one side of the platform, was too much for our frail support; the scaffolding fell apart, down we toppled headlong after the pummet, and the strain upon the sustaining ropes being too great, one of them snapped, and down came the post, falling very luckily in the opposite direction from us, or we might have been killed, or at least had our heads broken.

Billy fairly howled with disappointment at this overthrow of our hopes, and let forth many of the ugly words which he had learnt, either at Limehouse or aboard the *Lovey Susan*. Indeed, it was a most vexatious accident, for the labour of a good many days was undone in a moment, and we had to begin over again, both to erect the corner-post and to construct a scaffolding. Billy, who was like a child in some things, declared and vowed he would work no more on the big hut. "I take my davy I won't," says he. "What's the good? Here's another big hole tore in my breeches. Why should you and me work like slaves when there ain't no call for it, victuals growing free? And as for lodgings, the small hut is good enough for me. We don't want a castle when there ain't no one here but dogs and pigs; and I tell you what it is, master, we don't eat enough pork, and I wish we had some onions;" and so he talked on, and I said nothing, for I knew he would grumble until he was tired, and then

readily take up his work again. So in fact it proved, for after a day's idleness, or rather change, we spending the day in hunting for eggs, we set to work to weave more ropes and put together another scaffolding, which when we tried it stood very steady, even when we hauled up the pummet. With this pummet we drove the corner-post into the earth inch by inch, lifting it with our hands (it was as much as we could do) and then letting it fall plump on the head of the post. 'Twas terribly slow work, and hard too, and we thought our backs would break across the middle, they ached so much, only we had to pause in the driving every now and then to let down our platform, in proportion as the post went deeper into the ground, and this of course took a great while. However, we drove the post at last to the depth of four feet, and then Billy was just as elated as before he had been cast down, for the post stood so massive and solid that it seemed nothing short of an earthquake could move it; and that was strong enough for us, for against an earthquake, if it came, of course we could do nothing. Having succeeded with our first post, we did not take quite so long about erecting the other three; but it was near six weeks, I should think, before we got all four in position, I mean six weeks after we had felled the trunks, they having then to be pointed with our rude axes, and the scaffolding having to be built up afresh with the same care for the fourth post as for the first.

When we had the four posts up we were very well satisfied with our handiwork, but desperately weary, for we had stuck to it day after day without respite except to get our food and perform the other articles of our regular life—bathing, and going up to our watch-tower, as we called it, and so forth. Accordingly I said to Billy that we would take a week's holiday before we made the walls of our house, on which Billy sighed very heavily.

"Why, don't you want a holiday?" I asked him.

"Course I do, master," says he, "but how can you have a holiday without any beer?"

He then told me that when his father took a holiday, he drove to some

country part near London—Islington, or maybe Hampstead—and spent the day in playing skittles and drinking beer. This put a notion into my head, and the first day of our holiday we played skittles with some short posts set up in the sand on the beach, bowling at them with cocoa-nuts. 'Twas as good a sport as we could devise at that time, though we soon came to invent a better, as you shall hear.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

OF MY ENCOUNTER WITH A SEA MONSTER; AND OF THE MEANS
WHEREBY WE PROVIDED OURSELVES WITH ARMS

I think it was on the second day of our week's holiday that we had a terrible fright, which affected us the more because hitherto there had been so little to alarm us. We had eaten our dinner, and were roaming idly along the high ground in the west of the island, when, looking over the brink, Billy spied some nests among the rocks in the face of the cliff. We had never been able to obtain near so many eggs for our food as we wished, the hens laying their eggs, as I have said, in secret places which required much searching for, and for that we did not on our working days care to spend time. But spying these nests, Billy was set on clambering down to them to see if they contained eggs, which would make us a very good supper.

There was a narrow ledge that ran down the face of the cliff, ending not far above the sea, which at this spot washed the base, there being no beach of sand. The descent was so steep, and the ledge so narrow, that I was in some doubt whether the attempt were not too dangerous; but Billy, as I say, was set

on it, and when I saw him actually begin to clamber down, I could do naught but accompany him, and soon outstripped him, because he stopped more often than I did to pry in all the crevices. The face of the cliff was much scarred, and certain large boulders in it seemed to me to be very loosely embedded; indeed, now and again a piece of rock would become detached when I caught hold of it to steady myself, and rolled and rumbled away until it fell into the sea. You see by this how carefully it behoved us to go, and if the ledge had not been a little wider than it appeared from the top, I think I should have given up the enterprise. However, we persevered, and in the course of our descent rifled of their eggs such nests as came within our reach, the rightful owners of the nests, which were sea-birds, wheeling about our heads with a clamour of shrill and plaintive cries. We put the eggs in our pockets, having no other means of carrying them, and when Billy sighed for a basket I said that we would try to make one the very same day, there being plenty of material for weaving.

A Sea Monster

Here and there in the face of the cliff there grew trees, not of great size; indeed, it was a marvel that any grew, the ground being so hard and rugged. When we came near the sea, we saw a little cluster of a kind of pine tree^[1] (at least I judged it so by its exceeding pleasant smell) which jutted out over the sea, one of the tallest of them, covered with great bunches of flowers of a bright yellow colour, very pretty, reaching up to the edge of the narrow path down which we were climbing. It was a strange tree, for instead of having a trunk thicker at the bottom, like other trees, it divided into a number of shoots, which entered the ground in the shape of a pyramid. I was just reaching forward

[1] Probably the screw-pine (*Pandanus odoratissimus*).—H.S.

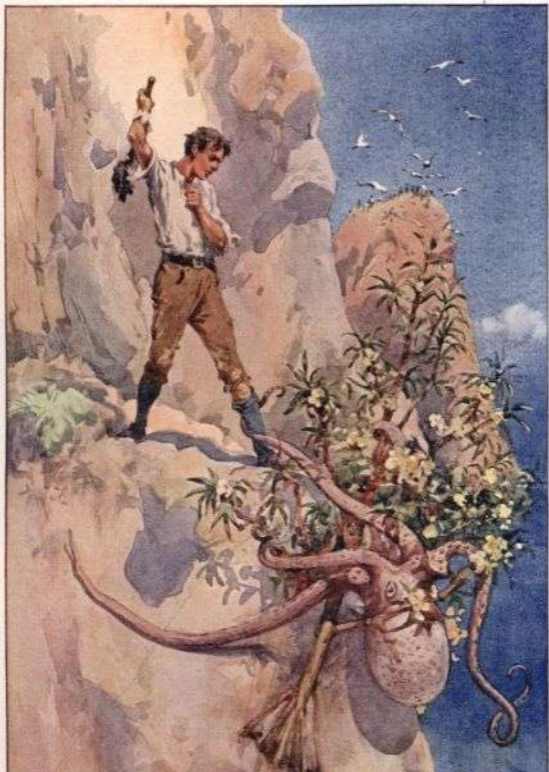
to pluck one of the blossoms when I felt a strange tickling about my ankle, and immediately afterward a sharp pain like that of a gad-fly's bite, only worse. I thought a scorpion or some such thing had bitten me, and turned myself a

little, for the ledge on which I stood was too narrow for great movements, and drew my leg back so that the reptile should not sting me again. But I felt then as if my ankle had been caught in a noose, which was being drawn constantly tighter, and I could not free my leg from the grip, though I kicked as much as I dared. Looking down to see what was holding me, I was annoyed, yet relieved at the same time, to find that my leg was caught in nothing worse, as it appeared, than a big brown, or rather brownish-purple, leaf, into which I supposed I had unwittingly put my foot. Yet I wondered that a mere leaf could grip me so firmly, and as I took out of my belt the axe without which I never went abroad, intending to cut the impediment away, my eye chanced to travel along the leaf towards its furthest extremity, where it was partly hidden by a cluster of fruit.

And then I felt a shiver run down my spine like a trickle of cold water, for there, beyond the cluster, I saw two horrid eyes, like a parrot's, gleaming in the midst of a big shapeless body, which I knew to be alive by its pulsations. I had never in my life seen or heard of such a thing, and knew not what it was or whether it was dangerous or no; but the mere sight of it filled me with a sickening dread, and when I saw the loathly monster drawing nearer to me, working its way, as it seemed, by the tentacles wherewith it had attached itself to the tree, and its body throbbing, I was as near overcome with sheer terror as any man could be, so that I could not think, nor even cry out to Billy, who was some few yards above me. All that I could do, and that was only by instinct, was to resist the creature's pull, which had all but dislodged me from my narrow foothold.

It was Billy's voice that roused me from this palsy of the mind. "My pockets won't hold no more, master," he said, being quite ignorant of what was passing beneath him. Then I cried out to him that a monster was attacking me, and at the same time I bent down and slashed furiously with my axe upon the tentacle that gripped my leg, and turned sick again when the axe-head encountered the slimy mass. But my strokes, doubly redoubled, caused the monster somewhat to relax its grip, and immediately afterward a big jagged piece of rock, hurled

by Billy, smote full upon it with a sickening thud, and rebounding fell with a splash into the sea. The monster, as if stunned by the shock, loosened its hold on the branches to which, as we now saw, it had anchored itself, and in a little while fell into the sea and disappeared from our sight.



"I CRIED OUT TO HIM THAT A MONSTER WAS ATTACKING ME."

"I CRIED OUT TO HIM THAT A MONSTER WAS ATTACKING ME."

"I never did see such a wicked villain," says Billy. "Why, master, you're as white as a sheet!" and, indeed, I was not far from swooning, the horror of that great beast being still upon me. Billy was not near so much affected, not having felt the monster's grip nor seen closely its baleful eyes; and I think Billy was a trifle scornful of the terror I could not conceal, though afterwards he said he didn't wonder at my feeling pretty bad. It was some little time before I was sufficiently recovered to attempt the upward climb; but, with Billy's help, I presently clambered to the top, and threw myself very thankfully on the grass, never heeding Billy's lamentable outcry when he found that two of the eggs he carried had broken in his pocket.

This terrible encounter, and most happy escape, set me on thinking first what a mercy it was I carried my axe, and then how perfectly defenceless we were against any human enemy that might come against us armed. I said to Billy that we must spend the rest of our holiday in making weapons, though when I spoke I had not the least notion of what we could make that would be of any avail. Billy was for making huge clubs, and sticking pieces of flint into their knobby ends, which would beyond doubt have proved very formidable weapons at close quarters; but, as I had told him already, we should be shot down with spears or arrows before we could come within reach of the enemy, and therefore we could do nothing against them unless we made weapons like their own. Whereupon Billy declared for spears, since we had no strings for bows, and we spent a day cutting light poles for the shafts and in searching for

sharp flints that might serve as the heads. But we had such a difficulty in fastening the heads on, and the spears were so exceeding rude and clumsy when made, that I despaired of ever making serviceable defensive weapons of them, and being by no means satisfied that it was beyond our capacity to fashion bows and arrows, I seized occasion while Billy was cooking our supper (which was baked bread-fruit and fried eggs, the latter stronger in flavour and not near so pleasant as hens' eggs, having a fishy taste)—I seized occasion, I say, to make a first trial for a bow-string, which Billy had very shrewdly perceived would be the greatest difficulty.

Making Arms

I tried first of all a very thin strand of a creeping plant, but though that was tough enough, it was not at all elastic, so that I gave that up at once. Next I bethought me of the fibres in the husks and leaves of the cocoa-nut, and wondered whether these could be woven into a cord; and if any are surprised that I should so much as mention this, having seen cocoa-nuts, perhaps, only as they appear in our shops, I will explain that the nut itself is enclosed in a tough fibrous husk of about two inches in thickness, while the leaf is covered for two or three feet of its length with a fibrous matting, very fine and strong, which acts as a kind of brace to the stalk and keeps it steadily fixed to the trunk. I had taken note of this fibrous substance, and, indeed, thought I remembered that the native people made thread of it; but when I came to the actual experiment, I found that the thread so made was as tough as you please, and it served us excellent well afterward in many ways, as will presently be seen, but it was quite lacking in that spring without which a bow-string is impossible.



SPEARHEAD

I do not mean to say that I made all these discoveries while Billy was cooking the supper, but only that I began to make my trials then. It was, indeed, several days before we lighted on something that was suited to our purpose, and that by a kind of accident. We had gone up the mountain, as was our daily custom, to make our survey, and coming down again we left our usual path, for no reason that I can remember, and came upon a patch of plants of a kind that we had not observed before. We had become by this time so knowing in the vegetation of our island, though quite ignorant of the names of the plants, that we stopped to examine this new kind, and plucked some of it, which we peeled as we went our way. It seemed to me that the bark of it had a certain stretch in its fibres, and when we got back to our hut we pulled the fibres out and twisted some of them together in the manner of a cord, and fastened the ends of the string thus made to the ends of a short pliable twig, and to our great joy, when I pulled the string and released it suddenly, it shot

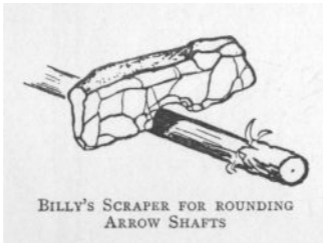
back with a twang as like that of a true cord as can be imagined. In my delight I cried out that I would be Robin Hood and Billy should be Little John, which he took at first to be an affront on his shortness of stature, he being eight inches or more less than I was at that time; he grew afterwards till there was no more than four inches betwixt us. But on my telling him what stories I could remember of Robin Hood and his bold men in Lincoln green—Friar Tuck and Maid Marion and the rest of the company—Billy, who had never heard of any of these before, was greatly delighted, though he doubted whether they were quite so good marksmen as the stories said, and professed that of them all he would have preferred to be Friar Tuck, who had a nice taste in venison, just as Billy himself had in pork. However, he agreed to be Little John, reminding me very pertinently that we had not yet made our bows and arrows.

I had already made up my mind as to the wood we should use for making the bows. It was that same red wood of which I have spoken once or twice, and which, being flexible as well as hard, seemed to me the fittest for our purpose of all the woods in the island. Accordingly we chose two strong saplings of this tree growing to my own height, or a little more, and having uprooted them, we cut off the branches and twigs, peeled the bark off, and then pared them for three or four inches in the centre, so as we might grip them easily. This done, we shaved the ends as well as we could with our axes until they tapered, and about two inches from each end we burned a notch in which we purposed fitting the strings. Thus with an easy day's work we had two fine bows, not very cunningly shaped, but strong and serviceable—at least, we hoped so.



Billy took upon himself to make some arrows while I made the strings. For this purpose he chose some straight light shoots, about as thick as your finger, peeled off the bark as we did with the saplings, and trimmed them with his axe and other sharp stones, rubbing them also with sand, until they were wonderfully smooth. Billy was more patient in this work than I had ever seen

him, and as each shoot was prepared he held it up to his eye and looked along it as if to see whether it were a trifle out of the straight, and if he thought so, he would rub and polish again until he was satisfied. He had near a dozen of these shoots prepared by the time I had finished the strings for our two bows, and he then began to point the heads; but it appeared that he was quite ignorant of the use of feathers, so while he was pointing the shafts I roamed about the woods in search of feathers, and found a good number on the ground, and these we stuck on the tail end of the shafts as I had seen them in pictures, for as for the actual things, I had never had them in my hand. This made me wish, and so did many other matters, that I had given more heed to the construction of things, for barring pottery and rabbit-hutches I was a perfect simpleton in using my hands. Of course, when the first arrow was finished, I tried it with the bow, and found that it did not fly near so well as I hoped; nor did the second and third that we made, which was a great trouble to us. The flight of these arrows was neither far nor steady, and for a long time we could not make out in the least why we had failed. It was Billy that discovered the reason, though I believe it was more by guess than by deduction.



"Why, master," he said, "I do believe 'tis all along o' those silly feathers you've been and gone and stuck in, so that the tail's heavier than the head."

I saw that there might be something in Billy's notion, so we first of all tried the experiment of making one of the arrows taper towards the tail; and when we found that it certainly flew from the bow much better than the others, I thought of improving still further by fitting stone heads to the shafts. We split up some pieces of flint, and using a flat corner of the lava tract as a kind of anvil, Billy chipped away at some of the smaller pieces with a heavy lump of the rock containing iron until we had a little heap of flakes shaped something like a leaf. Some of these we lashed to shallow grooves in our shafts by means of pieces of the string I had made; others we drove into clefts in the top of the shafts; and when we came to try these new-tipped arrows on the bow, we found that they flew very much better than any that we had made before.

By the time we had furnished ourselves with the bows and a dozen arrows our week's holiday was past, and we ought by rights to have gone back to our work on the house. But arrows were not made merely to be looked at, nor to be shot off only for fun, as Billy said, and he was bent on employing our new weapons in the useful work of providing food. We had had nothing but bread-fruit, cocoanuts, and eggs, and pork twice, ever since we had been on the island, which I reckoned to be now a matter of three or four months or so, and I own I agreed with Billy that we should be none the worse of a more frequent change of diet. Of late we had seen very little of the wild pigs, being so much busied with our building work and pottery, and other things; but the dogs were frequent spectators of our proceedings, though not so constantly as at first, finding no profit in them, I suppose. However, we now set off with our bows and arrows, fiercely bent on slaughter.

We tramped for a good long time across the island before we discovered a herd of pigs in a little open space beyond a wood. They were grunting, as pigs do, and poking their snouts into the ground as if in search of food, though I doubted whether they would find anything fit to eat, even for them, which are not particular, as everybody knows. We crept up very stealthily to the edge of the open space, so that they did not perceive us, and then, selecting the two

nearest animals, we let fly our shafts both at the same moment. The arrows flew very swiftly from the bows, but clean over the pigs, so that we did not hit one of them, and the twang of the bow-strings being very audible, the pigs instantly took fright, and scampered away, all but one old boar, as he seemed, who stood with his snout lifted, grunting very loud, as if angry with being disturbed.

"I'll have a shot for old father bacon," says Billy, fitting an arrow to the string, and taking aim as well as he could, he shot it; but having seen that his first shot went too high, he aimed the second too low, and it stuck in the ground a yard or so in front of the solitary boar. And then Billy flew into a mighty rage, I assure you, for the boar marched up to the arrow, sticking out of the earth, and sniffed at it with very loud grunts for a moment, and then snapped it up and broke it in two. "There's half-a-day's work spoiled," cried Billy, who was already angry enough at having missed his mark twice, and he rushed out, calling the boar by many very unseemly names. The beast was taken by surprise, and instantly turned tail and scampered after the rest of the herd, with Billy at his heels, and me not far behind, for remembering the scrape that Billy had fallen into once before, I did not like to let him go out of my sight. And so we pursued those pigs for above half-an-hour, I should think, and never came within fifty yards of them, nor getting any chance to take a shot at them, because they were never still. We gave it up when we were thoroughly weary, and were going back to our hut, much disappointed of our expected meat, when Billy remembered that we had left two arrows where we had first encountered the pigs.

"We must go back for 'em," says he, shaking his fist in the direction whither the pigs had fled. "They are easier shot than made, and easier broke than shot, drat it; but I'll make 'em porkers pay for leading us this dance, see if I don't."

I agreed that our arrows, made with such toil, were much too precious to be wasted, and we went back to the place where we had shot them, not

finding it by any means easy to light on the spot again.

"We shall have to practise, Billy," I said on the way; "we can't expect to be good marksmen all at once."

"I s'pose we can't," says Billy ruefully; "we do have to have three or four goes at a thing afore we does it proper. But I did want some pork."

Coming at length to the open space, we searched for a good time before we found the two arrows; but as I was stooping I made a discovery that quite banished my disappointment and more than made amends for our long tramp. The pigs, as I said, had been grubbing the ground vainly, as I had thought; but I now saw that it was not so, for there before me lay a long round root as big as a man's head, and of a dark brown colour, which I immediately recognized as a yam. I called Billy to come and see it, and remembering that we had ate some that time we sojourned on the island, and found them very like potatoes when boiled and mashed, but sweeter, we were exceedingly pleased, and Billy at once said that we must certainly make some pork sausages to go with our mashed potatoes.

"Provided the pigs have left us any to mash," said I, for I now saw that they had grubbed the ground pretty thoroughly, and though we searched it for some time, we did not find above six yams, which we carried back to our hut, and boiled one of them for dinner. Unless we should find another plantation of them on the island, which I scarcely hoped for, it seemed that our supply would be soon exhausted; but it then came into my mind that we might plant some of those that we had, and so grow them for ourselves. We knew nothing about the season for planting, nor the right kind of soil for them, but supposed they would be something like potatoes in their nature as well as in their taste, and so determined to eat no more of them for the present, but to keep them until such time as seemed fitting for planting.

This question made us think of times and seasons, which, living from day to day as we did without concern for the morrow, we had not yet troubled ourselves about. It was summer when we first came to the island, and we were now, as I guessed, about the end of autumn, though there was little in the weather to show it, nor very much, so far as we could tell, in the varying length of day and night. But the near approach of winter came upon my mind with a kind of shock. We knew not what the winter was like in these latitudes, nor whether we should be afflicted with severe cold; but we could tell from the ripeness of the fruits of the island that they would not hang much longer upon the trees; indeed, some had already fallen; and I began to wonder what we should do for food in the winter. We had discovered that the bread-fruit, when plucked, remained good for three or four days, if the rind was not pierced; but we had never kept any for a longer time, and I was not a little dismayed as I thought of the straits we should be put to if we could not preserve the food in some way.

Billy reminded me that the native people with whom we had dwelt for a fortnight had given us a bread-fruit pudding, which was delicious. I asked him whether he had seen it made, and he said that he had not, but it looked uncommon like batter pudding when it was baked, and indeed I remembered it was just such a rich brown colour as well-cooked batter. I had many a time seen my aunt Susan make batter, and though we had neither milk nor flour, we had eggs, and it seemed to me at least worth the trial to attempt a batter of bread-fruit. Accordingly we took two large bread-fruits, very ripe, and having cut away the rind and rejected the core, we put the white pulpy part into one of my earthen vessels, and pounded and worked it with a thick stick until it looked very like a thick batter. Billy meanwhile had beat up an egg, and when we added this to the other, and mixed it, Billy cried out it reminded him of pancake day, when his stepmother always made two thick pancakes for herself and his father, and he had a thin one if there was any left over. Since all the earthen vessels I had made were round-bottomed, and we had nothing at all

resembling a frying-pan, we were thinking of boiling the mixture, and hoped it would not burn, being so thick, when Billy asked why we shouldn't bake it. I pointed out that we had no baking tins, and without something to hold it the batter would indeed become as flat as a pancake; but Billy was equal to this difficulty.

"I've seen my mother—she ain't my real mother, 'course—put a piece of greasy paper round a dough-cake before she popped it in the oven, and it came out all right, only a bit burnt sometimes, and then, my eye, didn't she make a row!" When I said that we had no paper, he at once replied, "But we've got leaves, and I don't see why a leaf of a leaf, as you may call it, shouldn't be as good as a leaf of paper, or better, the name being such." This appeared to me to be quite a good notion, so we got some leaves and wrapped some of our batter in them, making little oblong parcels about four inches long and two broad, and these we put into our oven, which I have before mentioned, and when we took them out and removed the leaves, we found our cakes to be of a fine brown colour, and they smelled exceeding good and tasted better: in fact, we had made the bread-fruit pudding we had so much liked before, only ours was richer by the addition of the egg.

We were very well pleased with this, but I own I was still better pleased two or three days after, for I then came upon a portion of the batter which we had left uncooked in the pot and forgotten, and found that it was perfectly sweet and good, being not in the least offensive either in taste or smell. It then came into my head all of a sudden that if the bread-fruit pulp would keep good for days even when exposed to the air, it might keep good for weeks and months if kept from the air, and thus all our anxiety about our winter food would be removed. When I suggested this to Billy he shook his head, saying, "We used to keep potatoes in a cellar, but then they had their jackets on, and I've never heard tell of fruits keeping. You can't keep an apple, 'cause I've tried, only I ate it afore it was quite rotten." But I was determined to make the experiment, though having no cellar or other confined space I was at first at a

loss how to form a large enough receptacle for our store. After considering of it for some time I had a notion of digging a hole in the ground and lining it with pottery ware, but to this Billy said that we might use leaves and so save a lot of time. So we dug a hole, not very deep, and lined it well with large thick leaves, and into it we poured a great quantity of the bread-fruit pulp that we had mashed—not mixing it with eggs, of course—and then we covered it over with leaves, and put heavy stones on the top, and waited for a week to see what came of it.

Archery

While we were waiting the result of our experiment at storage we practised very diligently with our bows and arrows, and I observed that Billy was pitting himself against me, though he did not say so, at least not then, but he told me afterwards that he meant to try whether Little John could not beat Robin Hood. At first we chose broad trees for our targets, but we found after a time, when we began to be able to hit them, that our arrows were very much blunted against the bark, which made us think of devising a target, for the arrows took so long to shape that it was important to us they should not be injured. This making of a target gave us no trouble, for we had only to stretch leaves across a light framework made of twigs; and to mark the centre of it, for what I believe is called the bull's-eye, we smeared a circle with the sticky substance which, as I have said, came out of the bark of the bread-fruit tree when we beat it to make our flag, and then sprinkled the sticky circle with sand, which stood out, light in colour, against the dark green of the leaves.

We set up this target at varying distances, which we made greater as we grew more proficient, and we found that our arrows took no hurt from striking against it, passing through the leaves, indeed, so that we had to make another target by and by; but not very soon, because it was some time before either of us hit the target at all, and as for a bull's-eye, we thought we should never do it. Indeed, when we had practised for about a week, Billy declared that he was

sure there never was a Robin Hood (he had made the same declaration before about Robinson Crusoe), and he thought the tales about these two heroes must have been invented by the same liar, because the one was Robin and the other Robinson. When I said that was impossible, because Robin Hood lived five or six hundred years before Crusoe was heard of, Billy said 'twas no matter; the stories of both were all pure fudge, and he wouldn't believe until he saw it that any one could ever hit the bull's-eye at a greater distance than ten yards. It chanced that our target was thirty yards away at that moment, and fitting an arrow to the bow, I let it fly without any nice calculation, and Billy was fairly dumfounded, and so was I, when we saw the arrow sticking in the circle of sand, a little to the right of the exact centre. For a moment Billy looked foolish; then he flushed, and turning truculently to me he said, "I lay you a dollar you don't do it again, not in ten shots." This put me on my mettle, and it did not occur to either of us that we had no dollars nor any such thing; but I fired my shots one after another with the most careful aim I could, and missed the target altogether six times, and the other times only grazed the outer rim. Whereupon Billy began to caper, and said I owed him a dollar, and a pretty fine Robin Hood I was, with more of that boyish sort of talk, which made me angry, and I flung down my bow, intending, I own, to punch Billy's head. When he saw this, he flung down his bow also, and squared himself, and put up his fists in such a remarkable way, calling to me to come on, that I could not keep from laughing, and then he laughed too, and so we were friends again at once. This was the first time things got so near to a fight with us, and though we had little disagreements that are not worth mentioning, we never fought but once all the time we were on the island, and of that I must tell in its place, if I think of it.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

OF PIGS AND POULTRY, AND OF THE DEPREDATIONS OF THE WILD
DOGS, UPON WHOM WE MAKE WAR

It was after about a week of this practice in archery that we removed the covering from the hole where we had stored the bread-fruit, and looked to see how it was. To our great delight it was perfectly good, though it had changed its colour, being now somewhat yellowish, and also its smell, which was now something like that of yeast. This made me think that the paste was fermenting, as indeed it was; but it seemed to be none the worse, and we cooked a little and ate it with relish, finding it rather acid, like cheese. Being satisfied on this point, we immediately set to work to dig a larger hole, which we filled in like manner with a great quantity of bread-fruits, mashing them to a paste first in our earthen vessels. And having our anxiety thus relieved on the score of provision for the winter, we ought to have gone back to our work on the big hut, but we were so bent on improving our marksmanship, Billy being determined to go pig-hunting, that we spent nearly all our time in practising with our bows and arrows. By this means we made ourselves pretty fair marksmen at the stationary target, but when Billy talked about going out to shoot pigs, I said that he would find it a very different matter to hit a moving thing. However, he would not listen to me, but left me making some new arrows while he went off by himself. He came back after a long time, empty-handed and very crestfallen, having lost two arrows and broken a third, without hitting a single pig.

"I tell you what, master," says he, "you carry the target while I take a shot at it: that will be as good as a running pig, and learn me to shoot 'em."

"And suppose you hit me?" I said.

"Well, I might, that's true," he said, "you being bigger than a pig. Don't I wish I knew how that there Little John aimed when he was shooting at a deer!"



CLAY SAUCEPANS, AND TONGS OF WOOD

This made me think whether we could not devise a moving target, and though I could not hit upon any means for several days, I did at last, and we tried it, and it answered my expectations very well, and moreover furnished us with a kind of sport, which was very grateful to us in our loneliness. What we did was this: we made a target somewhat larger than our first, in the same manner, but shaped like a man, that is, the top was smaller than the rest, but we did not attempt to make limbs. We made it very light, for this reason: that we strung it to a thin rope made of the fibres of the plant I have mentioned before, this rope being tied to two trees, about twenty yards apart, and at the height of a man from the ground. We hung the target (or the Guy Fawkes, as Billy called it) to the rope by a large loop, and to this we tied another rope, but thinner, so that the guy could be drawn easily along the rope from tree to tree. Then we took turns, the one shooting at the guy with his arrows while the other drew it along as quickly as he could, and we tried which of us could plant the most arrows in the figure while it moved over this space of twenty yards, the loser having to prepare the food for next day's meals. We found it very good sport and very good practice too, and there was not much to choose between us, though I think I became a trifle more expert than Billy, he excelling me in muscular strength, but I having, or acquiring, a certain knack with which strength has nothing to do.

You may be sure that as soon as we had attained to any skill in hitting our running man Billy was mad to go out once more and shoot pigs, and we were talking about doing so, as we ate our breakfast one morning, when we heard a great uproar in the wood just below the mountain, running out towards the natural archway. It seemed as if all the dogs in the island were barking and yelping at once. Wondering what the cause might be, we snatched up our bows and arrows, having also our axes as usual, and hasting across the lava bed towards the noise, we came upon a great sow with a litter of tiny pigs, and twenty or more dogs around them. This amazed us, for we had never seen the dogs attack the pigs before, and I guessed that they would not have done so now, only the sow was limping as if one of her legs was broken, and I thought she might have fallen from a height, the ground hereabouts being very rough and jagged. However, she was making a good fight of it against the dogs, and we stopped to watch the struggle, forgetting our own errand.

The dogs, as I have before shown, were possessed of a certain degree of cunning, and while some of them held the sow at bay, others rushed in among the litter and carried off at least one of the piglets; the mother, threatened on all sides, being unable to defend all her family. After we had watched the scene for a little, Billy whispered to me, "I say, master, you ain't a-going to let the dogs have all the pork?" I agreed that we had as good a right to it as they, so we ran forward shouting, and the dogs, which had seized enough of the litter to make a very good meal, ran away with their booty, being plainly afraid that we should attempt to take it from them.

When the sow spied us she knew that we were as dangerous enemies to her family as the dogs; at least she guessed it, for she made a very savage rush at Billy, who was nearest to her, and would have overthrown him but that she was lame and he was nimble. We took counsel together what we should do, having a mind to capture her and lead her to our settlement by the lake, for we knew that the little ones would follow her, and Billy had a great notion of

starting a piggery. But we saw that, her leg being broken, we should have great difficulty in leading her over the hill, even if our united strength could pull her: yet we did not like to leave her to the mercy of the dogs, which would certainly worry her slowly to death, helpless as she was. Accordingly we thought it best to kill her outright, and while Billy did this with his axe, I easily caught two of the little ones, which remained near their mother, and held them by the legs until Billy came to my assistance, and then we tied their legs together with creepers, so that they could not escape. Then Billy caught another one, and reached after the fourth, which, however, had become alarmed and scampered away, only to be snapped up by the dogs.

Now the question was, how should we bring the dead sow and the live piglets to our hut by the lake?—for we had determined to eat the sow and to keep the little ones alive. The sow was too heavy for one, or even both of us, to carry over the steep and rocky hillside; the little pigs were too small to be driven and must be carried. If we took the sow and left the pigs, they would be seized by the dogs; while if we took them and left the sow, there would be very little remaining of her by the time we came back. We settled that I should carry the pigs home, and bring back ropes for dragging the carcass, over which Billy would keep guard; so I took a little squealing one under each arm, and Billy slung the third to my back with a creeper, and I was about to start when Billy said: "What if old father bacon hears their squeals and comes after you?" In that case I should certainly have to drop one of the pigs to wield my axe: my bow and arrows, of course, I could not carry; but I must take the risk, and so set off, very well laden.

I came safely to our hut, and shut up the pigs inside (which was a trouble to us afterwards, but there was no help for it at the time, we having no other place in which to secure them), and then, taking some of our ropes, I hastened back to Billy. But I had no sooner got to the top of the slope above the lake than I heard the same barking and yelping and snarling as before, and in the same direction. This made me hurry my steps, and 'twas well I did so, for when I

came upon the scene, there was Billy by the sow, and the pack of dogs leaping with great uproar about him, he having his back to a rock, and very manfully wielding his axe to keep off the furious animals. The moment I saw this I gave a great shout, having before observed that nothing was more likely to scare these wild creatures, and rushed upon them, and seeing me they turned tail and scampered away into the wood.

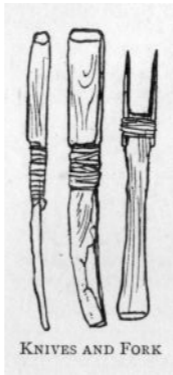
I found Billy in a very sad case. He told me that I had not long departed when the dogs came creeping up, and then, being worked into a frenzy by the sight and the scent of the carcass, and emboldened by seeing only one instead of two boys, they had made a rush upon him. He shot at them when he perceived that they were closing in, and I found that one arrow had killed a dog, another was sticking in the ground, and a third had broken against a spar of rock. Then he could no longer shoot, because they were upon him, but he killed two with his axe, not before he had been severely bitten about the legs, as he tried to prevent them from mangling the sow, and indeed he was in very great danger when I appeared to his rescue. The carcass had been so torn by the dogs that I did not care to have anything more to do with it; besides, Billy was so severely hurt, though he did not complain, that I saw he could give me little help in dragging the carcass home; for which reasons we decided to leave it to the dogs, and I only regretted that we had not done so before. I was so anxious about Billy, wondering whether his blood would be poisoned by the bite of the dogs, that I forgot to pick up our bows and arrows until he reminded me of them, and indeed he insisted on my gathering up two of those he had shot, the third being broken, saying that we could not spare any now that we had to reckon the dogs as our mortal enemies. Leaving the carcass, then, which the dogs were at instantly, we returned to our place, and then I bathed Billy's wounds with water from the lake, and tore a great strip off my shirt to make bandages, for which Billy blamed me, but what else could I do?

Since we could not endure that the pigs should be with us in the hut (they had been there too long already), we had to build a sty for them, or rather I had to, for Billy tried very bravely to help me, but had to give up after a short while. For some days he wore a very troubled look, asking me whether I thought he would go mad; but he cheered up wonderfully as the days passed and he did not take a dislike to water. I made as good a sty as I could with logs and branches, tying up the pigs inside so that they could not get away, but we were awakened in the middle of the night by a loud squealing, and when I ran out I found that the dogs had come and scratched away a part of the weak fence, and I was only just in time to save the piglets from them. Since I could do nothing to strengthen the sty in the darkness, I built a great fire near it, and sat by it for the rest of the night, in no very agreeable frame of mind, I assure you, and wishing that we had not brought the pigs, for being wild they were scarce likely to thrive in captivity. However, Billy was so set upon commencing swine-herd that I gave in to him, and next day began to build another sty, somewhat farther from the hut, and very much stronger, in which we put two of the pigs, killing the third and roasting a part for our dinner, hanging the rest up in the smoke of our fire to cure it. For roasting we made a tripod like to those that gipsies have, and not having any metal we made it of pottery ware, moulding the clay about three straight saplings.



OUR FIG-STY

We had had so little flesh-meat hitherto that we had not felt the lack of utensils, such as knives and forks; for bread-fruit needed nothing but our fingers, and eggs we always boiled hard. But now that we had the means of procuring flesh, I began to think of knives and forks and other things which we commonly use at home, though I have been told that our forefathers employed nothing but their fingers up to not so very long ago. Seeing that we should not be able for a few days to take up our work on the new hut, while Billy was recovering of his wounds, I thought it a fair opportunity to provide ourselves with articles of this sort if we could. We had no lack of material for handles, and it was not a very hard matter to shape a two-pronged fork of wood with the axe; but it was different with the knives, since we had nothing that would serve for blades except flints. However, by searching about the hillside I found several thin and fairly flat pieces of flint which we contrived to split still thinner and to sharpen by continually grinding them against the rocks, and when we had fixed them into handles which we made of the hollow shoots of a certain tree, we had knives, clumsy indeed, and not very sharp, but good enough to sever the limbs of the animals we killed for food, and also to part the meat into pieces when it was cooked.



Salt and Water

This same matter of meat put it into our heads to get salt for ourselves, and fresh water; for neither could we relish the food without the one nor quench our thirst without the other, cocoa-nut juice after pork having very disagreeable effects. We got water from the sea in some of the shallow pans that I had made, and found that by leaving these exposed the water in course of time evaporated, leaving a very rough and common kind of salt behind, and mixed with other substances. As for fresh water, we found when we boiled water from the lake, and allowed it to stand till it cooled and then poured it off, that it almost wholly lost the sulphurous taste, and we could drink it without hurt, which was a great comfort to us. We also put some of our pans out when rain fell, which happened pretty often, so that I have forgot to mention it; and with our fare thus enlarged, and being provided with conveniences that we had not dreamt of at first, our lot was much improved; and indeed we only wanted some means of replenishing our wardrobe to be set up for life.



What with one thing and another, I think near a month must have passed before we returned to our work on the big hut. There may be some who will blame us for this dilatoriness, and say that we ought to have continued on one task until it was finished; but I will say to them that if we had done so we might not only have fallen ill for want of change in our food, but we might have starved in the winter through not laying up a store; and besides, these critics have never been, I dare say, alone upon a desolate island. However, we did go back to our work, and the four corner posts being set up, as I have said, we had next to build the walls, which we did in the following manner.

The Hut

Between the corner posts, and about six inches apart, we planted strong poles about three inches across, leaving a gap on the side farthest from the lake, this being our doorway. On the outside of these upright posts we lashed a number of thicker logs, twice as thick indeed as the others, by means of

creepers, laying the logs horizontally one upon another. This was only done with prodigious labour, as you may guess, all the poles and logs having to be felled and trimmed by us with our rude instruments, and if I had hitherto been able to keep count of the days, I should have clean lost it now, for we did not desist from our work until the walls were finished, and every day was like the one that went before and the one that came after. When the walls were finished, and it was a question of the roof, we deliberated for a little whether to make it flat, or to give it a pitch, like the roofs of cottages at home in England. What determined us was the discovery that water was beginning to ooze through the flat roof of our small hut; the rains becoming heavier and more frequent as we drew near to the winter season. Accordingly we gave a pitch of about four feet to our roof, thus forming a fair slope on each side to carry off the rain water. The framework of the roof was formed of bamboos lashed together, and resting on grooves which we cut with much toil in the tops of the wall posts. In order to keep out the rain we decided to thatch the roof over, and for this purpose we collected a great quantity of grasses and reeds from the borders of the lake. Billy told me that the thatched roof of a cottage belonging to his uncle at Plumstead was full of fleas, and as we did not desire to be visited by any such creatures we soaked our materials very thoroughly in the sulphurous water of the hot spring, thinking this would repel them, afterwards drying it in the sun. We need not have troubled ourselves in this matter, for during all the time we dwelt on the island we saw neither fleas nor any other noxious insect; indeed, the grasshopper was the only kind worth mentioning, and we grew to like their cheerful song in the evenings.

The thatching took a long time, neither of us having the least idea how to set about it, and I doubt not a true thatcher would have laughed at our botching and bungling; but we did as well as we could, and were mightily pleased with ourselves when the work was done. There only remained the door, and if it had not been for the wild pigs and dogs on the island we should never have troubled about a door at all, the climate being such, even in winter, which was

now upon us, that we need never have closed our house to keep out the cold. But seeing that we should never be secure from molestation by these beasts without a door, we made one of stout logs lashed together, a little wider than the doorway, and since we could not hinge it, we contrived so that when we wished to close the hut at night or when we left it, we slid the door between the wall and two stout posts which we drove into the ground inside. As for a window, we did not need one, since we were up at dawn and abed with the dark, and had the doorway always open when we were in the hut during the daytime.

I said we were abed with the dark, but we did not always sleep at once, and oftentimes lay talking, so that we knew pretty nearly all about each other before we had been many months on the island. Billy's life had been so hard before he ran away to sea that I believe he was more contented now than ever before, having got over his first fears of savages and starvation, and the old smoker, as he called the burning mountain. (This, I ought to say here, had not been violently active since we first came to the island, though we sometimes heard faint rumblings, and saw spurts of steam and water, but never so great as at first.) I was not near so contented as Billy, for my life had been very easy and comfortable at Stafford, and I remembered my kind friends there, and sometimes felt in the lowest deeps of misery when I thought I might never see them again. But when I reflected I saw that I ought to be thankful that I was not cast on a barren island, or among savages, and there was always a hope that some navigator might sail towards our island and spy our flagstaff, though we often vexed ourselves with the thought that a vessel might pass us in the night and we know nothing about it. I think by this time we had altogether forgotten the men of the *Lovey Susan*, and did not in the least trouble ourselves to guess at what had become of them, though Billy did say once that he was sure they were eaten up by savages.

Our large hut being finished, I thought we deserved another holiday, having never left working at it for many weeks, or perhaps months. But the very first day we purposed being idle, a great storm of rain overtook us as we roamed over the hills, and drove us back to our house for shelter. We were drenched to the skin, and our garments were so old and tattered that we thought they would fall to pieces when we stripped them off to dry them; and moreover though the air was not cold, as we know cold in England, yet it was chilly sometimes, especially at night, and I feared sometimes when we got wet, that we should be seized with an ague. We began to consider whether we could not by some means contrive to make ourselves clothes, and I reminded Billy that we had made a kind of cloth for our flag out of the bark of the bread-fruit tree.

"Yes, but we ain't got no scissors," says he, "and there's a deal of cutting out to be done in making clothes. My mother—not my real mother, you know—used to make my breeches out of father's, and you should have seen her snipping at 'em, gnashing her teeth together all the time. We can't cut out with our axes, or them things you call knives."

This was true, but I suggested we might beat out the strips of bark till they became of the proper shape. Billy scoffed at this. "What about patterns?" he said. "She used to have paper things, and lay 'em on the cloth and cut round 'em, and you can't make sleeves without 'em, that I'm sure of. Besides, where's our needle and thread?"

"We've made thread out of the fibres of the cocoa-nut," I said, "and as for needles, couldn't we point some thin sticks, and try them?"

"We can try," says he, "but it won't be no good, and you've forgot all about thimbles."

We did try, and I was not very much surprised when we failed, for though we could point a stick with our flints, we had nothing with which we could

pierce the eye, and we found that tying the thread to the end was by no means satisfactory. However, we did contrive to put a few patches into our breeches by sticking on some of the bread-fruit cloth, which was soft and brown, with the sticky stuff that came out of the bark when we beat it. I should mention that we were not able to use this stuff immediately, for it did not make the cloth adhere; but we found that if we left it for a day, it became hard, and being then heated in one of our pots over a fire, it turned into a very fair glue. Besides patching our breeches thus, we made ourselves long coats, or rather cloaks, for they had no sleeves, being simply a long piece of cloth with a hole in the middle, and though we laughed at each other a good deal when we put them on, they covered us from neck to heel, and were very useful in keeping off the rain. And while we were about this, we thought we might as well make hats too, if we could; and after many failures we managed to fashion some bonnets out of cocoa-nut leaves, which kept our heads dry, and when the summer came defended them from the sun's heat, and our necks too, for we stuck on flaps at the back.



BILLY'S PALM-
LEAF HAT

We had started a piggery, as I have mentioned. At first it was a great deal of trouble to us, for the dogs came yelping round the sty at night, and the wild pigs also tried to reach the two piglets we had captured, and we had to be

constantly on the watch lest the walls of the sty should be broken through. However, these wild inhabitants of our island in course of time seemed to accept the piggery as part of the order of things, and left us in peace. But our troubles were started again when Billy all of a sudden conceived the notion of a poultry run. In the course of our second holiday, after our new hut was finished, we chanced to discover several nests of hens, which we had formerly sought for in vain, they being cunningly concealed or else very inaccessible. Domestic fowls do not seem in general to be very plentifully endowed with wits, but the fowls on our island, having to provide against the rapacity of rats and dogs and pigs, certainly had more intelligence than ordinary; and the hens were not particular about the comfort of their nests, so long as they could find a shelter—some secluded nook among the rocks where they could lay their eggs. Billy had said more than once that he would like to have a poultry run, but though we now and then found eggs, and once or twice managed to bring down a fowl with our arrows, which we roasted or boiled, we had never yet been able to catch one alive. They frequented mostly the little patch of woodland in the extreme west of the island, and there we sometimes saw them roosting in the upper branches of tall trees. It was near this spot that we found the nests I have mentioned, but the birds were very wary, and flew away at the first sign of our approach.

Fowling

It was clear that if we were to catch them, we must snare them in some way or other, and having not thought of making nets, which we might have done with cocoa-nut fibres—indeed, we did afterwards—we wondered whether the sticky substance that came from the bread-fruit bark might serve us as birdlime. We tried it, but we found that it hardened too quickly for our purpose; at least, that was how we explained our want of success; and we thought that if we mixed it with some other substance that would keep it moist the result might be different. We tried bread-fruit, and then shredded cocoa-nut, but neither was effectual; and then, almost as a last resource, we made the

experiment with a nut that I have not before mentioned, because we had not found it of any use as food. It grew on a tall and very leafy tree, and the ground was at this time strewn with the olive-green fruits which had fallen, being over-ripe. We easily removed the outer covering, and within was a hard shell, something like a walnut, only smooth, and inside the shell was a whitish kernel, which we had found was not very palatable; but it was very oily, and we thought this, when pounded, might mix very well with our glue, as I may call it.[1] Accordingly we did this, and taking a quantity of the mixture to the spot which the fowls haunted, we smeared a fallen branch with it, and having spread some small pieces of baked bread-fruit as bait, we went among the trees to await the issue.

A Fowl-house

Billy was patient enough when work was a-doing, but he never could bide patiently, for which reason many holidays were not good for him. He ran so often to the edge of the wood to see if any birds were snared, that I am sure he was the cause why we had to wait so long, the birds taking alarm at his movements. At last I persuaded him to go with me back to our house, and when we returned after a long interval we suspected by the unaccustomed cackling we heard that our birdlime had proved successful; and so it was, for when we came to the branch, there was a fine hen fluttering her wings and cackling most lamentably, and also a kind of wood pigeon, which did not make near so much noise. Billy wrung the neck of the pigeon in an instant, saying it would make a tasty morsel for dinner, and then we tied the legs of the hen, and carried her home. But one hen does not make a poultry run, and it was a considerable time before we caught any more fowl, the fate of the first seeming to have warned the rest. However, we did succeed in catching four or five more at intervals, and we turned our small hut into a fowl-house, putting poles across for them to roost on. It is a strange thing, but after a little while the fowls, which had before scarce made a sound, began to cackle and crow just as the fowls do in England, and Billy said that finding they were now safe from

their enemies, and fed regularly, they were much happier than before, and showed it by their singing. How that may be I know not, but I am inclined to think that they had better kept silence, for one morning after a night of wind and rain, during which we heard that strange sound we heard on our first night, we found the gate of our poultry run open and all the fowls gone, leaving only a great quantity of feathers scattered about, both inside and out. This told us pretty plainly what had happened, and if we needed assurance, we had it in the footprints in the sodden ground.



OUR SMALL HUT TURNED INTO A FOWL-HOUSE

"'Tis them rampageous dogs, master," cried Billy in a fury. "The thieving villains! And one of the hens beginning to sit, too! I wish we could poison 'em."

"We can't do that," I said, "but we shall have to make war on them, or we shall never feel safe, either for our belongings or ourselves, for they attacked you, and I am pretty sure that if one of us was hurt and could not count on the help of the other he would soon be torn in pieces. We must teach them a lesson."

"Yes, but how?" says Billy. "They're such cowards that they won't stand still to be shot at."

"Nor would you, if you were a wild dog," I said. "I think we had better set a trap for them."

War on the Dogs

"Yes, and catch 'em alive oh!" says Billy, and we straightway began to consider of the kind of trap that would serve us best, Billy favouring a running noose, which seemed to me not very sure, so I proposed a pit covered over

with branches and leaves. We tried this, and before we went to bed we put a good-sized piece of roast pork (Billy having shot a pig that day) on the covering of the pit, hoping that the dogs would be drawn to it by the smell and then would tumble into the pit, where we should find them in the morning. In the middle of the night we heard a yapping and yelping; but we did not get up, for one thing because it was dark and we could scarcely have seen to deal with our captives. However, in the morning we found the pork gone and also the dogs, and when we examined the pit we saw that some had fallen in but scrambled out again up the sides, though how they did it we never could tell, the hole being of a pretty good depth. This failure did not slacken our determination, and we soon thought of a more subtle trick, to which there was one drawback in the fact that we had no means of making a good torch, which seemed essential to it. We could, of course, have made a great blaze with our fire, which we had never let go out since we had first kindled it, except when a great rain put it out; but that would as like as not have defeated our own ends. However, it chanced that one evening we made a discovery which was useful to us in this particular, and much more afterward, as will appear.

I have mentioned the nut we pounded and mixed with glue to make our birdlime. Well, since we did not wish to use up too many cocoa-nuts or too much of our bread-fruit paste for feeding our two pigs, which were thriving wonderfully, we gave them these other nuts, which they appeared to like very well. On this evening I speak of, in replenishing the fire to cook our supper, we happened to throw into it two or three nuts which had got among the fuel, and we observed that they burned with a very bright flame, quite different from the flame of wood or cocoa-nut shells. We did not think any more of it for the moment, but when I lay in bed (I say bed, but it was only leaves and dried grass), our house being pitch-dark, I thought all of a sudden that perhaps we could make a candle of these nuts if we wished, though we had no need of a light, having nothing to read. I called out to Billy to know if he was awake, and telling him of my notion, he said, "What's the good?" which I remember he

always did say when I suggested anything new. However, I resolved to see whether I was right, and next day I put two or three kernels together, and kindled them, and they burned with a light like a candle's, but with a rather offensive smell.

We at once set about making a torch, and finding that we had a difficulty in getting the kernels entire out of the shells, which were very hard, we thought of boiling them, and then found that the shells cracked with the slightest tap, so that the kernels came out whole. When we had some twenty of these kernels we skewered them together on a thin, hard stick, and so had a torch, and there being now no obstacle to the trick I purposed playing on the dogs, we took one of our pigs into the house, and surrounded the other with a kind of stout stockade inside the sty, and at nightfall we left the gate of the sty open, but contrived that we could easily close it by means of a rope which we carried into our house. We did not go to bed, but waited, holding our torch ready, with flint and tinder, and also a couple of the spears I have before mentioned, which, although rude weapons, were the fittest for the work in hand.

It was not long before we heard the light patter of feet, and soon after the squealing of our decoy. We waited a little, so as to give our expected guests plenty of time to establish themselves, knowing too that they would not be able to do any harm to the pig, and then we pulled the rope, so closing the gate upon the intruders. Then I kindled the torch, and holding it aloft in my left hand, I rushed out with a spear in my right hand, and Billy armed in like manner. The sty was a good way from the house, and before we got to it the dogs that were outside, alarmed by the unwonted glare and by our shouts, scampered away into the darkness, leaving their comrades howling and yelping in the sty, and the pig squealing too in a terrible fright. Having the prisoners now at our mercy, for they could not leap the walls of the sty, we doomed them to instant execution, and when some of them fled for refuge into the covered part of the sty, we took off a portion of the roof, and so fell on them again, and did not desist until we had killed every one. We left them there until the morning, and then carried

them forth, nine in all, and Billy insisted on skinning them, saying that their coats would make fine mats for our house-floor, which indeed they did when they had been well washed in lake-water and dried in the open air. The vengeance we took had an excellent deterrent effect on the rest of the pack, which no more molested us, at least in that part of the island. We caught more fowls to replace those that had been stolen, and captured the litter of another sow, which we killed for food, and were happy in the thought that by natural increase our fowls and pigs would in course of time provide us with as much food as we needed, or even more. We kept the hides of those we killed, though we had no immediate use for them. Billy said he wished he could make a pair of boots, for the rough ground was very troublesome to his bare feet, and my boots were very much worn and, indeed, scarcely held together. But we knew nothing of bootmaking, and for some time did not attempt to provide ourselves with footwear, though afterwards we contrived to make some strange and uncouth foot-gloves: I can call them by no other name.

[1] This was clearly the candle-nut, of which more is said presently.—H.S.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

OF THE NAMING OF OUR ISLAND—OF A FLEET OF CANOES, AND OF
THE MEANS WHEREBY WE PREPARE TO STAND A SIEGE

We had now fairly established ourselves as the owners of the island, having

a comfortable house, domestic animals, and a sufficient store of food, the only article in which we were lamentably deficient being clothes. The necessity we were under of working hard with our hands left us little time for commiseration, and I verily believe that we were in the main as cheerful and happy as we could have been anywhere. And now that the completion of our hardest tasks left us a little leisure, it came into our heads that we ought to give our property a name, or rather it was Billy that thought of it, he saying that since I was clearly king of the country, it was ridiculous not to be able to say what country it was.

"Call it Smoking Island," says he, "because of that old smoker up there."

To this I objected that it was not a pretty name, and besides, the mountain was not always smoking.

"Well then," he said, "call it Lonely Island, because it is lonely, and so are we."

To this I replied that a more cheerful name would suit me better, and suggested that we should call it Perseverance Island, since all our present comforts sprang from our persevering in the face of difficulties. But this Billy would by no means agree to, saying that it looked like bragging, and besides he hated the word perseverance, because he had to write it so many times on his slate at school, and it made him think of raps on the knuckles. He told me that he had been for a few months at a charity school, but he played truant so often that the master refused to have him any longer, at which he was very glad. After considering sundry other names, to which either Billy or I had some objection, we finally settled on Palm Tree Island, both because most of the trees of the island were palms, and because we got our first comfort, when we were deserted, from the cocoa-nut palms on the hill-side.

The general country being thus fitted with a name, we proceeded to name the several parts of it. The mountain we called simply The Mountain, though to

Billy it was always Old Smoker; the slope leading up to the crater we called Rocky Hill, and the wood beneath Bread-fruit Wood. The big rock at the north-west corner was Red Rock, and the two smaller ones at the south-west were The Sentinels. And so we named various parts as we thought of it, not all at one time, and many of them not until I made my map, of which I may say more hereafter. I must mention, however, that Billy insisted on giving my name to the wood where we slept on our first night, and in my turn I gave his name to a sandy bay on the west of the island, and Billy was very proud when he spelt out Bobbin's Bay on the aforesaid map.

Plantations

So the winter passed away, not like the winter in England, for we had no frost or snow, nor did the leaves fall from the trees; the only true sign that it was winter was the absence of flowers and fruit on the trees; and even this was not the case with all of them, for the cocoa-nut palm bore its fruit all the year round, so that on the same tree there were nuts in all stages of ripeness, which I thought a very wonderful thing. We had a considerable amount of rain, and this became greater as we came into the spring season. We had kept for this season the yams which we saved from the pigs, as I related a while ago, and we now planted them, choosing two places, since we did not know on what soil they would thrive best, whether where we had found them, or near our house. We had kept the yams in one of our pans, and we guessed it was time to plant them because we saw sprouts growing out of them, as you sometimes see the eyes of a potato sprouting. We cut these sprouting parts off, keeping the other parts for boiling, and set them in the ground, some on the ground just below our house, the others in the glade where we had discovered them. Knowing that we stood no chance of getting a crop unless we defended the plants from the wild pigs, we put fences of hurdles (made of twigs and reeds) round our plantations, which were at first only a few yards square, and waited with what patience we might for the result. I will say here that the yams we planted near our house came to nothing, why I know not; but the others throve

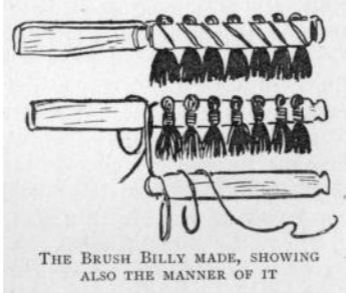
exceedingly, and though we had some trouble with the pigs, which broke down the fence more than once and did some damage, we got a very fair crop in the summer, which supplied us with mashed potatoes, as Billy said (for which we used dripping from the pigs we cooked), and also with seed for another sowing.



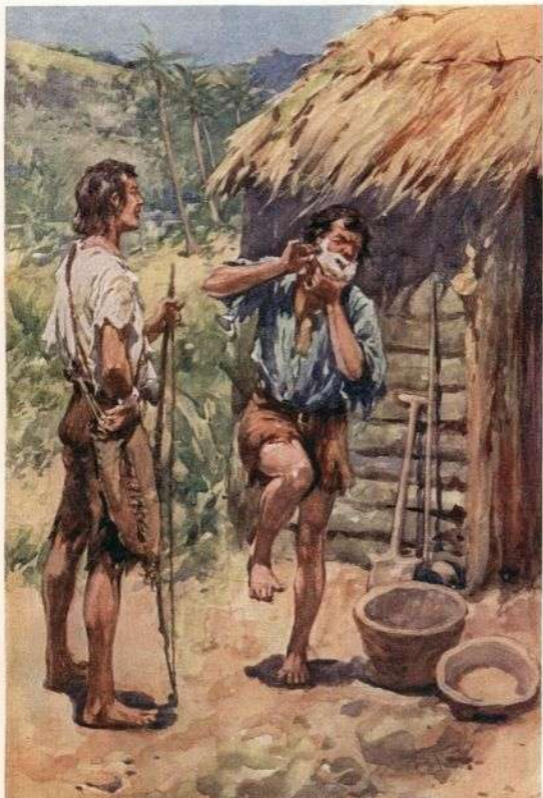
Articles of Toilet

Though our great work in the building of our hut was finished (at least we thought it was) our days were by no means idle, for we had our animals to feed and our fences to keep in repair, and moreover we made more pots and pans, also arrows and spears, thread and rope. One thing that gave me much amusement was the brush that Billy made. Of course we had not been able to attend to our toilet since we came to Palm Tree Island, beyond bathing and washing our heads: I mean we could not brush our hair, which was now grown down to our shoulders for want of scissors, nor trim our finger-nails, though our hard work kept these pretty short. But on going down to the lake one sunny day to fetch water I saw my image reflected, and afterwards bemoaning my exceeding unkempt appearance, though in truth it mattered nothing, Billy

took it into his head to make me, secretly, a brush and comb, which he presented to me with great glee. "There, old king," says he, for he sometimes called me king instead of master since we named the island, "there you are, and I hope you'll use 'em to keep your old majesty's head tidy." His manner of addressing me was not, you perceive, very reverential; but I will say this for Billy, that though he was very sturdy and independent of spirit, he was never insolent, being a gentleman in his nature, and so we were rather good comrades than anything else, and the talk of kings and so forth was mere fun and play-acting. I did use the brush and comb which he had made for me, but not, I confess, very often, and I cannot help thinking what a great number of things that we are accustomed to we could do without; indeed, though we had made ourselves knives and forks, we did not use them very much either and you might have seen us at dinner-time squat down on the floor of our house, with two mats of leaves in front of us, on one of which was our meat (pork, or a pigeon or fowl), on the other our yams or bread-fruit, boiled or baked, with a little heap of salt in the corner, and little clay mugs filled with cocoa-nut juice or water at the side. Then we would take a yam in one hand and a shank of pork, or a leg of fowl, in the other, dip them in the salt and take a bite, and then a bite of the yam, and so go through our meal very comfortably till only the bones were left. Afterwards we thought of making stools and chairs and a table, as much to employ our time as for any conveniency of them, and then we ate our meals again in the civilized way, though I own I thought it not a whit better nor much cleaner than the other, for we could always wash our hands.



I said that we could not cut our hair, but when it grew so long that it covered our shoulders, and Billy said I should soon be an old woman, we thought of shortening it by burning; so we each became barber in turn, holding the hair away from the head with Billy's comb, and then burning the ends away with a torch. Billy was much more hairy than I was, and though he was three years younger than me his cheeks and chin already showed signs of black whiskers and beard, and one day I found him trying to shave with a flint, having made soap by boiling fat with the ashes of wood; but he succeeded so ill, only making his chin raw, that he gave it up, and said he supposed he would have to look a fright.



"ONE DAY I FOUND HIM TRYING TO SHAVE WITH A FLINT."

"ONE DAY I FOUND HIM TRYING TO SHAVE WITH A FLINT."

A Fleet of Canoes

One day, about a year after our first coming to the island, as we judged by the ripeness of the breadfruit, Billy went up Flagstaff Hill, as we called it, to take the survey which we never omitted, each of us doing it in turn, though we sometimes went together. I was moulding a new pan, when all of a sudden I heard a great shout from the hill-side above, and looking up I saw Billy leaping down towards me with a speed that seemed very dangerous, waving his arms and shouting, though in the distance I could not distinguish his words. My heart leapt into my mouth, as the saying is, for from his excitement I surmised that he had descried a sail at sea, and I thought he was calling to me to help him raise our signal. I ran towards him, and as we drew nearer to each other, I saw plainly on his face the marks of great agitation, and then in a breathless way he called the one word "Savages!" and I was instantly in a terrible fear lest they had landed on the island and were coming to attack us.

However, when we met, Billy told me that from the hill-top he had seen a fleet of canoes on the north side of the island, passing from west to east. They were filled with savages, though whether armed or not he could not tell, they being a good distance out at sea, nor was there anything to show whether they purposed landing. It came into my mind with a shock at that moment that we were very ill able to defend ourselves in case they should land and attack us, for we had very little provision in our hut, and if we took refuge there they might keep us shut up until we died of hunger, or thirst, which would be worse. I blamed myself very much for lack of prudence in not making provision for

such an emergency, but the truth is that after spending so many months without seeing a human form we had become careless, and went from day to day as though there had been no human beings in the world except our two selves. However, it was too late to make up for this neglect now, if the savages did indeed land, and I saw that in that case we could only take to the woods and trust that our hut and plantations, being inland, might pass undiscovered. Accordingly I accompanied Billy back up the hill, and we went round the wood where our signal-tree was, to a place nearer the crater, whence we had a more extensive view.

"There they are!" cried Billy, pointing out to sea, and I saw eight or nine long canoes filled with brown men, who must have numbered near two hundred in all. But I saw with inexpressible relief that they had come past the Red Rock, and were proceeding steadily eastward, and knowing that there was no beach on the north side of the island where they might land, we had great hope that we should not be troubled with them. Keeping out of sight behind rocks, though indeed there was perhaps little danger of our being seen, we watched the fleet until it became no more than a speck on the eastern horizon, and then we went down to our hut, relieved of present danger, but by no means easy in mind about the future.

Fortification

We knew not whether the fleet was going or returning, but whichever it was, I was surprised it had not put in at our island for rest and refreshment, for the nearest land to the west was at least twenty miles away, and on the east it could not be less, for we had seen but the dimmest line in that direction. Billy said the savages were without doubt afraid of the old smoker, and even though he was harmless at present, the island had a bad name, and so they would not land on it except under very great stress. This I devoutly hoped was the true explanation, for if it was, we had a reasonable hope that we should never have to deal with savage enemies. Yet the fright we had had determined us to do

something to provide more efficiently for our safety, and the first thing we did was to make loopholes in the walls of our hut, so that if we were at any time forced to take refuge there, we might at least be able to make some resistance by shooting arrows at the enemy. Then we carried a great number of coconuts into the house, which would provide us both with meat and drink, and we determined to dig a hole in the floor when the bread-fruit was fully ripe, and store it with the pounded pulp as we had done outside. Then it came into my head of a sudden that, our hut being built wholly of logs and thatch, the enemy might easily set fire to it and burn us alive, and to hinder this we carried down great quantities of the clayey soil of which we made our pottery ware, and mixing it with sand and small stones, we made a kind of rough-cast with which we covered the whole of the outside of the hut, roof and all, so that we not only concealed the joints of the walls, but also, as I hoped, protected the hut from fire.

This work took us a long time, as you may guess, and before we had finished it, we saw the fleet again. One or other of us went up the hill several times a day to watch the eastern horizon, and on the third day, I think it was, after we first saw the canoes, a little after sunrise, I saw some tiny specks in the east, and recognizing them by and by for canoes I watched them with great anxiety. I feared lest we might have two enemies to deal with, the savages and the volcano, which had been rumbling for a day or two at intervals, and sending up puffs of steam or smoke, and we wondered whether there was going to be another eruption like that at the time of our first coming. As soon as I saw the canoes, I signalled for Billy to join me, and the moment we caught sight of them he cried: "Why, there's only six; there was eight or nine before," a fact which had escaped my notice. They were plainly heading straight for the island, and not in a course that would bring them past the north side with a good offing as before.

"I don't want to be eat," said Billy, going pale under his sun-tan; "but we can't fight over a hundred savages, can we, master?"

Before I could reply there was a loud rumbling beneath us, and being not a great way from the crater, we set off at a run, going down towards the Red Rock, there being no lava on this side. We had run barely twenty yards when a great puff of steam or smoke was shot up into the air for near two hundred feet, I should guess, and a shower of pumice stones fell around us. This frightened us so much that, forgetting all about the canoes, we did not stop running until we came to the edge of the cliff opposite the Red Rock, and then, there being no more signs of activity in the volcano, we were thinking of climbing up again to our watching-place when, to our great joy, we caught sight of the canoes making round the north side, and indeed bearing away northwards away from us.

"Three cheers for old smoker," cried Billy. "He's scared 'em away, sure as nuts, and they won't eat us after all."

We stood watching the canoes as they made their way very toilsomely against wind and current, and did not go down to our hut until they had quite vanished from sight. It was long past our usual dinner-time, I am sure, and as we had had no breakfast we were mighty hungry, and ate with very good appetites, having lost our fear; and taking up our mugs of cocoa-nut juice, and knocking them together in the way of folks drinking a toast, I cried out, "Here's to old smoker!" and Billy shouted, "God bless him!"

This happened, as I say, three days after our first alarm, and we did not cease from our efforts to put ourselves in a good posture of defence if we should ever again have reason to fear an attack. We had already made our hut fairly fire-proof, and cut loop-holes in the walls, these at varying heights, so that we might shoot down from a height upon the enemy at a distance, or on a level with them if they came to close quarters. Since a man behind walls is equal to at least three outside, I should think, we considered that we two, though hardly come to man's estate, could make a very good fight of it; our only trouble was

the matter of water, for while we had no fears in the matter of food, we did not see how by any means we could store sufficient water in the hut, even if we filled all our pots and pans.

Sinking a Well

I was lying with Billy one evening outside our hut overlooking the lake, when the solution to this puzzle came all at once into my head. The ground behind the hut sloped pretty steeply down to the lake, the length of the slope being about twenty feet, and the vertical height about six feet—that is, between the floor of our hut and the usual surface of the water. For I must observe here, lest I forget it, that the depth of water in the lake varied very much at different seasons, being far greater after a period of rainy weather than in drought, the variation being at least equal to the height of a man. And in regard to this variation a circumstance caused us much wonderment, for though when the rains were heavy the lake rose very rapidly to a certain point, we observed that it never came higher than that point, no matter how long the rains continued. When I pointed this out to Billy he saw nothing to wonder at in it, saying that the lake must be just like the sea; for though it had rained hundreds and thousands of times since the beginning of the world, the sea had never drowned the world since the Flood, and it surely would have done so unless there was some hole at the bottom that opened when the sea was getting too full.

"That can't be," said I.

"Well, then, how is it?" says he. "You pour water into a cup, and it'll slop over presently. The lake's a cup, though a big one; why don't it slop over after all these rains if there ain't a hole in the bottom, as I say?"

"But it can't be in the bottom, Billy, or the lake would sometimes be drained quite dry," I said.

"Well, it is, pretty nearly," he replied, but I would not admit that, for though

the water subsided slowly after the rains had ceased, it had never sunk so low as to let us see the bottom. At low water we hunted all round the lake to see if we could find an outlet through which the water ran away, but we saw none, and remained in our puzzlement for a good while longer.

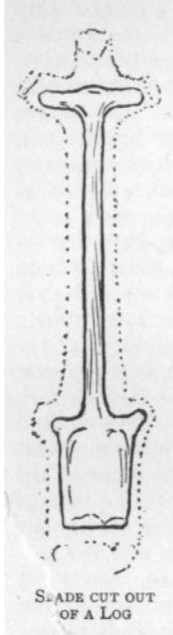
However, I was beginning to tell of the notion that came into my head as we lay that evening above the lake. Being so little distant from it, I thought, why should we not sink a well in the floor of the hut, and connect it with the lake by a pipe?

"What's the good?" says Billy, when I put the question to him. "For one thing, the water won't run up into the hut without a pump; at least, I've never seen water run uphill yet; and then, as soon as any savages come, you may be sure they'll spy it, and then where are you?"

I said that as for the latter point, we should, of course, take care to show no sign outside of what we had done; and as for the former, I did not despair of finding some way to raise the water to our level, even if we could not make a pump. Billy talked till it was dark about the difficulties of what I proposed—the difficulty of digging a hole, of preventing the earth from falling in, and so forth—until you would have thought he was the poorest-spirited creature that ever lived; but that was only Billy's way, and I often observed that he was never so active and eager, aye, and never so hopeful too, as after he had been talking in this gloomy manner. At any rate, next day he set to work with me to make a trial of my notion.

It happened that, the weather having been dry for a good while, the water was now low, indeed, within a foot of the lowest point to which we had ever known it to sink, which was favourable to our plan; for it was necessary that our pipe should enter the lake below the water's surface, even in the driest weather, and moreover if the latter had been full, we should have found it very troublesome, and perhaps impossible, to do as I shall now relate. This was

nothing less than to dam up the water of the lake for a little space, so that we might cut a passage through the side of it towards our hut. To make this dam we felled a number of logs and dragged them down to the bed of the lake, where we arranged them in the shape of a great V, the point of the V being out in the lake, the ends resting on the shore. We lashed the logs together very firmly, and coated them with clay, and so made a dam which we found to answer very well. Of course we had to bale out the water which was first between the arms of the V, and Billy grumbled as we did this, saying that he was sure there would be a heavy rainstorm, and all our work would be for nothing; but in this he turned out a false prophet, since we had no rain at all for many days.



When the inside of the V was dry, its floor was about three feet below the level of the water outside of it; and within that dry space we could work very comfortably at making a cutting through the bank towards the hut. To do this we had to make spades, which we fashioned out of hard wood as well as we could with our axes, and they served our purpose excellently well, though they would not have done so had not the earth been soft; if it had been rocky, I

know not what we should have done. With these spades we began to cut away a portion of the sloping bank of the lake, continuing till we had, as it were, taken a slice or a wedge off it, up to within about three yards of our hut. This took us two whole days, for the earth, though soft compared with rock, was pretty compact, and our clumsy tools made us sigh often, and sweat too.

Having come, as I say, to within ten feet or so of our hut, I thought we might then give over digging and endeavour to pierce a way to a point directly beneath the centre of the floor, or at least near enough as that we might sink a shaft to meet it. We surveyed the position for some little while, so as to take our bearings, as Billy said: and then, having got a pretty good notion of the course our proposed passage should take, we shoved into the earth, horizontally, a pole we had sharpened to a point, and when we found we could push it in no further, we drew it out and gave it another mighty shove, directing it in such a way as we thought would bring it midway between the two corner posts, though of course several feet below the floor. We found after a time that, though we tried to drive the pole straight, nevertheless it deflected somewhat towards the right; and when we pulled it out to give it another shove, it met with some obstacle, which I was afraid might be the bottom part of one of our posts, though I could not conceive how we had gone so far out of our reckoning. But with a little more pushing the pole, being in a certain degree flexible, went past the obstacle, so that if this was one of the posts, it had not been met squarely in the middle. The pole being now wholly in the earth except just enough of it to hold by, we judged that we had driven it as far as was needful, and mighty glad of it we were.

Leaving the pole in the earth, we set about boring in the floor of our hut, not beginning midway between the door-posts, as we should have done if we had encountered no obstacle, but a little to one side. We proceeded here in the same manner as we had done in the bank of the lake, using a sharp-pointed pole, only we drove it down in a vertical direction; but we soon found that this would not effect our purpose, as indeed we might have known before if we

had thought about it, for it was necessary that we should make a clean hole, which could not be done by driving in a pole. After considering of it, we determined to get a large piece of bamboo stalk, at least five inches across, and to drive that into the earth with the pummet we had used in building the hut. This we did, and placing the bamboo (a piece about three feet long) in the hole we had already begun to drive, we dealt it several heavy blows with the pummet, by this means driving it into the ground, and at the same time forcing some earth up into its hollow interior. Then we took the bamboo out, and carrying it outside the hut, poked all the earth out of it, and when it was empty, put it once more into the hole, and smote it again as before. This was a very tedious business, for as the hole went deeper we had to use a longer piece of bamboo, and when we had near finished the bamboo broke in the middle, and we had to dig to a depth of three feet or more around the hole before we could reach the lower portion to pull it out again, at which Billy was very wroth, because the excavation had to be filled in again, so as to bring the floor to its former level. However, we continued until the hole was seven or eight feet deep, at which depth we thought we should come to the pole we had driven through the bank; but it would have been scarcely less than a miracle if we had bored the hole to the exact spot, and we had indeed to enlarge its circumference until it measured full thirty inches across, and not till then did we come to the pole. When we did strike this we were both very joyful, for we had been working at it for four full days, and had yet got but a very little way in our design.

A Surprising Discovery

We went back now to the lake-side, and using bamboos as we had done in the hut, but with longer and larger stems, we made little by little a sort of tunnel about five inches wide running to the well we had sunk. We then sank this latter a few inches below its former level, so as to make a kind of cistern or reservoir for the water when it should flow in from the lake; and in order that the water might not run away through the soft earth, we let down a quantity of clay with

which to line the bottom, intending to bake it with fire after we had rammed it until it became hard and tight. Billy took this work of ramming, performing it with a long and stout pole, which he lifted high and then brought down with great force, he always delighting to show the strength of his muscles. However, he had just made a stroke of particular power, when the beater pole slipped from his hands and he fell flat on his face over the top of the well. He was on his feet again in an amazing short time, and I laughed as he ran to the door, holding his nose, I thinking he was running to the lake to bathe it. But in a moment I was aware of a very evil smell which came without a doubt from the well we had sunk, and it was so powerful, and also noisome, that I very quickly beat a retreat too, and joined Billy outside the hut.

"I'm poisoned," says Billy, spluttering and spitting on the ground. "What did you do it for, master? I said as how 'twould be no use."

"You're a Job's comforter," said I, somewhat tartly, such a speech as Billy's only sharpening the edge of adversity, to my thinking.

"You're another," says Billy, who did not in the least know what I meant, his acquaintance with the Bible being at that time, I fear, very slight. "There's the bottom knocked out of the well, and dead men's bones below, that's what it is."

It did come into my head for a minute that we might have opened up some grave, or at least a place where human folk had been overtaken and buried by lava from the mountain; but I soon gave this up, for the earth was soft, and not a whit like lava, and as for a grave, no one would have dug it so deep down in the earth. I was just as much vexed as Billy was at this untoward event, but I think I was even more curious to learn what was beneath our unlucky well, and I went back soon into the hut, intending to examine the place. However, the evil smell was so overpowering that I was fain to seek the open air again, and it was some time, an hour or two, maybe, before the air became clear enough for

us to enter the hut with any comfort. Bethinking myself that the clearing of the air showed that there might be nothing very terrible below, the foul smell being due to the sudden release of air long imprisoned, I got a length of our rope, and let it down with a stone on the end until it touched the bottom, which we found to be twice as deep as before; and when I did this, I perceived another thing which seemed to me mighty strange, which was nothing less than a current of air passing up through the well. There was, it is true, a passage now between the lake-side and the hut, but we had felt no current when the connection was first established, and yet we could not conceive of a current coming from the very bowels of the earth. Billy declared, in something of a fright, that we had got down to the roots of the mountain, whence came the steam and the hot water; but I answered that this was plainly absurd, the current of air that we felt being perfectly cool, though not very fresh.

I thought we might let down a torch into the well, whereby we should perhaps be able to see something of what was below. Accordingly we kindled a torch of kernels and let it down at the end of a rope, and very evilly it smelled, I assure you. We observed that the flame flickered a great deal until it descended to the first bottom of our well, or perhaps two or three feet deeper; then the torch burnt more steadily, but the flame did not rise straight up, but seemed to be swayed a little to either side, and I could not help thinking, by the look of it, that it was burning in a greater space than when it was in our narrow well-shaft. Considering of some means of proving whether this was so or not, I could at first see none, short of enlarging the shaft until one of us could descend it, which indeed neither Billy nor I was disposed to attempt. It was next day when an idea came into my head, and that was occasioned by my seeing the spring-back of Billy's bow when he shot at the running man, at which we exercised ourselves now and again, seeing that we might have real men to shoot at some day. The spring of the bow, I say, gave me a notion, and taking a flexible strip of wood of the same tree, I tied one end of it to a long pole, and then bent it double, not fastening it in that position, but inserting it thus bent into

the shaft, the sides of which prevented it from springing back. Then I lowered the pole, and the bent piece of wood scraped the sides of the well until it reached what had been the bottom and a little beyond it; but then, as I still let down the pole, the bent wood sprang loose, like as Billy's bow did, which showed very plainly that the shaft was much wider below.

This discovery perplexed, nay, disquieted us. For one thing, it was a mercy that we had not lighted on this hollow chamber, for such it must be, when we were driving in the posts for our hut, for then we might have broken our necks. As yet we were ignorant of the extent of this open space, though we knew its depth, nor could we tell whether it in any way endangered the firmness of the hut. Billy said that if he had known there was such a cellar beneath us he would not have lifted a hand to help me build, and I own that if we had discovered it when we were beginning to build, I should have assuredly chosen another situation. But after spending so many months of hard work in putting up our hut, I was very loath to leave it now and begin all over again, though it was a staggering thought that at any moment of the day or night we might sink, and the hut too, and maybe be cast into another hole, for we could not tell but that the second bottom might give way like the first. Moreover, even supposing that our hut was no less safe than before, all the labour that we had been put to in devising a means of supplying ourselves with water from the lake had gone for nought. I think this was the heaviest blow we had had since we took up our abode on the island, and for a time we stood stock-still, contemplating the dark hole that was the grave, so to speak, of our hopes.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

OF OUR SUBTERRANEAN ADVENTURE, AND THE MANNER IN

"Billy," said I, after we had stood silent a good while, "we must find out what is below."

"What's the good?" says Billy; "and how can you do it? Neither of us can scrooge ourselves down through this hole, and I ain't a-going to try, that's certain."

"But you can help to make the hole wider," I replied.

"And suppose I fall in," says he, "who'll pull me out?"

"I should certainly do my best," said I.

"And suppose you fall in too?" says he, being very persistent.

"Then we shall help each other out," said I.

"And suppose we find ourselves in the old smoker's kitchen, or get buried alive or something?" says Billy.

"We won't suppose any more, but just set to work," said I. "I will dig out the earth, and you can carry it away, and then there'll be no chance of your tumbling in."

The matter being put thus, Billy would by no means agree to it, but insisted that he would take his turn with me at digging. He asked me, however, how the earth was to be carried away, for if we did it with our hands it would take a month of Sundays. I answered that we must certainly make some baskets, which was a pretty easy matter after a little practice, there being plenty of rushes and such-like things growing at the borders of the lake. Having made

two very fair baskets, that would hold about a bushel apiece, we began with our spades to cut away the earth around the hole, Billy carrying it outside the hut when I dug, and I doing the same when he dug. This work was exceeding laborious, since when digging we had to be very careful not to let the earth fall down the shaft and choke it up, and also the basketfuls of earth had to be hauled up every few minutes. We were several days at the work before we came to the bamboo pipe we had driven in from the lake side—not, of course, that we did nothing else, having our other duties to attend to, and besides we now went up to our watch-tower three times, and sometimes four, every day, so that the savages should not come in their canoes and take us by surprise.

The Cavern

Having got down to the pipe, which, as I have said, was but a few inches above the cavity into which we had broken, we saw that we must be even more careful, for if the earth should give way all of a sudden, as it did before, we might for all we knew be hurled into a bottomless abyss. All the time we had been digging we had felt the current of cool air striking upward against us, from which it was plain that the chamber below was not a perfectly closed vault, and the only comfort we had of this was that we were certainly not coming to the old smoker's kitchen, as Billy called it, for then the air would have been hot. To avoid this headlong fall, I considered we should now cease to stand on the ledge of earth at the side of the hole, and rig up a rope ladder which we might attach securely to the doorposts above. Billy was digging when this idea came into my head, he being lighter than I, and after I told him of it he scrambled up very quickly by means of steps we had cut in the side, confessing he was glad to get out in safety.

It took us some time to make a rope ladder, but when it was done, and fastened to the doorposts, I descended and hacked away with my spade at the sides of the hole below me until I had made it big enough for my body to go through. Then I got Billy to hand down to me a lighted torch, and bending as

low as I could, I clung to the ladder with one hand, and with the other held the torch in the space below, being nearly suffocated by its stinking fumes. However, by moving the torch backwards and forwards I made out that the space was a small chamber, oblong in shape, but not regular, and with a floor, but, so far as I could see, no outlet, though I knew there must be one, because of the current of air. Feeling by no means sure of the depth of the floor below me, I clambered up again and pulled the ladder after me, and we lengthened it by some three feet before I descended again. By the light of my torch I then saw that I could drop to the floor without any danger, and I let go the ladder, and fell upon my feet on hard rock.

"What cheer, master?" calls out Billy, with his face close to the top of the shaft above. I told him that I was safe and what manner of place I was in, and said I would explore further, and when I did so I found that we had no need to trouble ourselves about the safety of our hut, because the walls of this underground chamber were of hard rock, like the rocks on the sides of the mountain, and the roof the same, except at the place where we had dug our shaft. How this came to be I did not trouble to think,^[1] nor did it concern us, the great matter for us being that our hut had a solid foundation, which was a great comfort. When I told this to Billy, by shouting up through the shaft, the sound of my voice echoing very strangely, he cried back that he was glad to hear it and that he was coming down to see. "No, no," I cried at this; "you keep guard above while I seek further; and besides, the ladder does not reach the ground, and perhaps you couldn't get up again."

"Then how will you get up, master?" says Billy.

"Why, you can draw the ladder up while I go exploring, and by the time I come back you can lengthen it," was my answer.

This he agreed to do, only he begged me not to be long.

When I came to examine the chamber, I found it to be neither so large nor so lofty as I had first supposed. The general height of it was not above five feet, though in parts it rose to ten feet or more. I had soon made a tour about the chamber, the compass of which was perhaps sixty or seventy feet, and in one corner of it I at last discovered an opening, through which, I did not doubt, came the current of air I have before mentioned. It was, as I found when I held my torch to it, a very low and narrow passage, not above four feet high, and the draught of air was so strong that it made my torch flare, and, indeed, was like to blow it out. This made me consider whether I had not better rest content and go no further; but curiosity was strong within me, and so I went into the passage, or tunnel, having to bend my body very low, and crept along with great caution, holding the torch in front of me lest I came unawares upon a chasm and broke my neck. The passage seemed to me to incline slightly downward, though I could not be sure of this, since there were not only several crooks and turns in it, so that not many yards of it were straight, but also it was in some parts pretty near choked with rocks and stones, which I supposed had fallen from the roof and sides. However, I picked my way among these obstacles when they occurred, and found as I went on that the passage became both wider and loftier, so that I was able to stand upright.

After I had gone some distance through this tunnel, wondering whether it was natural or had been made by men's hands, and inclining to the former belief, I perceived that it was joined by another passage which ran into it from my right hand, and the two passages thus joined in one became a tunnel which increased both in width and height the further I went. Whereas at starting from the cavern I had had to bend low, with little space on either side of me, I now found myself in a passage which in some parts was as much as twenty feet high, as near as I could guess in the deceitful light of my torch, and so wide that five or six men could easily have walked abreast in it. And as I still kept my

eyes cast down, being heedful of my footing, I perceived by and by on the floor of the passage sundry small whitish objects which, when I stooped to examine them, I found to be shells, and they became more numerous the further I went. I began now to question with myself whether this tunnel did not communicate with the sea, and whether the sea ever came up through it so far into the interior of the island, for the cavern whence I had started on this journey was directly below our hut, and that was situate at least half a mile from the sea-shore.

I went on, being eager to satisfy myself on this point, and holding my torch about the level of my head, when all at once I felt the skin of my hand scorched, and, looking up, saw that the flame was burning very low, which had escaped me, so much were my thoughts taken up. I had no mind to pursue this journey in darkness, for though I had come very well to this point, I knew not whereto the tunnel would bring me, nor what perils might be lurking in the way. Accordingly I turned myself about, purposing to acquaint Billy with what I had discovered, and to come again, either with him or alone, with sufficient light to hold out to the end. But I soon saw, to my exceeding discomfort, that I had already presumed too much upon the endurance of my torch, which was flickering lower and lower, and within a little, though I made what haste I could, went out altogether. At this I was mightily vexed, though not alarmed, for the floor of the tunnel was perfectly sound, albeit rough, and I did not look for the least difficulty in making my way back to the cavern. Though not alarmed, I say, I was vexed, for I could not go nearly so fast in the dark, and I began to think that Billy might be a little uneasy at my long absence. As to myself, there was only one thing to trouble about, and that was to keep to the right hand, so that I should not fail of re-entering the passage by which I had come when I arrived at the place where the other passage joined with it. To make sure on this point I felt with my hand along the wall at my right, and found this a help to me for some distance; but by and by I had to leave it, so as to get past some rocks that stood in my way, and in a little while after I returned to it

I stumbled clean over another obstacle, hurting my hands and knees, though luckily my head did not strike the ground.

Lost

When I rose up, I could not find the wall at once, the passage here being exceedingly rough with loose rocks and stones. I stumbled on, and now for the first time the thought came into my head, how awful it would be if a man were lost in such an underground passage as this, not at first thinking of this plight as likely to be mine, though soon I did begin to be very uneasy, and indeed I was almost overcome with horror when all of a sudden I thought, "What if there be a perfect network of these passages in the island, and I can never light on the cavern again?" I wished now very heartily that I had let Billy come down to me when he offered it, but there was no use in wishing, so I groped my way onward, having now got my hand upon the wall again.

I had noticed for some time that the floor of the tunnel was ascending, and it seemed to me steeper than I had thought it to be when I came the other way; but I paid little heed to this, because a hill always seems steeper when you ascend than when you descend. But all of a sudden I felt that the inclination was downward, and I was trying to recollect if I had gone up and then down as I came from the cavern, when I felt something cold about my feet, and, taking a step forward, splashed in water. Instantly I turned about and rushed back, stumbling and falling, and in a great dismay, for I knew now that I had lost my bearings. There had been no water in the passage when I came; either water had rushed into it suddenly, though how that could be I knew not, or else I had come into another passage. Whichever it might be, my situation was exceeding serious, for I might be drowned, or I might wander for hours and never come to the cavern. I picked myself up when I fell in my haste, and as I leant against the wall to recover myself, something scurried past my feet, which made me shiver until I thought that it could not be more than a rat or some other small beast. But being now so confused that I knew not whether I had

come from right or left, I lifted up my voice and shouted the seaman's call "Ahoy!" for if I was anywhere near the cavern, Billy might hear me, and that familiar word would bring him, I did not doubt, to my help. I was startled by what ensued upon my shout, for the whole space about me was filled with noise, which at first I did not know to be the reverberation of my own voice. The noise, the like of which I suppose had never been heard in that place before, terrified all the denizens of it, and I felt several small animals brush against my legs as they scurried past. When the sounds had rolled away, I listened very intently for some answering cry, but there was none, even though I shouted again, and I could not but conclude that the din, great as it was, had failed to reach Billy's ears. And since it now seemed plain that I must depend on myself alone, and to stay still where I was would not help me a jot, I began in sheer desperation to grope my way along the passage, not knowing in the least whether I was going right or wrong. But supposing that I had overshot the entrance to the passage leading back to the cavern, and that I was now retracing my steps, I crept along by the wall on my left hand, every now and again stopping to shout and listen, but always in vain. And it came into my mind presently that while the sound of my voice might carry a good way along the portion of the tunnel in which I then was, yet it would not penetrate far along the passage that ran back at a very sharp angle from it, so that I would do better to save my breath until I arrived at the fork, and I went on again, holding my peace.

The tunnel seemed to me now to be full of strange whispers and little silent noises which I had not perceived when I travelled along with my torch. I have not a doubt it was my imagination playing tricks upon me, helped very much by the darkness; but I did not think of this at the time, and my skin crept, and broke out into a cold sweat, at the rustlings and echoes that I heard, or thought I heard. I stopped two or three times to listen more intently, and then heard nothing but the beating of my heart, and so on again, until I thought I must surely have come to the fork of the two passages. Halting, I groped with my

hands to discover if the passage was wider, and then I felt sure I heard a rustling, and another sound, as of an animal breathing heavily, and at that moment something cold and clammy touched my outstretched hand. Instantly I drew back, and scarce knowing what I did let forth a great shout, which rang, I doubt not, with the very accent of fear, and immediately it was answered by a shout, which I took at first to be the echo of it, for the hollow tunnel prolonged the sounds so that nothing was clear. But in a moment I heard, quite near to me, that ill word which had wont to be on Billy's lips, but which, since I reproved him for it, he had never used. I cried his name in a burst of joy, and he called back, "Is that you, master?" and the next moment we were together, and I confess I threw my arms about Billy, and would not let him go until he asked me in a quavering voice what I was afraid of.

Found

He told me that, being uneasy at my long absence, when he had expressly charged me not to be long, he had let himself down by the rope ladder into the cavern, and came with a torch in search of me, and it was his hand that had so scared me. "But there you are!" says he. "First I knocked my head against the roof, and then my funny-bone against the wall, and then I tumbled head-first over a rock that some one had put in the very middle of the way; over I went, and my torch was knocked out of my hand, and the flame was put out. I hadn't got flint and steel on me, course not; and so I couldn't light the torch again without going back all the way, and I couldn't find the torch at first, and when I did find it, things had got so mixed up that I didn't know no more than Moses which was for'ard and which was aft. But I set a course straight ahead, and here we are."

"But where are we?" I said.

Billy of course could not tell me this, having lost his bearings just as completely as I had done. All that we knew was that the cavern was not

reached by the passage along which I had been going, for neither Billy nor I had encountered water in our outward journey. It seemed to me that we had both wandered into the passage which I had observed to run into the other from the right hand, and if this was so, we had but to go in the same direction as I had been going when Billy met me, and to cling to the wall on the left side, and we should by and by find ourselves at the fork of the two passages. And indeed, we had not gone above a dozen paces when Billy, who was in front, cried that the wall turned a corner, and when we reached it we wheeled round in the same direction, and in due time came to the cavern, which, though it had seemed dark to me before, was now light by comparison with the blackness of the tunnel we had left. I asked Billy whether he had lengthened the ladder, and when he confessed that he had not, I wondered how we were to ascend to our hut again, for the bottom of the ladder was out of my reach. But Billy solved this difficulty by getting on to my shoulders and then grasping the ladder, by which he very nimbly climbed to the surface. There being no room in the shaft for him to bend down and assist me, I had to wait until he had lengthened the ladder, which he did very quickly, blaming himself for not having done it before. Thus we came safely to our hut again, and both having had enough of underground passages for that day, we determined to go on another expedition later, indeed, very soon, for Billy was eager to explore the tunnel to its end, when I had told him of the largeness of it, and of the shells on its floor.

I did not tell him my tale at once, for the moment we came up into our hut we were aware that it had been visited in our absence. Having made our discovery of the cavern by accident, and gone down into it without premeditation, we had not thought to shut the door of the hut, which, being open, those rascally dogs of which I have spoken more than once had made an irruption. By great good luck there was nothing that they could destroy, but they had thrown down a pile of cocoa-nuts we had in one corner, and these lay scattered all about as if they had played ball with them. I doubt not they would have made an attempt, as they did afterwards, to plunder our poultry-run, but it

would appear that they had not discovered our absence for some time, and had been startled away by the sound of us returning. We determined, when we should descend again into the cavern, to close our door very firmly.

The discovery of the cavern made us alter our plan of bringing water to the hut. We had intended to make a reservoir just below the pipe, into which we might let water from the lake whenever we needed it; but we contented ourselves now with putting a plug into the end of the pipe, with a small hole in the middle of it, which we could stop or un-stop at will, so that by removing the stopping we should have a small trickle of water which we could collect in one of our vessels, and draw up into the hut. Having fixed these plugs, we went to the lake and filled in with our spades the excavation we had made in the side, heaping rocks about the ground that had been disturbed, so that there should be nothing to betray our device to any one who might chance to come. We then removed our V-shaped dam, and hastened back to the hut to see whether the plan answered our expectations. We found when we took out the stopping that there was a continual drip of water, which pleased us very much, for we now knew that, however long we might be shut up in the hut, we should never lack for water, and so we might be quite easy in mind.

Exploring

When we had finished our work in this matter of the water supply, which was a day or two after our adventure in the tunnel, we set off again, both together, to make a further exploration, only this time you may be sure we took several torches of a large size, so that the same trouble of darkness and bewilderment should not overtake us. This time also we took the precaution to close and fasten the door, for though there was little or nothing in the hut to which the dogs could do serious hurt, we preferred their room to their company, as the saying is.

We went through the tunnel together, and came to the spot where my torch

had gone out, and had not gone very far from thence when we found our way blocked by water, which came right into the tunnel, and which we knew by its salt taste to be the sea. It was quite plain from this that there was an outlet to the shore, but we could not tell how far it was from us, the place being exceeding dark, so that the flames of two torches held together scarce seemed to penetrate the blackness. Billy was greatly disappointed at finding our further progress thus checked, and asked me whether he should swim through the water until he came to the opening on the shore; but this I would by no means consent to, for I could have given him no light, and we could not tell what perils of sunken rocks or other things we might encounter in the darkness. And it was a mercy that Billy paid heed to my words, and was not obstinate, for if he had done what he proposed, and entered the water, I doubt not I should never have seen him again.

The Dogs Again

When we came back to our hut we heard a mighty cackling from the fowl-house, which, as I have said before, was the smaller hut we had used while the larger was a-building, and stood some little distance from the latter on the edge of the level space. Our fowls being in the main quiet birds, we suspected that something was amiss; indeed, Billy declared at once that he was sure 'twas the dogs at their old tricks, and was for opening the door and sallying out upon them at once. But I bethought myself of a better way, and moreover one that would help us to prove in some measure the efficacy of our defences; so I took out the plug from one of the loopholes we had made in the wall facing the fowl-house, and peeping through I saw nigh a dozen dogs assembled about it, and some scratching diligently at the earth below the palisade. They had never molested our creatures since the time when they were so sore discomfited at the piggery, and I was not a little amazed at their coming now, for none of them had seen us descending into the cavern. But I suppose it was as Billy said, that they were cunning beasts with the second sight; indeed, he said he had heard of witches, and sometimes fair princesses, being turned into the shape of dogs,

but he knew these villainous rogues were not princesses. However, they did certainly seem to have discovered that we were no longer on the surface of the island, and were, as I say, striving to gain an entrance to our poultry-run.

I whispered to Billy, so as not to disturb them, to take the plug out of another loophole, and then to shoot an arrow through when I gave the word. This he did, and our arrows flying forth almost at the same moment, by great good fortune (and perhaps some little skill) struck two of the dogs, which fell writhing. I expected to see the rest of the pack take warning and flee instantly, but this they did not do, which shows that there is a limit to their reason; for seeing no enemy they did not connect the fate of the two with any external cause, but immediately set upon them, tearing them in pieces with horrible yellings and snarlings. While they were at this cannibal business Billy and I sent more arrows among them, and six dogs in all had fallen to our weapons before the rest came to any understanding and sought safety.

"We could hit savages better," said Billy, as we sallied out, "because they are bigger than dogs."

"I hope we shall never have the need," I said, taking a long shot at the rearmost of the dogs as they disappeared in the bushes.

When we came to the poultry-run, we found that the dogs had already scratched a good-sized hole beneath the palings, and within a little they would have been able to scramble through and work havoc among our fowls. We set about recovering our arrows, and soon had them all but the one I had shot last, which, when I came to the place where I expected it to be, was not there, nor could we find it, though we searched for some time.

"You must have hit the villain, master," says Billy.

I could hardly believe this, for the range was long, and the dog was moving;

but on looking closely upon the ground I saw a trace of blood, and suspected that I had in fact hit the dog, which had, however, run on with the arrow in him. Being curious on this matter, I determined to follow up the track, and sent Billy back to the hut for a spear or an axe, as well to defend myself if the animal should turn upon me as to put it out of torment if its wound should be grave. The track was sometimes faint, but mostly clear, and ran in almost a straight line, so that I followed it with ease, where it led me through the wood eastward of the hut, bearing to the right round the base of the hill. But I did not see the dog for some time, until all of a sudden I caught a glimpse of it limping into the undergrowth some way ahead of me. I made speed to overtake it, and the animal turned, snarling very fiercely upon me, and standing as if to dispute my advance; but I perceived that the creature was already far spent, for it tottered, and recovered itself with great difficulty, so that I was very glad when Billy came up, and with one thrust of the spear ended the poor beast's life.

"There you are, you villain!" cried Billy with a kind of savage joy as he dealt the stroke; but I own I felt in a manner sorry for the creature, and thought it a pity that we should have to wage war against them, though I saw it was a necessity, they being, in their wild state, as fierce and dangerous to us as wolves. Maybe my softness was partly due to my recollection of a terrier we had at home, and I was contemplating the beast Billy had slain, striving to make out some likeness between her (for 'twas a bitch) and my uncle's terrier, when Billy cried, "What's that?" and I was aware of a faint yelping near by. Penetrating a little further into the undergrowth, I saw three little puppies, their eyes just open, but they were not yet able to crawl.

"They are very pretty when they're young, Billy," I said.

"Pretty!" says he. "I'll show 'em. They shan't never grow up to plague us;" and he was on the point of piercing one of them with his spear when I stayed his hand.

"But why and what for?" says he, looking at me in amazement. "They'll only starve, or be eaten by the other rascals when they find 'em. Better kill 'em now and have done with it."

Our Pets

But I had been thinking that we were two lone creatures on this island, and we might perchance find some solace and amusement in keeping pets, which we could not do with pigs or poultry, the former being too swinish and the latter too silly. And I confess the little things looked so pretty that I had not the heart to kill them, and so I proposed that we should carry them back to the hut and do our best to bring them up.

"What's the good?" says Billy. "They won't live. I had some rabbits once, and they died; and some guinea-pigs, and my mother drowneded them—she wasn't my real mother; and they may be pretty now, though I can't see it, but when they grow up, bless you, they'll be as fierce as those other villains, and we may as well kill 'em first as last."

"Billy," I said, "my aunt Susan used to say, 'Never climb up to the chimney-pots to meet the rain!——'"

"No one would but a fool," says Billy, interrupting, and when I tried to explain what my aunt meant he said that was all very well, but where did the chimney-pots come in? However, to shorten the story, he gave in to my wish, and we carried the puppies to our hut, and made them up a bed of grass and leaves in one of our large pans. We were hard put to it to know how to feed them, and indeed, the food we gave them—bread-fruit made into pap, and scraps of chicken, and the like, as well as broth sometimes—did not agree with them very well, because they were so young, so that I doubted whether we should succeed in rearing them. One died in three days, but the others survived, and I ought to say that Billy was fully as diligent as myself in tending

them, and showed a marvellous ingenuity in the preparation of their meals. As they grew up, we used to watch them anxiously, expecting that one fine day they would leave us and join themselves to their own kindred in the wilds, and Billy said he hoped his dog would not leave us the first, for he would never forgive it. But we saw with great satisfaction that they showed no inclination towards the society of their kind; indeed, it was the contrary; they shunned them, and showed every mark of enmity if they approached, so that we saw they would prove to be very good watchdogs when fully grown. Billy called his dog Robin, which he said was a good name for a dog but not for a man, and I called mine Little John to match; and they soon learnt to answer to their names.

[1] Probably the fissure had at one time extended to the surface, but had been gradually filled up with soil brought to the spot by drainage from the high ground.—H.S.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

OF A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN BILLY AND THE
NARRATOR—OF AN ENCOUNTER WITH A SHARK, AND THE
BUILDING OF A CANOE

We now began to consider ourselves as the possessors of considerable wealth, compared with our condition when we first came to the island. We had a fair estate, with none to dispute our title, at least, none had yet done so; a

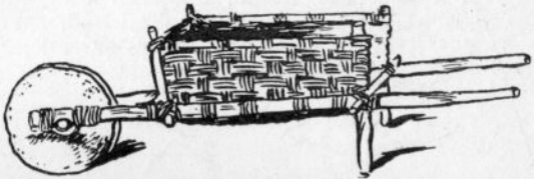
substantial and commodious house, by no means a mansion, and very plainly furnished, but having the necessary things, to which we could add the others, and did. We had food, both of the animal and vegetable kind, of our own breeding and growing, so that we were always sure of its freshness. We looked abroad on our little domain with a great deal of honest satisfaction, seeing our own handiwork in it, and being ever urged on to other achievements by what we had already done. This summer, for an instance, finding that our yam plantation thrived exceedingly, and needed hoeing because of the very fertility of the soil, we made ourselves rakes and hoes, the former of wood and bits of bone (these took us a long time), the latter of scallop shells bound with cords about crutched sticks. Then, when the yams were ripe, and we had to bring them to our house from the plantation, which was at some distance, we thought of making a wheelbarrow, which also employed us for a good time, and was indeed one of the most difficult jobs we took in hand, the want of nails being a great hindrance. The body of it was made of wicker-work closely plaited, and the wheel a disc of pottery, which answered very well until it broke in going over rocky ground, and then we had to carve out a wooden one, which was a very tiresome job. We made also a sort of bench-table out of the stump of a tree, which we split down the middle by driving in flint wedges, and when we had split it we took one half and planed the inside of it with scrapers, also of flint, and then scoured it with sand, not being content until it was as smooth as a sawyer's plank. It was on this that I drew the map I have mentioned before, using a mixture of charcoal and oil pressed from candle-nuts, and Billy was very proud when he saw BOBBIN'S BAY marked on it in pretty neat, big characters. We made also some rough stools and chairs, using always strong cords of cocoa-nut fibre in the place of nails. Billy and I had a little difference about the stools, he preferring them to be of three legs, and I of four, my reason being that the four-legged sort were the more stable, while his reason was nothing but a contrariness of temper that sometimes seized him; in which frame of mind if I said I should like pork for dinner he would immediately declare for chicken.



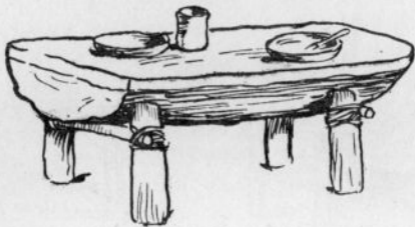
RAKE HEAD



SCALLOP-SHELL HOE



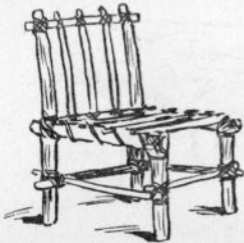
OUR WHEELBARROW



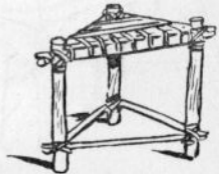
OUR TABLE

A Difference of Opinion

It was this that brought about the fight between us, which I think I mentioned before. We had just finished making our first stools, his being three-legged, and he sang a trifle loud because he was finished first, he being always more handy with his fingers than I was, except in delicate work and the making of pottery. He taunted me about my slowness, asking what was the good of bothering about four legs when three would do quite as well, and saying that he supposed I must have one more than he, because he was only the son of a poor blacksmith of Limehouse; and more to the same effect. Now this, I thought, was very unjust, for I had never stood upon any difference in rank there might be between us; nor indeed did Billy as a rule allude to it, much less express any discontentment, but called me "master" very simply and naturally. What came over him this day I know not, but he sat on his three-legged stool with a very gloomy face, grumbling and growling until I could endure it no longer.



MY CHAIR



BILLY'S STOOL

"For goodness' sake, Billy," I said, "leave me to my work. Go and get the dinner ready, or something."

"I won't," says he. "Why should I get your dinner? I ain't your servant, though I ain't got a mad uncle what's got more money than wits. Money! what's the good of money when you ain't got no sense for the spending of it? Why, if it hadn't been for your uncle I'd 'a been rich by this time, working for decent wages in London, instead of sweating for nothing."

"You're an ass," said I, as pleasantly as you please.

"I may be an ass," says Billy, "but I'm blowed if I'm a silly ass, and that's what *you* are."

A Fight

And then I own I clean lost my temper, and, leaving my work, I went to him and dealt him a blow that sent him and his stool to the ground. Whereupon he sprang to his feet, and came at me tooth and nail, as you may say, butting me with his head, and grappling me, seeking to throw me by main force. He was

very muscular, as I have said, and he came very near to effecting his purpose with me; but I shook him off, and being longer in the arms than he, and possessor of a little more science, I contrived to ward off his blows until he was pretty tired, and then dealt him a stroke which fairly knocked the wind out of him. He sat on the ground for some time looking about him in a dazed and stupid way, and presently, when he was somewhat collected, he said, "You give me a rare good 'un that time, master," and went on cheerfully: "You do look comical with your nose a-swelling."

I was already aware that something was amiss with that very prominent feature, and I might have felt aggrieved at this allusion to it but for the good-tempered manner in which Billy spoke. It was plain that he had quite lost his ill-humour, and bore me no malice for the beating I had given him; indeed, he appeared to think of me all the more highly because of it. But I was exceedingly vexed with myself for losing my temper over such a trifle, and when we were sitting together by and by, bathing our wounds, I spoke very solemnly about it, saying that it was nothing less than sinful, after the mercies that had been vouchsafed to us, our preservation from manifold dangers by land and sea, to give way to our angry passions and fight each other with hate in our hearts. Billy heard me patiently for a while, and subdued his naturally jocund countenance to a decent solemnity; but presently he burst forth with a laugh, and said, "Lor, master, how you do talk! What's a round of fisticuffs and a black eye or two? I got a walloping and deserved it, and you and me will be all the better friends," which I believe we were.



OUR FISH-HOOKS



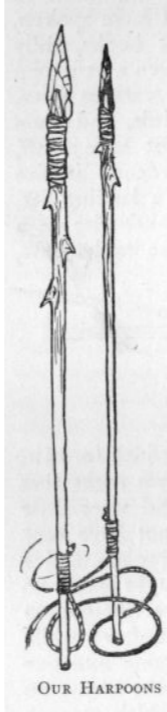
OUR GAFF AND LANDING-NET

Fishing

Now that our heavy labours in building our hut and securing our supply of food were over, we had leisure to indulge ourselves in lighter and more sportive avocations. We practised diligently with our arrows at the running man, and greatly improved ourselves in shooting; and we also began to consider whether we could not catch some of the fish which came about the coast sometimes in great numbers, particularly where the water was deep and big rocks lay near the surface. We usually had intimation of the arrival of a shoal of fish by the unwonted number of sea-birds we saw flying low and diving into the sea, and indeed gorging themselves. Billy said he had often

fished for tiddlebacks in the ditches near his home, though he seldom caught any, and I myself had some angling in our country streams; and our only difficulty being hooks, for we had lines in plenty, made of that fibre of which I have spoken, we set our wits to work to invent hooks, Billy saying what a pity it was we hadn't even a bent pin. We did devise after a time hooks of various sizes, made out of the bones of small birds, and then nothing would satisfy us but we must have a gaff, which we made of tough wood hardened in fire and greased with pork fat, and also a landing-net, which we made of fibres stretched basket-wise on a frame of bent wood. Armed with these implements, and with lines and rods, and bits of shellfish for bait, we went down to the sea and fished from rocks that stood out of the water at low tide, and were little more than covered at high. We did not have very much success, the hooks being easily broken, and I remember one of the first fish we caught made us very ill, so that for some time after we thought no more of this addition to our food. But after a while we determined to try again, and it came into our minds that we had seen the natives of the island we stayed on catching fish with spears, which manner we had not thought of at first, the hook and line being the English way. Accordingly we made some light wooden spears, or rather harpoons, and with these in our hands we stood on the rocks until we saw fish that took our fancy, and then flung our spears at them, as we had seen the natives do. We missed a great many times, for it was not often that we had the chance to throw our spears perpendicularly straight, and except when we could, we were not able for a great while to take good aim, because we did not allow for that strange effect water has of making things appear to be in a different place from where they are. [1] We should have been in great danger of losing our spears had we not foreseen this want of success, and attached a thin line to each of them, which we held when we made our cast. After many disappointments, and diligent practice, we contrived to make the needful allowance for the apparent bending of the harpoons, or rather their turning aside from the straight path as soon as they entered the water, and indeed we became fairly dexterous, and could depend on getting a good basket of fish

whenever we chose. Our first experience having made us wary, we were careful not to eat freely of any fish until we had proved whether it was good for food, and the course of this proving was somewhat painful to us, for we found that certain fish, even in the smallest portions, caused sickness and giddiness. But after a time we learnt to know the wholesome from the unwholesome, and then we often had fish at our meals, broiled, baked, or boiled, and we cured a quantity, both with salt and with smoke, against the time when they should not be so easily got.



OUR HARPOONS

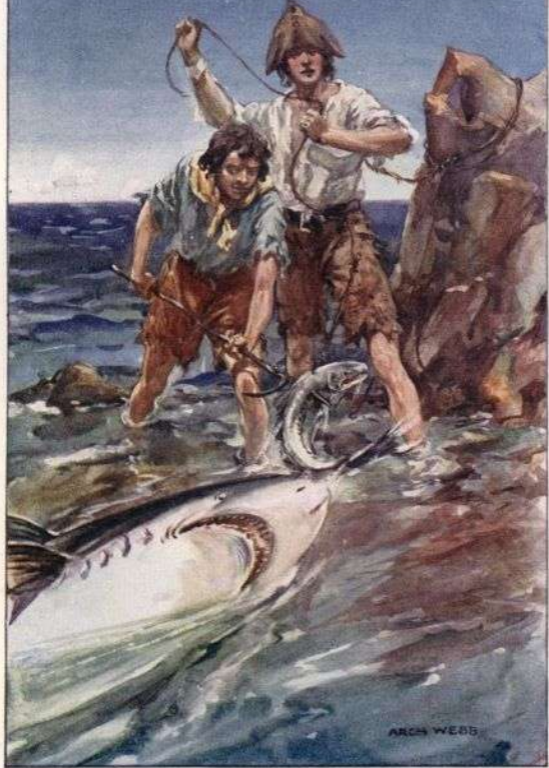
One of the best fishing grounds about our coast was a spot just beyond the little sandy beach at the south of the island, where it joined the lava tract, a number of jagged rocks there jutting out of the cliff. We were able to leap from

one to another of these rocks until we came to a somewhat larger one about fifty or sixty yards out to sea, to which fish, both large and small, seemed to be marvellously attracted. This rock appeared to us to be shaped like a mushroom, having a broad top rising a little in the middle, beneath which the fish lay, for forty winks, as Billy said. There was little rise and fall of the tide, but at flood the top of the rock was just awash, and it was covered with marine plants and limpets, which caused us to be very careful of our footing. Here we sometimes caught so great a quantity of fish that we had some trouble in carrying them ashore, so that we made it a practice after a time, whenever we went to this rock, to take with us a stout bag, made of a coarse broad grass that grew abundantly on the shore of the lake; and we placed our catch in this, and then, instead of springing from rock to rock, which had some peril, we being so laden, we attached a line to the bag, and hauled it ashore as soon as we reached the base of the cliff.

We became, I say, fairly dexterous in course of time with our harpoons, which we lost now and again, in spite of all our care, when the fish we had speared were big ones, and too strong for us to hold. Once, indeed, I was dragged right into the water, a great fellow suddenly sounding when I had driven my harpoon home; and that time I not only got a thorough drenching and several bruises through falling on the rock, but lost fish, harpoon and line together. To prevent the like mishap from happening again, we accustomed ourselves to wind the end of the line about a spar of rock, so that if any fish proved too strong for us, either the line snapped or the harpoon became disengaged. In either of these cases, to be sure, we lost the fish, and if the line snapped we lost the harpoon as well; but we did have a security against being drawn into the sea ourselves, which in itself would have been a trifle, seeing that we could both swim and thought nothing of a wetting; but at certain seasons we had observed that sharks were numerous off the coast, and we had a great dread of being snapped up by one of these monsters, so that at such times we were careful not to go above our middle when we bathed.

I remember very well one day, when we were on this mushroom rock, and the fish being very plentiful, we remained on it longer than our wont, until, indeed, it was pretty nearly a foot deep in water. I had just harpooned a fine fellow near three feet long—a sort of cod from which Billy promised to cut some fine steaks for broiling—and Billy with the gaff was helping me to land him, when all of a sudden I spied the fin of a shark making straight towards us, and only a few yards away. In another moment the beast turned over and heaved itself clean out of the water and half on to the rock, and snapped up the prize under our very noses. I think we were first more angry than affrighted, Billy fuming against the impudent rogue that had snatched away what would have been a welcome addition to our larder. We had two or three spare harpoons floating in the shallow water behind us, and attached by their lines to the spar of rock. These we seized, and just as the shark was jerking himself back into deep water we hurled our weapons at him, and were lucky to hit him before he sounded. In a moment the sea about us was like a boiling caldron; we were swept off our feet by the lines, which the wounded shark was dragging crosswise over the rock, and before we could recover our footing one of the lines, which was somewhat shorter than the other, snapped. But the other held, and we saw that the shark, instead of plunging in a straight course away from the rock, was heading up the coast, and moving in a circle of which the line was the radius. We expected that this line also would snap in a moment, and then we should have lost both our harpoons; but we were astonished by and by to see that there was less and less strain and movement in the line, until it ceased altogether.





"THE BEAST HEAVED ITSELF CLEAN OUT OF THE WATER."

"THE BEAST HEAVED ITSELF CLEAN OUT OF THE WATER."

"I do believe we've killed him, master," says Billy. "Heave ho! we'll soon see."

Accordingly we hauled upon the line, and drew it in little by little, until we saw the body of the shark at its end quite motionless.

"We've got him and both the harpoons," cries Billy, "and the fish too, for he ain't had time to swallow him proper."

We passed a couple of lines round the monster's tail and dragged him to the shore, and there Billy immediately set to work to open him, and disgorged the fish of which we had been robbed. However, having no mind to eat what the shark had partly swallowed, I persuaded Billy to throw the fish into the sea, and Billy laughed at me finely afterwards, I assure you, when I was eating with great relish a shark-steak he had broiled for our supper.

"If you can eat the shark, master, why couldn't you eat the fish?" says he.

I own I could give him no answer except that my gorge rose at the thought of it, and this led me to consider of the strange inconsistencies of men in matters of food, as in other things. My aunt Susan would have been aghast at the idea of eating a snail, but she would eat a chicken which she had herself fed on snails; and when I mentioned this, Billy said that he didn't see any difference between eating a chicken full of snails and the snails themselves.

"Billy," said I presently, "I never thought I should see you eating worms."

"Why, whenever did you see me do that, master?" says he; "I never done it. I'd be sick."

"But we had a chicken for dinner, and you may be sure it had eaten worms," I said.

He began to see what I was driving at, and looked very grave for some minutes, as if endeavouring to probe the comparison. Then a broad grin spread over his face, and he said, "I reckon the chicken eats worms for the same reason as we eat chickens, 'cause they're nice," and I am sure he believed he had solved a very knotty problem.

A Canoe

It was partly this adventure with the shark, and partly our natural wish to circumnavigate the island, that set us on trying to make a boat. We had many times been sorry that we did not think of securing the boat of the *Lovey Susan* which had been staved in on the beach, and therefore abandoned by the seamen, but which we might perhaps have patched up if we had hauled it away from the sea. Unhappily, neither Billy nor I had the least knowledge how to build a boat, nor if we had would our rude tools have availed us much, so that though the idea had come into our heads more than once, we had never done anything towards putting it in action, partly from this ignorance of ours, and partly because we had been so much occupied with other matters. Now that the notion had come back to us with more force, however, we determined to see what we could do in digging out the trunk of a tree to make a canoe, something like those we had seen from our look-out hill, though not near so large. Since we required it only to hold two, there was no reason to make it large, whereas there were many for making it small, for a large one would have needed a terrible amount of work, and if we could have made one, we might have had great difficulty in bringing it down to the beach and then in launching it. Yet we resolved that, though it should not be large compared with those that held twenty or thirty men, it should be of such a size as to ride the sea with fair stability, for we did not want a cockle-shell or any cranky thing.

For this purpose we chose a tree, of what name I know not, though I think it was a kind of pine, which grew on the slope above the sandy beach I have mentioned more than once. We chose it as much for its position as for the nature of its wood, for being on the slope we thought that we could more readily bring it down to the sea than if we felled a tree further from the shore. We felled it as we did the trees for our hut, with the aid of fire, and a notion came into my head by which we made a great improvement on our former rough method. Our difficulty had been to make a fire sufficiently large to burn away the trunk rapidly, and yet not so large as to burn or scorch the tree higher than was necessary. The idea that came into my head was to put a bandage about the trunk, and so keep the fire within bounds, and when we considered of the best material to use for this purpose, we decided that clay would be the most serviceable, because it would not only not burn itself, but it could be easily kept sodden. Having chosen our tree, therefore, we clapped a thick bandage of wet clay round the trunk about three feet from the ground, and lit a fire all round the tree, and let it burn very fiercely for a time, and then we raked it away and chipped off the charred wood with our axes; and having again wetted the clay, we kindled the fire again, so that it would burn away the fresh surface of wood that we had exposed. We continued thus until we had thus burnt and chipped away a deep incision all round the tree, and meanwhile we had debated whether we should make our canoe on the top of the slope (in which case we should let the tree fall on to a little patch of fairly level ground on the west side of it), or whether we should cause the tree to fall down the slope over the cliff on the western side, and so to the beach. Billy declared for the former course, saying that if we let the tree go over the cliff it would assuredly be smashed, and the trunk once split would be useless for our purpose. In answer to this I said that, however vexatious it would be to have to fell another tree, how much more vexatious would it be if any mischance happened to our canoe when we had finished it and were bringing it down to the beach! In the one case we should have lost merely the time and labour of felling the tree; in the other, there would be the additional loss of the longer time and greater

labour expended on the canoe. Billy agreed with this reasoning, so towards the finish we built all the fire on the land side of the tree, until with a little hauling and shoving it snapped off and toppled with a mighty crash over the cliff. We ran down to see what had happened to it, and though some of the larger branches had been broken off, the main trunk, so far as we could tell, was not hurt in the least.

We burnt off the top and the remaining branches, both Billy and I tending our separate fires, of which we had many, so that the work was made much lighter than it would have been if every single branch had needs be lopped with a clumsy axe.

Having thus got a log of wood clear of branches, and, as I reckoned, about fifteen feet long, we peeled off the bark, and set to work to hollow out the vessel. It was plain that this would be a work of long time, for the trunk was about three feet thick, and I do not know how many months we might have been about it if we had not brought fire again to the aid of our axes. We found that we could save time by allowing fires to smoulder for long periods in the top of the log, which we wished to hollow out; and by starting these fires at intervals, we found that when we had chipped away the charred wood beneath the first, the wood beneath the second was ready to be chipped away also, and so on all down the log. Billy and I were thus employed the whole livelong day, and many days in succession, in building and removing fires, and chipping away the charred wood, by which means we gradually dug deeper and deeper into the heart of the log, rejoicing as we saw it, by almost insensible degrees, receiving the semblance of a canoe.

The tree had fallen, as I said, over the cliff on to the sandy beach, and we were in some trouble of mind lest a high sea, or peradventure a violent storm, should carry our canoe away before it was finished. It lay a little above high-water mark, it is true; but for our greater security we moored it, when we left work upon it, by means of ropes to some heavy rocks, which we trusted

would preserve it from any such untoward event. And it was indeed lucky we did so, for when we had been for some weeks (as I guessed) at the work—not continuously, for we had many other things to attend to—one night a violent storm got up, with great fury of wind and rain, and also some rumbling in the mountain, which made us feel very uneasy; and when we went down in the morning, the storm having ceased, to see what had happened to our canoe, we found that it had been lifted and tossed about by the sea, being indeed half full of water; but mercifully the waves had not dashed it against the rocks at the base of the cliff, or it would assuredly have been shattered, or at least very much damaged.

This was the first really great storm we had had since our big hut was built, and the result of it, especially as it was followed by a period of rainy weather, was to make us leave work on our canoe before it was finished, and turn our hands to another task. Our hut, as I have said before, was built on a little level tract, above and below which the ground sloped, on the one side towards the cliffs, on the other to Brimstone Lake, as we called it, from its medicinal water. The slope above the hut was gradual, indeed, but it was a real slope all the same, and during this period of heavy rain the water swept down in a wide torrent from the heights, flowing past and through the hut, which was flooded, and very uncomfortable. We suffered in this way, Billy and I, more than our fowls, for they had poles to roost on. As for the pigs, we did not trouble about them, and I do think that the more sodden the ground the happier they were. We did our best, in dry intervals, to make our walls watertight, but could not wholly succeed in this, for the doorway faced the upper slope, and we could not by any means make the door fit so closely as to keep out the water. Since the floor of our hut was thus sodden, we could not sleep on it, but had to make our bed on the bench table, and very hard it was.

Cutting a Trench

It was a day or two before we thought of any means of curing this very

disagreeable state of things, but then, all of a sudden, a notion came to us—whether first to Billy or to me I do not remember—of digging a trench round the hut, with outlets opening into the lake. We set about this at once, finding the earth easy to work, even with our rude spades, because it was so sodden, and after two or three days' work we had made a shallow trench about the upper end of the hut, shaped like a half-circle, so that when the rain-water fell down the slope it would be intercepted by the trench, and so carried into the lake. We observed again, at this time, that though the amount of water that flowed into the lake was very much greater than we had ever known before, yet the surface never rose above the certain level of which I have already spoken, and we were still very much puzzled to know, at least I was, how the surplus water was carried off; Billy saying that it didn't matter to us, and we shouldn't be any better off if we did know. My way of looking at things was different, and I own I felt a great curiosity always to learn the reasons and causes of matters which were not easy to understand. Yet it was, after all, little more than an accident which brought about the discovery of this matter, and of that I doubt not I shall tell in its place.

[1] A rather long-winded allusion to refraction.—H.S.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

OF OUR ENTRENCHMENTS; OF THE LAUNCHING OF OUR CANOE,
AND THE DEADLY PERIL THAT ATTENDED OUR FIRST VOYAGE

While we were busy making the trench to keep the rain from our hut, another notion came all of a sudden into my mind, which, in a kind of merry sport, I at once made known to Billy.

"We will make a moat about our castle, Billy," said I.

"What's a moat, and where's our castle?" says he, leaning on his spade, and looking all around.

"Why, every Englishman's house is his castle, as they say," I answered, "and as to a moat, you must know, Billy, that in the olden times——"

"The times of Robin Hood or Robinson Crusoe?" says he; "for if it is I don't believe a word of it."

"This is quite true, I assure you," I said. "In the olden times, I say, when every great lord lived in his castle, there was a great ditch or trench all round it, to keep enemies away, for in those times lord often used to fight lord."

"Like rats," says Billy. "Go on, master."

"Well, that ditch was called a moat, and it could only be crossed by a drawbridge," I said, "that is, a bridge that was let down over it from the castle gateway; and so, when the bridge was up, and the moat filled with water, no enemy could get into the castle, and the people inside were safe."

"And suppose they were," says Billy, "what's the good unless they'd got enough victuals inside to last 'em ever so long? If I was the lord outside I'd stop there till they either starved or came out and had a good fight."

I answered that no doubt that was what they did, and went on to say that if we continued our trench and made it wider and deeper, bringing it close against the walls of our castle, we might add very greatly to the strength of our position if ever the savages came to the island and we had to defend ourselves against them. As to the matter of food, I said that we had in the cavern below the castle as good a storehouse as we could wish for, and I resolved that we would start at once, or at least as soon as we had finished our canoe, to convey a great store of bread-fruit and yams, and salted pork and fish, into the cavern, for which purpose we should have to increase the number of our pots and pans. But since this storehouse would be of little use to us if we were driven out of the castle, Billy consented to help me to dig a moat, though he said it would take us ten years to finish it, if we made it deep enough and wide enough to be of any avail. And, indeed, we were not long in finding out, when we began the work, that it would take us a very great time, if not ten years; for to be of any defensive use the moat must be at least six feet deep and about twice as wide, and we were aghast when, at the end of a day's work with our spades, we saw the exceeding smallness of what we had achieved. I was minded to give up the attempt, though it always vexed me to leave a thing half done, and the partial excavation we had made gave an untidy appearance to the place which displeased me mightily. Moreover, the rains ceasing, and a season of dry weather ensuing, the ground became so much harder that we found our progress even slower than before, so that we did give it up, and went back very cheerfully to our canoe, which we had neglected all this time.

We had hollowed out the log sufficiently for our purpose, though when I looked at the clumsy product of our toil I had a great doubt whether we should be able to sail in it. It had none of the nice curves and shapeliness of a boat, and was the same at the one end as at the other, so that to talk of its prow cutting the water, or cleaving the waves, as fine writers say, would always have been ridiculous. However, we had first to bring it to the water, and that we found a prodigious task. The log, even hollowed out as it was, was much heavier than those we had used in building our hut, and all our pushing and

pulling did not avail to move it an inch. We tried the plan of the rollers, whereby we had brought the trees down the hill-side, and by levering up the end of the canoe we managed to slip one of our round poles beneath it, and then others, and when we had several in place, we shoved it and moved it a few feet towards the sea. But the weight of it was so great that the poles were driven into the sand, and so far from being rollers, there they stuck, and we had no means of removing them except by digging them out. This was a pretty check at the outset, and I do not think anything could have been more vexatious. Billy and I stood beside our ungainly vessel, cudgelling our brains for some means of moving it, and Billy said he wished the worst storm that ever was would spring up, so that the waves would come dashing up the beach to the cliffs, and so carry back the canoe into its rightful element.

"What makes water so strong, master?" he said, when he had uttered this prayer for a storm. "The sea could lift this here ugly thing as easy as if it was a cork; but water ain't got no muscles, and it's muscles what does it."

I could only answer that such was the nature of things, and that made me think how feeble even the strongest man is, and how a puff of wind or a wave of the sea can undo in a moment the labour of weeks and months. I might have said something of this to Billy, though he was always impatient of such talk, only he broke in upon my musing: "Well," says he, "I suppose we'll have to go and cut some more poles, and make a regular road of 'em down to the sea, and that'll take us a week or more."

"Time doesn't matter to us," I said.

"Oh, but it does," cried Billy. "Suppose Old Smoker took it into his head to go a-blazing? Suppose there was an earthquake? If we had the canoe afloat, we could lie off a bit until Old Smoker's temper was over."

"But why suppose such things?" I said. "Here have we been two years or

more upon this island, and nothing has happened to harm us——"

"Except that ugly monster with the long legs," says Billy, interrupting.

"True; and——" I began. But he interrupted again.

"And the shark," says he, "and the pig what tumbled me over, and the dogs what bit me. It's all very well for you to talk, master. Things ain't fair, that's all I've got to say. You don't get hurt, but I do. Why, even fleas, now. We had a lot of fleas at home, but d'you think they hurt my mother-in-law? Not a bit of it. They plagued me awful, till I could screech; but my mother-in-law never felt 'em at all, and that wasn't fair, 'cause she was big and I was little—at least, not so big as her."

I said it was true that Billy had suffered more mishaps than I, but perhaps my turn would come some day; meanwhile we had as yet discovered no way of moving the canoe, unless we tried Billy's plan of laying a kind of roadway of poles from the cliff to the sea, and we supposed we should have to do that, arduous as the work would be. We left it for that day, and for the next, too, being loath to begin a task we did not like; and then we saw another way of achieving our purpose, which I wonder we had not thought of before. We had rigged up over the hole in the floor leading to the cavern a sort of windlass, by means of which we lowered provisions into our store-room, and it was when we were letting down a basketful of yams that the idea came into my head. Could we by any means devise a windlass which would give us a sufficient purchase to haul the canoe to the sea?

"Course not," said Billy, when I put it to him. I never knew Billy's like for the seeing of difficulties. "Nothing but oaks would be strong enough."

Launching the Canoe

But I was by no means satisfied that the plan was impossible, and I went

down to the shore at low tide to look about me. I ought to say that the windlass in the house was a very simple machine. We had stuck two young stout saplings into the ground, one on each side of the hole, having shortened their stems so that the fork where the lowest branches were stood about three feet above the earth. Across these forks we laid a short round pole for the drum of the winch, at one end of this we lashed two slighter poles for the handle, and about the drum we wound and unwound the rope by which we lowered things. Now it was quite certain that we could not move our heavy canoe unless we had a contrivance very much stronger than this, and the difficulty was that a windlass for this purpose must be erected on the sand, and below low-water mark, or it would not bring the canoe to the water. There were certainly no trees of any kind growing in the sand, so that it seemed that any contrivance of the kind must be made there by our own hands.

But as I was walking along the beach, endeavouring to see my way through this difficulty, I observed a rock, not above three feet high, which had a deep jagged groove across the top of it, resembling in some degree the fork of a tree. I looked about for a companion rock near at hand, but all that I saw were flatter and much smaller, not one having any groove to match the other. But why should we not rig up, I thought, something that should serve as well? After a great deal of consideration I hit upon a plan, which Billy and I proceeded at next low tide to carry out. We got two stout poles, and drove them into the sand with the pummet, one across the other, so that the tops of them made a big letter V, the point of which was at the same height as the groove in the rock. We next laid a stout pole across from the V to the groove, smearing it at the resting-places very plentifully with fat, so that it would turn easily: this made a drum. Then we plaited a thick and long rope, and wound one end about the drum and knotted the other end to the nose of the canoe through a hole we made with our axes. Last of all, we fastened a handle to the drum in the same way as we had done with the small windlass in the hut.

When this rough piece of machinery was ready we began to turn the handle,

both of us heaving at it, because the canoe was so heavy that it needed all our strength. At first, indeed, we could scarcely move it, and feared that all was again for nought; but when we had greased the drum again with pork fat where it fitted into the supports, we managed to turn it a very little way, and that giving encouragement, we persevered, and had the joy of seeing the canoe coming inch by inch, with much creaking and groaning of our machine, nearer to the water. If the canoe had had a keel, I doubt whether we could have moved it, for it would almost certainly have ploughed into the sand and stuck; but being rounded and not pointed, it slid down, though slowly and with many checks. And so, having drawn it down to a spot where the depth of water when the tide came in would be sufficient to float it, we let forth a shout of delight and went home to dinner with cheerful minds and keen appetites, I do assure you.

We had left our mooring-rope attaching the canoe to the rock, so that it should not float away while we were at dinner; and when we had finished the meal we went down to the shore again, very impatient to try the vessel's buoyancy. The tide was not yet come near high enough to float it, and we waited for a good while, watching the ripples crawling up over the sand, every moment a little higher. At last the water was washing around the canoe; then it floated, and no sooner did it float than Billy pushed it out with a great shove into deeper water and leaped aboard, and I laughed heartily at what ensued, for he turned a somerset and went souse into the sea, and the canoe filled and sank. Billy came up spluttering, and the first words he said were, "What's the good of the silly thing!" And, indeed, I saw that maybe the matter was not one for amusement, for if the vessel toppled over, or turned turtle, as they say at sea, whenever we tried to board her, we should have had all our labour in vain. However, we could but wait until the tide fell again, when she would be left high and dry, and meanwhile we went back to the house, as well to dry Billy's clothes (what there was now left of them) as to consider how we might improve the stability of the vessel on which we set such store.

I remembered that when we were on the island where we sojourned for a time (how long ago it seemed!) we had seen some strangely-shaped canoes which very much moved my curiosity. There were cross-pieces of wood let into the side of the canoe, and bent over, being fastened at the lower extremity to a pole or plank which floated on the water. This odd contrivance I had heard the seamen call an outrigger, and the purpose of it was to keep the vessel on an even keel, as one may say, though having no keel it would be better to say plainly, to keep it steady. I was now much more alive to the benefit of this contrivance than when I had merely seen it as a spectator; things do take on very different aspects according as we are personally interested or not; and we immediately set to work to fashion an outrigger for our vessel, which took us two or three full working days to make, and another day to adjust. When it was done, we floated the canoe once more, and got into her, and felt exceeding pleased with ourselves for the space of perhaps a minute, and then our complacency received a wound, for by some shifting of our position the balance of the vessel was altered, the outrigger rose up and made best part of a circle in the air, and Billy and I were cast into the water. It was plain that the outrigger was too light, and we made another one, using this time the heavy wood of the cocoa-nut palm, which being very hard, too, gave us a deal of trouble to fashion to the right shape; but we managed it at last, and when we fixed this new outrigger to the canoe, we found that we could sway from side to side without any danger of capsizing. Billy was greatly uplifted at this, and wanted to set off there and then on a voyage; he even said that perhaps we might rig up a sail and voyage to England; but I told him that we had not yet proved the vessel, and did not even know whether she would ride through a sea of any roughness; and as for England, it was impossible to think that we could ever cross the immense ocean in so clumsy a craft, though the mention of it set me a-longing, and I felt more miserable than I had done for many a day.

We had not yet made any paddles for propelling our canoe; Billy very sensibly saying that 'twas no good wasting time on them until we had proved whether our vessel would float. However, now that we were assured of this, we made some paddles, finding it a pretty hard job, for we had no means of splitting planks from the trees, and we had to content ourselves with short poles, with blades made in the following manner. To one end of the pole we lashed a thin flexible rod, bent to the shape of a circle, and we made a kind of basket-work on this by crossing and re-crossing with threads of cocoa-nut fibre, which we drew as tight as we could. When we had coloured it red with the sap of the redwood tree of which I have spoken before, we had a very serviceable paddle, and not ill-looking either. We paddled about in shallow water near the sandy beach, not venturing to go further out as yet, from fear of capsizing where we might be snapped up by a shark. Our vessel behaved very well, though with no grace of movement, to be sure, and we found after a little practice that we could sit on the crosspieces of the outrigger, which joined the sides of the canoe, and work our paddles very well.

I asked Billy what we should call our vessel.

"Blackamoor, that's what I say," said he.

"But she's only black inside," said I; "her outside is fair enough; and now I come to think of it, we can paint her and make her look better still."

Naming the Vessel

Accordingly we did this, expressing oil from the candle-nuts of which I have spoken, and mixing this with sap from the red-wood tree. We made a paintbrush of thin spines, and with this we painted the sides of the vessel, which took us above a fortnight, I should think, for it was wonderful what a prodigious quantity of paint we used, and what a prodigious number of nuts we pressed before we got enough oil for our purpose. When the painting was

finished, Billy said that we ought to call the vessel *Painted Sally*, or some such name; but I thought she deserved a more respectful appellation, and suggested *Esperanza*, a name which I had come upon somewhere in my reading, and which I thought had a pleasant sound. However, Billy would not hear of it.

"It's French, that I warrant you," he said, "and I can't abide 'em. Besides, what's it mean? I suppose it means some rubbish or other."

"Well, I think it means 'hope'," I said, "and I think it a much prettier word."

"I don't," says Billy bluntly; "it's too soft like."

"And therefore it suits our vessel," I said, "for you know, Billy, ships are always given ladies' names."

"Yes, and the *Lovey Susan*," says he, "she went to the bottom, and *her* name was soft enough, and I don't believe any boat with the name *Esperanza* would ever have the strength to ride through a storm. I likes a plain straightforward name, I do, like my own; you won't find any man," says he, "with a better name than Billy Bobbin."

"Well, shall we call her Billy?" I asked.

Billy looked very serious at this, and after considering for a minute he said he wasn't going to be called a "her" or a "she" for anybody, not even on a boat, and then added, "Call her plain *Hope* and settle it, master, and never mind about your *Esperanzas*."

"Fair Hope would suit a lady better than Plain Hope," I said very gravely, and Billy, who was quite unconscious of the verbal point ('twas a very small one, I own), agreed that *Fair Hope* wasn't bad; and so we got some powdered charcoal and mixed it with oil, and printed the name in black letters on the larboard bow, as Billy called it, and having done this, we thought we

might now venture to make a short expedition up the coast.

We go Sailing

It was a fair bright morning when we set out on this our first voyage, and we were very much excited, as you may imagine. We had been by my reckoning, which was pure guess-work, above two years on the island, and though we had become pretty reconciled to it, regarding it indeed as our home for the rest of our lives, there were times when our lot seemed to be that of prisoners, and the prospect of getting beyond our bounds, though ever so short a distance and for ever so short a time, seemed like the loosening of fetters and the removing of prison bars. This made me think what a blessed thing is liberty, and when I remembered unfortunate people whom I had read about as falling into captivity I compared our lot with theirs, and saw how much we had to be thankful for.

However, to return to our voyage. We had been taught a certain caution by sundry incidents that had already happened in our life on the island, so we put some food and two or three pots of fresh water in the bottom of the vessel, and our spears, axes, and bows and arrows as well. While Billy carried these things down to the vessel, I went up to our watch-tower, to see whether any canoes were in sight, for we should have been very sorry if we had run among a fleet of savage vessels. However, there was not a speck to be seen, only the low dusky line on the western horizon that we believed to be the coast of some island. Accordingly we set off in perfect ease of mind, and paddled slowly along, keeping close to the shore, and following its indentations as well as the rocks and shoals would permit us.

The seaward aspect of the familiar parts of the island was very interesting to us, and we amused ourselves with guessing what places in the interior were opposite to us when the cliffs hid them from sight. For some distance we passed beneath low cliffs; then the shore took a great curve inward, making the bay we had called by Billy's name; the head of this bay we judged to be the

point of the shore nearest to our hut, which was not itself visible from any part of the sea, lying as it did in a hollow. We paddled out to the nearest of the big rocks that stood like sentinels guarding this side of the island, and found a great quantity of clams upon it, some of which Billy insisted on taking into the boat, to see if they tasted any different from those we found on our own shore, and in reaching over he pretty nearly upset the vessel. From thence we went on to the second rock, some little distance out to sea, and Billy wanted to get out and climb the rock, which stood almost perpendicular, but with jagged sides, so that climbing was possible; but the base of it was so thickly covered with slimy seaweed that it would have been difficult to maintain a footing, so I persuaded Billy to forego the enterprise. Leaving this rock, we continued on our course, and came by and by to the rocky spar that was what may be called the land's end of this part of the island. Here the cliffs were very steep, indeed, almost perpendicular, as we had discovered before when we had tried to walk round the coast, and found our way blocked. When we had turned the corner, we found another little bay, but no beach, except a very small strip of sand at the foot of the cliffs. We saw a great quantity of driftwood on this beach, and when we paddled up to it, a huge eel darted away from beneath a water-sodden log, on which Billy made a great lamentation because we had not brought our fishing lines and hooks. Among the driftwood we saw two or three very old planks, worm-eaten and covered with moss, and we wondered whether they were planks of the boat of the *Lovey Susan*, which we might have had now if we had been more thoughtful. We took them on board, not that they would be of any use to us, but that we might keep them as mementoes.

The Cave

Paddling out of this bay, we were coasting along by more high cliffs when we came all of a sudden to an immense opening, which appeared to run a great way into the shore, though we could not tell how far, for its depths were very black.

"A cave, master!" cried Billy, full of excitement, and I was excited too, there being I know not what of mystery and fascination about a cave. "Let us go in," says he.

You may think it strange, but I felt a great reluctance to paddle into that gloomy place; my imagination, more active than Billy's, saw it peopled by sea-urchins and hobgoblins, and I could fancy I already heard strange noises, the fruit, I suppose, of my reading that wonderful play of Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. However, I could not show the white feather before Billy, so we paddled into the entrance, finding a considerable depth of water there, and so for twenty or thirty yards, there being more light in the cave than we had thought when outside, because it was lofty, and the water threw up reflections. But when we had come some twenty yards into it, it made a sudden bend to the right, and at the same place became very much darker, so that though we peered in we could see but a few yards in front of us. We stayed for a little, looking about us, and seeing nothing but what appeared to be considerable patches of seaweed floating on the water; nor did we hear any noises, but all was as still as death, so that even Billy was oppressed by the silence, and even more by the hollow echo when he spoke.

"I don't much like the look of this place, master," he said.

I did not tell him that my feeling was the same, but affected to laugh at him, though at the same time I dipped my paddle to bring the vessel round with her head pointing to the opening. As I did so, I observed a sort of heaving and undulating movement in one of the patches of seaweed, and marvelled at it, for there was no current on the surface, and the vessel was perfectly steady. But supposing there must be an under-current of some kind, I paid no more heed to it, but continued to paddle, and we soon brought the vessel out of the cave and among a little labyrinth of rocks, partly above the surface and partly submerged. We had but just got there, however, when we found our vessel

begin to lose way and our paddles to stick in the seaweed, as we supposed, which was now very thick on the surface, and which was the greater impediment to us because of the outrigger. We strove as hard as we could to force the vessel through, but it was like tugging at a rebellious slip-knot; the harder you tug the more you tie yourself up. We were thinking of backing the vessel, so as to go round about the obstacle, when all of a sudden, as I took notice of how the tendrils of the seaweed were clinging about the outrigger and curling up towards the side of the canoe, I was seized with the horrid suspicion that we had not to deal with seaweed at all, but with a monster, or maybe several, like to that terrible creature which had almost dragged me down when we were searching for eggs, as I have related. This thought made me shudder with a sickening apprehension, especially when the notion struck me, as it did at that moment, that this cavern could not be very far from the steep and rugged cliff by which we had descended. Even before I could whisper my dread thought to Billy, some of the tentacles, as I had now no doubt they were, were creeping over the side, and one of them touched my leg and immediately held fast. For an instant I was perfectly overcome with horror, as I was on the cliff, and, as it were, paralyzed in my will; but then, making a great effort, I jerked myself free, at the same time calling aloud to Billy and chopping with my axe, which I had seized, at the tentacles that held the canoe in their grip and had altogether stopped its motion.

A Shoal of Monsters

"The monster, is it?" cries Billy, who hated the thing with the same aversion as I did, but seemed to be quite exempt from its fascination. "I'll monster him," says he, and he dropped his paddle and took up his axe and began hacking away with all his might at the horrid feelers that were crawling over the vessel. There were the two of us, then, slashing and chopping with desperate energy, running, or rather creeping as quickly as we could, from end to end of the canoe whenever a tentacle showed itself above the gunwale, with the result that the grip of the creature (or creatures, for we knew not whether we had to do

with one or many)—the grip of it, I say, relaxed, and we thought we could leave our axes and take to the paddles again. But we had not gone above two yards when the vessel was brought up again, and this time the paddles themselves were seized, and though I struggled with all my strength, my paddle was drawn out of my hands and I saw it no more. Billy was more lucky, and kept his, but he had to drop it into the bottom and take to his axe again, as did to mine, and so we fell to it again, slashing and chopping at these hideous tentacles that came up over the side, parts of them falling into the bottom of the vessel as we severed them and writhing there. Once more we beat off the enemy thus, and then I seized Billy's paddle in feverish haste, and plied it with all my might, Billy doing what he could also with two spears held together. And this time we got clear of the rocky labyrinth, to my unutterable relief, though with some scraping of the outrigger, for you may be sure we were in so great a hurry to get away that we could not stop for nice steering; and we kept on paddling hard for some minutes after we were a fair distance along the shore, and, indeed, did not cease until we found ourselves in the channel between the island and the red rock, and then we had another alarm, but of a different kind, for our vessel was caught in the mighty current which rushed through the narrow passage, and was swept on as if it had been a cork, we gripping the thwarts and fearing every moment that we should either be dashed against the rocks on one side or the other, or be totally submerged in the boiling torrent. However, we came out at the further end safe, though very wet and terrified, and were carried on, though not so violently, past the place where the cascade fell from the mountain, and so on towards the long spit of land that had the natural archway at its end.

The End of the Voyage

We still had cause for alarm, for as yet we had no mastery of the vessel, and feared we should be carried by the current right out to sea. But by dint of great efforts, Billy with the paddle, which he had taken from me, being the more muscular, and I with the spears, we managed to take the vessel across

the current and towards the land on our right hand, and by and by got into pretty calm water near the archway. Here, in the steep wall of the cliff, we saw a small cove, where we might have beached the canoe; but after what we had come through we had little disposition to linger, and so we paddled through the archway and turned the corner, and went along by the lava beach until we came at length to the sandy beach whence we had started. We were fairly worn out, I assure you, as well with our frights and terrors as with our exertions, and besides, we had eaten nothing since the morning, though we had provisions with us, having had too much to think about otherwise. Never did mariners land with more thankfulness than we did. When we had tied up our vessel we went to our house and built a roaring fire, to cheer our spirits as well as to dry our clothes; and when we had eaten a comforting meal and fell a-talking, we spoke of our satisfaction in the seaworthiness of the Fair Hope, and also in having circumnavigated the island.

"I'd like to kill that monster," says Billy, as we talked about that part of our adventure; "and I will, too, if he'll come out of that cave where we can see him proper."

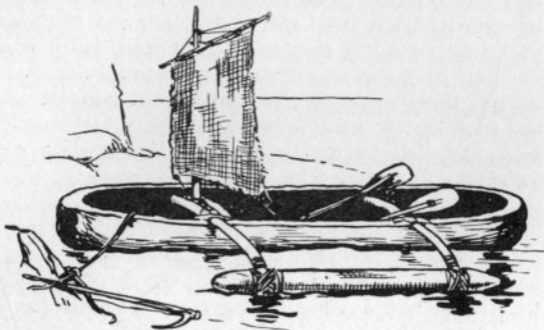
"I think we had better leave him in possession undisturbed," I said, with the horror of the creature still upon me. "Perhaps there is a shoal of the monsters there; the rocks we saw would make a very good home for them. And I don't think we'll go that way again, Billy; I seem to see those dreadful tentacles crawling all about me, and the leathery feel of them when I chopped makes me shudder still."

"Cheer up, master," says Billy. "After all, we did 'em more damage than they did us, and taught 'em a lesson, I warrant you."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

OF OUR VOYAGE TO A NEIGHBOURING ISLAND, AND OF OUR
INHOSPITABLE RECEPTION BY THE SAVAGES

We did not take another voyage for some days, for my dreams were haunted by visions of the monster, and I felt a shuddering reluctance even to look at the canoe, upon which I seemed to see tentacles writhing. And when we did again embark, it was only to paddle out to the fishing-ground I have mentioned, though by and by, when the recollection of the monster had become somewhat dimmed, we cruised about the coast sometimes for the mere pleasure and exercise of it, and to make ourselves more expert in the management of our vessel. After a time the notion came to us of rigging up a mast and sail, and trying what we could do in real navigation. We had some difficulty in stepping the mast, which was a straight pine sapling; but the way we at length hit upon was as follows: we fastened two straight logs athwart the canoe, setting them parallel, and just so far apart as gave room for the mast. Having set up the mast between them, we lashed two more logs, but shorter, crosswise upon the first two, close up against the mast, which was then, as you perceive, gripped pretty firmly by the four logs. The sail gave us little trouble, for we had become expert by this time in weaving, and we wove a sort of huge mat with long grasses, which we found to serve excellently well. Spars and cordage were also easily made, though they took a prodigious time, and we one day hoisted our sail to see how our contrivances would act.



OUR CANOE

Rigging

We were much disappointed when we found that as soon as the sail caught the wind our vessel heeled over, so that we had to lower the sail immediately, or we should have been capsized. After some thought we hit upon a remedy, which was to make some alterations in the weight of the outrigger, and also in the length of the outrigger beam; and when we had spent a deal of time in making experiments, and running some risks of losing the vessel, we managed so that she ran perfectly steady with an ordinary breeze. And then we discovered that, our stability being assured, we could sail marvellously close to the wind and at a very fair speed, much faster, indeed, than we could paddle, and it then became our delight to make little trips round the coast and some distance out to sea, always very carefully looking out first from our watch-tower to be sure that no savages were in sight.

The Red Rock

On one of these expeditions we sailed round to the north side of the island, and it came into our heads to see whether it was possible to make an ascent of the big red rock, the sides of which, so far as we had been able to examine them from the cliffs and the hills, appeared to be unscalable. We took care not to let our vessel drift into the current that ran between the rock and the island, and running round to the north side of it, we found that it was not near so precipitous here as on the other sides—indeed, there was a very convenient landing-place at the foot, and a little cove where the vessel might safely lie, tied by the painter to a crag, while we satisfied our curiosity by making the ascent. You may be sure that we tied the vessel up very securely before leaving her, for if she had drifted loose I do not know what we should have done, for we could scarcely have swum to the island, the current being so strong, and I suppose we should simply have stayed on the rock until we were dead.

There was no pathway up the rock, on which we were perhaps the first human beings that had ever set foot, and we found the ascent a great deal more difficult than it had appeared from below. We had to clamber up from point to point with the aid sometimes of stunted bushes—very sturdy they were, too—that grew out of fissures; and choosing the easiest way, we made a very zigzag course, sometimes losing sight of the sea altogether. Here and there we disturbed sea-birds which had made their nests in the face of the cliff, but there were not near so many of these as we might have expected. After climbing thus for about three hundred feet, as I calculated, we came to a sort of broad terrace that ran in a fairly easy slope round the northern and eastern faces of the rock, and pretty well covered with shrubs and moss. From this we made our way, rather laboriously, to the southern side, and came by and by to the ledge, or platform, which jutted out from the rock to the island, and which I mentioned a while ago. Billy, you remember, had spoke of leaping the gap, which would have been an impossible feat, for not only was the distance too great, it being, I should think, at least twenty feet, but, moreover, the ledge on the rock was somewhat higher than the promontory of the island. Looking

down upon this latter as we now did, the gap seemed even less than it had appeared from the other side, and I had really to be very stern with Billy when he declared again that he knew he could jump it.

From this ledge or platform we found the ascent to the summit of the rock pretty easy, and when we got there, we saw that it was flat in general, but a great deal cut up by fissures and jagged bosses, so that it was not near so smooth as it appeared when we overlooked it from the side of the mountain. Some of the fissures were of considerable depth, and when I flung a small fragment of rock into one of them, to test it, there came a faint splash from below, by which we knew that it contained water; and yet the splash was not so faint as to come from the sea, so that we concluded the water at the bottom of the fissure was fresh, and had collected there from the drainage of the sort of tableland on which we stood. There were thin shrubs and lichen growing on the rock, but we saw nothing to interest us, and so, having got but a poor reward for our labour in climbing, we descended again, and found the descent little less laborious than the ascent; indeed, I thought it more difficult, for the looking down made me a little dizzy. We were both pretty tired by the time we reached the canoe, which was just as we left it; and I should not have thought it worth while to say anything about this fruitless expedition but for some surprising events that happened later.

Preparing for a Voyage

It was some little while after this, I think, that I suffered a spell of homesickness, and was more miserable and down-hearted than I had ever been since we came to the island. I have no doubt it was because we had more time on our hands than heretofore, for with the making of our canoe it seemed that there was little else left for us in the way of handiwork, and the tending of our animals and plantations was by no means enough to fill all our days. The servant of the ingenious gentleman in the tale—Sancho Panza is his name, I think—in his simplicity invoked blessings on him that invented sleep; and I

would match him by a similar invocation on the inventor of work, for I am very sure that while we work we have no leisure to be discontented, and when our work is done there is blessed sleep to refresh us. I did not forget the saying that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and Billy and I, as I have said, did some little in the way of play, with skittles, and shooting at the running man, and in sailing our canoe, which was a very fine sport, I assure you; and we spent some time in trying to teach our dogs, which were growing apace, to perform tricks, with but little success. However, I mention my home-sickness because it was when I was in that black fit that Billy spoke again of sailing to England.

"Why not make a bigger canoe, master, and put a great store of food and water aboard, and sail away?" he said. "When our water was done, we could touch at some of them islands we passed and get more, and maybe after a bit we might fall in with a proper ship and get a passage home."

I pointed out in answer to this that we should not find it an easy matter to launch a vessel large enough to carry provisions for a lengthy voyage. "If we had a chart and compass," I said, "and other things useful in navigation, about which neither you nor I know much, we might perhaps set off and go from island to island on our stock of food, until we came maybe to one of the possessions which the Dutch have, I believe, in the Indian Archipelago, or maybe to some place in Spanish America where we might find a friendly ship. But suppose our food gave out and we could not make land," I said, "what could we do without a chart or any means of taking observations? If luck went against us, we might sail for weeks, and indeed months, without ever seeing land at all. And besides," I went on, "suppose nothing of this sort happened to us, but we chanced upon an island where the native people were hostile——"

"We would fight 'em," says Billy, interrupting me; "that's what we made them bows and arrows for, and we can shoot straight now, and we could make a few thousand arrows so that it wouldn't matter if we lost some."

I could not help smiling at Billy's simplicity, admiring at the same time his stoutness of heart; but I showed him that with all our expertness we could not hope, being two, to contend with great hosts of savages, who would very soon overwhelm us. However, Billy was not at all convinced that his idea of a voyage to England was impracticable, and he talked so much about it that I was in course of time prevailed on to consider it, at least so far as to consent to make a little experiment. In short, we resolved upon making a voyage of several days from the island. We had to consider of the well-being of our live stock during our intended absence, and that gave us some trouble, for though we might take our two dogs with us, we could certainly not transport our pigs or our poultry, nor did we wish to do so. On the other hand, if we left them in their usual habitations, and we were away longer than we expected, they would certainly starve, while if we let them loose the fowls would as certainly be devoured by the wild dogs, and the pigs the same, or else return to their wildness, but most likely the former, for animals that have become domestic are no match in fighting for wild animals of their kind. We might have left a large quantity of food, that's true; but knowing the nature of beasts we knew that they would devour it gluttonously without any forethought, and maybe kill themselves with over-eating, and at any rate there would be none of it left after the first day. It was a good while before we hit upon any way out of this difficulty, and then it was Billy who thought of a way, and very ingenious it was, in my estimation. As he very truly said, we needed some contrivance that would enable the pigs to get their food, but not too fast, and his device for this was to make a long trough with holes in the bottom of it, and to raise this above the ground just so high that the pigs by lifting up their snouts could nibble through the holes at what the trough contained. I say I thought it an ingenious notion, and we considered how such a trough could be made, for we could not make one of planks, and it would be a tedious business to burn out the inside of a tree as we had done with our vessel. But it came into my head that we could make one by moulding clay on such a tree, which we did, and having broken a number of holes in the clay when it was moist, we burnt it hard, and

thus the trough was finished, in much less time than the hollowing of a tree would have taken. We put some yams into it, and made a trial of this new contrivance, and we found it answered our expectations almost too well, for owing to the height of the trough when we had propped it up, the smallness of the holes, and the unwonted postures to which the pigs were enforced, they could only eat very slowly, which must have been a great trouble to animals accustomed to rapid gobbling of their meals. We saw that we should have to make a special trough for the smaller pigs, or else give them one end of the trough to themselves, for otherwise the larger animals would never have let them eat at all; and in the end we put up a fence between the smaller and the larger pigs, and tilted the trough a little, so that it was lower at one extremity; and this end also we filled with pounded bread-fruit as well as yams, as being more fit for the younger stomachs, besides being not so hard to get at through the holes. From the trial we made we saw that the trough, when full, would hold enough food for three or four days, and if we were absent longer than that, the pigs must needs sing for their supper, as Billy said.

As for the fowls, we could not for a long time think of any manner of supplying them with food. We were accustomed to fling their food to them over the fence of their enclosure, and Billy said that what we needed was some contrivance for dropping supplies down among them at intervals. I remembered having read somewhere of a device for releasing a catch by a candle burning a thread passed through it at a certain distance from the top, but we could not make with our candle-nuts a candle that would last near long enough, and besides, if we could there was the danger that it would cause a conflagration. But this set us on thinking towards the plan which we resolved on, and that was to support a basket of food by a catch, and tie to the catch a strip of raw hide, which, when it contracted with the sun's heat, would release the catch. The manner of our doing this was as follows. We suspended the basket from the roof of the fowl-house by slings, one on each side, and to one of the slings we fastened a long strip of raw hide, the other end of this being

attached by a wooden peg to the wall, and the hide being stretched pretty tight in a horizontal direction. The contraction of the hide would thus pull the sling from under the basket, and so cause it to fall. We found when we tried this at first that the basket fell too soon, which was due to the too rapid contraction of the hide; but we devised a remedy for this by wrapping the hide round with wet grass, which prevented it from contracting so soon. We put enough food in the basket to last about two days, being unable to put more because it would then be too heavy for the catch.

"If we are away longer than two days, and they eat it all too soon," says Billy, "they must make the best of it, and maybe it'll learn 'em not to be greedy."

The supply of water for our animals gave us no trouble, for with our numerous pots and pans filled there was enough for over a week.

A Certain Lecture

All these arrangements having been made—and we grudged the time for them, so eager were we now to go a-sailing—we determined to set forth the very next day. As we lay in our hut that night, before we went to sleep we talked over what was before us, and I own I was in a very serious mood, for we were certainly braving the unknown. We might be caught in a storm, and knew not in the least how our vessel would then behave. We might encounter savages, who would be hostile to us, and maybe kill us, or make us captives. We were leaving a comfortable and secure home, and embarking on what might prove to be a very sea of troubles; and when, in talking to Billy, the manifold dangers to which we might be exposed became more deeply pictured in my mind, I was almost ready to give up the design. But when I threw out sundry hints to this effect, Billy spoke so slightly of these imaginary perils, and so glowingly of the delights of roving and going a voyage of discovery, that I resolutely stilled my qualms, and, indeed, felt some little ashamed of my timorousness. For an example, when I said that we might never come home

again, Billy said, "Why, master, you *are* a croaker. We might have gone to the bottom with poor Captain Corke and poor Mr. Lummis, and we didn't. We might have been took into that boat with Hoggett and Wabberley and that lot, and we warn't, and mighty glad I am of it, for I wouldn't be within call of Hoggett for a thousand pound. And if so be they're alive anywhere now, and Mr. Bodger is with 'em, he wishes to goodness he warn't, that I warrant you."

"But suppose we come back and find our house ruined with an earthquake or smothered under ashes from the mountain?" I said.

"Why, we shall think ourselves uncommon lucky," says he, "as we was not here to be ruined and smothered too. I call that nothing but croaking, master."

I took some pains to defend myself from this charge, and to show Billy that there is all the difference in the world between a settled habit of looking on the dark side of things and a prudential survey when some great enterprise is in question; but I might as well have talked to the pigs, or to our two dogs, for all the impression I made. And it is as well 'twas so, for his confidence and resoluteness to see only the bright side were wonderfully cheering to me; and I have often since thought that it is a great affliction to be able to see too much. To use a homely instance, the donkey in the tale starved because he could not make up his mind between the two bundles of hay; if he had seen only one at a time he would have had a very good meal.

When we rose in the morning I was quite as ready as Billy to embark on our voyage. At the last moment something put it into our heads to convey all our spare provisions and some of our tools to the cavern below, which already held a great store, and to conceal the opening, which hitherto we had only covered with loose logs. We now laid these logs very close together across the top of the shaft a little below the floor level, and over these we laid grass, and over this again a quantity of earth like that of which the floor consisted; and then we rammed it down, and laid on it flags and rushes with which we were

used to strew the floor, so that no one would think, to look at it, that there was a cellar beneath. Then, having already strengthened the fences of our poultry-run and pigsty, to keep out the wild dogs, we carried down to the vessel a good store of provisions and water, also our spears and bows and arrows, the arrows in neat quivers we had made out of palm leaves. We then waited for the full tide to launch our canoe and set sail.

We go a Voyage

This happened in the afternoon. We had talked over the direction of our course, and had resolved to sail to the westward, for no other reason, I think, than that we had seen the seamen of the *Lovey Susan* make for the east, and we had no wish to meet them again if perchance we had to land for any purpose. If any one says it was a foolhardy thing to attempt a voyage without a compass, and asks how we could be sure of finding our way back again, I will remind him that it was very rarely indeed Old Smoker had not a crown of steam or smoke upon his head, and he stood so high that he could have been seen for a distance of thirty or forty miles, I am sure, and we did not purpose to go near so far as that. Our design was, indeed, to make direct for the island which we had seen as a dim line on the western horizon, and we set forth in the afternoon because we thought it best to approach this island under cover of night, for if our coming was observed by the people of the island while we were still a great way off, they would be able, if hostilely inclined, to prepare an ambuscade for us, which might be our ruin; whereas if we surprised them by an unexpected arrival on their coast, they would not have had time to get ready for us, and so we should not be in near so much danger.

A Coral Island

The breeze blew gently from the north-west, and the *Fair Hope*, beating up against it, proceeded but slowly, though she sailed with a steadiness which, now that we were farther from land than we had ever been before, gave us

much contentment. Our progress was so slow, indeed, that darkness was upon us before we had got half-way to the island, and we had to steer by the stars, which shone out with exceeding brightness in a sky perfectly clear. There is something inexpressibly moving in sailing thus upon a calm sea, in the deep silence of the night, and neither Billy nor I had much to say to each other. We tried to sleep a little now and then, taking it in turns to steer, for the vessel needed no other management, so tranquil were the elements; but neither of us could sleep soundly, and at length we gave over the attempt, and were content to float idly on. Some while before daybreak we heard the sound of breakers on our leeward side, and we instantly brought the vessel to, having no mind to run upon a strange shore in the darkness. When the dark lifted, we saw that we were within a mile or so of a low island which, from our former experience when sailing in the *Lovey Susan*, we knew to be a coral island. Between it and us there was a reef over which the sea was breaking, and we could see no opening in it, but we knew that there always is an opening in such a reef, giving admittance to a broad lagoon. Accordingly, we hoisted our sail again, and, still beating up to windward, we came after some time to a gap in the reef at least a hundred yards broad, so that we ran through it with ease, to find ourselves, as we expected, in the shelter of the lagoon. We saw immediately that our coming had not been unobserved, for on the farther side of the lagoon there was a crowd of naked brown people in a little clearing among the trees, who we knew had seen us, at first by their gestures, and then by the proceedings of some few of them. For while we looked, we saw a half-dozen or so running along the shore away from us, and Billy cried that they were affrighted, and they must be a lot of cowards. But I very soon perceived that he was quite mistaken in this, for the goal of the runners was plainly a little cove about a mile up the coast, where there were certain long dark objects drawn up on the beach which I judged to be canoes, though I could not see them clearly at so great a distance, especially as we were on the sea-level.

We were about two hundred and fifty yards from the place where the

natives were congregated on the shore of the lagoon, so that we could see them plainly, and we observed that the men were armed with clubs and spears, but we saw no bows and arrows. They made no signs of welcome such as were made by the people of the islands at which the *Lovey Susan* had touched, nor did they make signs of hostility, so that I thought they were waiting for some indication from us as to our friendliness or the reverse. Accordingly I stood up in the canoe, and, raising my hands above my head, waved them in the air, upon which many of the natives did the same, only their hands held their weapons. But they shouted also, and there did not appear to be anything unfriendly in the tone, so we continued our course towards the shore, to which Billy had indeed been slowly paddling all the time. As we drew nearer the shouts of the people grew more vociferous, and I observed that the women and children among them had now got behind the men, which I thought might be out of nothing but shyness, but on the other hand it might be for security; and when we were, I suppose, about sixty yards from the shore, I directed Billy to cease from paddling, so that we might hold a parley with the people, if we could, before venturing to land among them. But though he shipped his paddle, I observed that we still drifted shoreward, the tide coming into the lagoon through the gap in the reef, and being by no means ready to come within the power of these people until we were sure of them, I caught up my paddle, and began to use it so that we might keep a constant distance from the shore. It was very fortunate I did this, as it proved afterwards, for it precipitated the attack which would have otherwise been made upon us later, when we might not have been able to get away. The people, no doubt, supposed from my action that we were going to paddle out of the lagoon, which did not suit their bloodthirsty minds, for at the first stroke I made they burst into a great roar, the ferocity of which was not doubtful, and a perfect cloud of spears hurtled through the air, one of which, narrowly missing me, struck Billy in the arm, and another completely transfixed his dog Robin, which fell dying in the bottom of the canoe, and was immediately licked with every demonstration of grief by its companion. Other spears hit the canoe, and some

stuck in its sides, but the most fell into the water.

An Attack

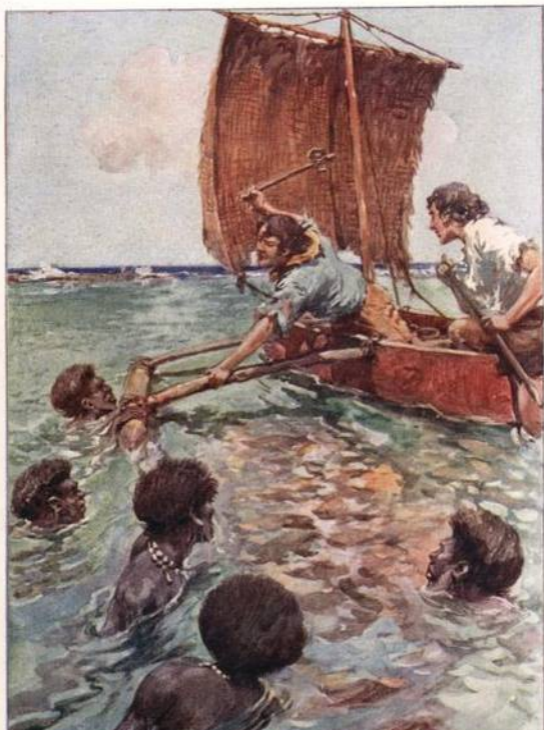
Billy was in such a rage at the loss of his dog that he seized his bow and arrows, and in spite of his own hurt was going to shoot among the savages; but I saw that we were in very great danger and sharply bade him drop his weapon and help me run our vessel out of harm's way. We set to with our paddles, therefore, making all haste to get out of the lagoon, and not at present hoisting the sail, for the lagoon being sheltered by a thick belt of trees, we felt scarcely at all the north-westerly wind, and went much faster with paddles than we could have done with the sail. The savages cast more spears at us, but none hit us again, and we were soon out of range and thought we should easily escape through the gap, when I observed that three of the canoes which had been lying on the beach were now launched, and were coming towards us very fast. It was plain that the native village was in that direction, for though not above half-a-dozen men had hastened thither along the shore, there were at least forty men in the three canoes, which now, I perceived, were making slantwise across the lagoon, with the plain intent of cutting us off from the entrance. This sight made me feel very anxious, for though we might very likely outdistance the canoes if we could hoist our sail in a fair breeze, we were no match for them in the sheltered lagoon, our vessel being, I think, heavier than theirs, and having only two paddles to their dozen at least. We had less distance to go than they, that's true, but they moved I doubt not three feet to our one, so that I could not help thinking we had a poor chance of escaping, especially as Billy could use only one arm. We worked as hard as ever we did in our lives, I assure you, Billy doing the steering, and all the time he muttered terrible threats of vengeance against the savages for killing his dog.

We had been so intent upon the canoes that were speeding to cut us off that we had had no eyes for a nearer danger. When the savages on shore had discharged their spears, a good number of them leapt into the water and set off

swimming after us, of which we were not aware until on a sudden we saw their black heads on the surface not many yards away. They were very fine swimmers, that is certain, for some of them had overhauled us, and were indeed almost within reach of our outrigger before we saw them. I own I got a fright then, for if they once managed to grip the outrigger, they could haul it beneath the surface and so upset our craft, and all would be over. In this extremity I called to Billy to keep them off with his spear or axe, though this meant a slackening of speed which we could ill afford in face of the canoes drawing nearer so rapidly to the gap; and besides, it gave opportunity to others of the swimmers to come up with those that had at first outstripped them. You see, then, how desperate was our situation, I having both to paddle and to steer, and Billy having to rush from end to end of the canoe to beat off the men, which would soon become an impossible business, for while he jabbed at the men aiming at the stern cross-piece, another made a dash for the bow-end, and there were others ready to clutch at the beam.

I was pretty nearly mad with despair when, as we came out of the shelter of the trees lining the land side of the lagoon, I felt the breeze blow stronger against my cheek and a flush of hope within me. Crying to Billy to keep up for a minute longer, to which he answered, "Trust me, master," in a breathless kind of way, I dropped my paddle, caught at the halyard, and ran the sail up the mast. Instantly it filled and took the wind, but in the moment when the vessel came to a stop at my ceasing to paddle, two of the swimmers laid hands on the beam of the outrigger, and I felt the vessel give a dreadful lurch. My heart was in my mouth, as we say; but Billy, with a desperate stroke of his spear, drove one of the men away, and the next moment the sudden filling of the sail caused the vessel to plunge forward, so that the man who still clung to the outrigger was drawn along and prevented from exerting his strength to upset us. And while he still hung on Billy reached over, and brought his axe down with great force on the man's head, almost losing his balance; and the man gave a yell and let go his hold, falling back among his companions, who had now abandoned

the pursuit.





" BILLY REACHED OVER, AND BROUGHT HIS AXE DOWN ON THE
MAN'S HEAD."

"BILLY REACHED OVER, AND BROUGHT HIS AXE DOWN ON THE MAN'S HEAD."

Just as, before, our attention had been kept from the swimmers by the canoes, so our tussle with the swimmers had prevented us from observing the oncoming of the canoes. Being now free from the former danger, we saw that our vessel and the canoes were about equal distances from the gap, and I perceived with a terrible sinking of the heart that though the *Fair Hope* was making much greater speed than when we drove her by paddles alone, yet the canoes were going still faster, the men in them plying their paddles with amazing force and dexterity. Within a few moments it became clear to me that the foremost canoe and our vessel must reach the gap almost at the same instant, and Billy, who seemed to have forgotten the perils in the excitement of the race, cried out, "Don't let it be a tie, master. I'd rather be beat than come in a tie." But I saw that to be even with them would be as good as a beating, for if we came so much as within spear-throw of them, we could not by any means escape as we had escaped from the men on shore. And though I now took to my paddle again, having fixed the sail, and strove with all my might, I perceived that within a minute the savages' first canoe must reach the gap before us, and I was on the point of giving up for lost, grasping my bow with the resolution to make the best fight I could before being overwhelmed. Billy had already taken his, though I knew by the set of his face that he was suffering much pain from his wounded arm, and catching my eye, he said, "This is what we made 'em

for," and looked with great determination at the savages in the canoes.

Escape

But in that critical moment I saw something that set me on taking another resolution, and carrying it out too, all in an instant, as it were. We had been making, as I have said, for the gap in the reef, through which the sea flowed inwards very smoothly. Upon the reef itself the water was very much broken, more at some points than at others, and in that flash of time I had observed that the part nearest to us, on our right hand, appeared to lie some little distance below the surface, for the water above it was not near so restless and foam-crested as at some other parts. There were swells and eddies, indeed, but it seemed to me that the water was deep enough to take our vessel, and, as a drowning man will catch at a straw, I seized on this as a bare chance of escape. In the twinkling of an eye—for I saw and thought and acted all in a breath, so to speak—I thrust my paddle into the water at such an angle as would divert the canoe towards this part of the reef, telling Billy what I was about, and bidding him be ready for anything that might happen. The vessel's head swung round to the reef, we scudded across it with a scratching and scraping that made me shudder, and it was well I did not know then what I learnt from a mariner afterwards, how if we had struck upon any small pinnacle of hard coral we must have been overturned to a certainty; that knowledge might then have made a coward of me. But I did not know it, and we scraped and bumped across the reef, which was very narrow, and so came into the open sea, where, feeling the full force of the wind, we sped away right merrily.

"You did that prime, master," says Billy, "and now I'll have a shot."

But by the time the foremost of the three canoes had come through the gap, and Billy had adjusted his aim, we were clean out of range, which rejoiced me as much as it disappointed him. "Can't we lay by and have a shot or two?" he said; "the wretches killed my little dog." But I thought it was more pertinent that

we should make good our escape, especially as it yet remained to be proved that the canoes could not overtake us. It was a mercy they had no sails, for the paddlers drove their craft along at a prodigious pace, so that for a time we did not draw very much away from them, and when we did, immediately afterwards there was a lull in the wind which made them gain upon us, so alarmingly that I took to my paddle again to assist the wind. The savages shouted with joy when they saw the gap between us lessening, and even when the wind freshened again they did not give up the pursuit, taking encouragement, no doubt, from what had lately happened, and hoping that the wind would drop again, and for a longer time, until they came within spear-throw. In this posture of affairs I saw that Billy might be right, and that it would be really a wise thing to discourage them more effectually, especially as we had done nothing to provoke them, but on the contrary had intended to deal with them in the most friendly way. Accordingly, I luffed a little, as seamen say, and so allowed the first canoe to make upon us, and then I fitted an arrow to my bow, and taking as good an aim as I could, let the shaft fly. Our vessel was not above sixty yards distant from theirs, and if I had been shooting on shore I should have hit the mark as like as not; but being not at all accustomed to take aim while moving up and down I missed the man at whom I aimed, and indeed did not hit any man, the arrow sticking in the side of the canoe.

"Try again, master," says Billy, but I was afraid I should not get the chance of another shot, for the savages had stopped paddling, not being sure, I suppose, whether I had done any damage or not; and our vessel being under sail, was carried on a good way. But when they saw that no one had been hit, they let forth a shout of derision, and set to paddling again as if determined to dog us. I dare say I was nettled a little by the mocking note I heard in their shout, which as it were put me on my mettle; whether it was by greater care and steadiness or sheer good fortune I know not, but certainly my next shot took effect, though the range was longer. The man in the bow of the canoe gave a great yell, and at the same moment dropped his paddle, and we saw

him tear my arrow out of his left shoulder and clap his hand to the wound, whereupon Billy gave a shout of delight, and cried, "There you are, old dirty-face, and I wish it was you that shot my little dog." The next man in the canoe hurled his spear at us, but it fell some little distance astern, and the other canoes having by this time caught up with the first, we guessed by the loud chatter of the men that they were taking counsel together, even while they still worked their paddles. The result of their deliberation was that they gave up the chase, a very reasonable course, for I am sure they could not have caught us. They turned their canoes' heads towards their island, which was now, I suppose, about two miles distant, and as soon as we saw that they were really leaving us we hove to, and I bathed Billy's wound with fresh water from one of our pots, observing as I did so that the lurchings and jerkings our vessel had suffered in crossing the reef had caused our pots to spill over, so that we had not left above a third of the water we started with. Billy's wound, though he made light of it, was an ugly gash, and I was a little anxious lest the weapon that dealt it was poisoned. However, this was not so, and when I afterwards put a bandage of leaves upon the wound (for Billy would not hear of my tearing a strip from my tattered shirt), his arm was stiff for a few days, but then quickly healed.

I bathed his wound, I say, and then we ate a very good meal, and Billy gave my dog a double share of food, to comfort him, he said, for the loss of his companion. I asked him if double meals would comfort him, supposing I was killed, merely to tease him, but his face became so piteous when he said, "Don't say such things, Master, for I can't a-bear it," I wished I had never spoken the words. I had never told Billy how the thought that he might die came to me sometimes, and what intolerable anguish it caused me, and I did not know that he ever had the like thought; but he confided to me a long while after that sometimes as he lay awake at night the question would repeat itself in his mind: "What if Master should die?" and it gave him such a dreadful feeling of loneliness that he would put out his hand to touch me lying near him, to make

sure that my flesh was still warm with the blood of life. When he told me this I remembered having once felt his hand upon mine, and how it tingled, and when I spoke he tightened his grasp and said, "Good night, old king," and I knew by his tone that he had a great affection for me; but I never supposed he was troubled in mind, or I might have shown him, perhaps, more plainly how great was my affection for him.

However, to return to our vessel. We ate a meal, and considered what we should do: whether continue our voyage in another direction, or return at once to Palm Tree Island. Billy thought we had better go a-cruising, "For," said he, "we don't know but what these savages will spy on us, and see where we go to if we go home at once, and then they may come after us some day, and we shall have a deal of trouble."

"But they may spy on us even if we don't go home at once," I said, "and never leave us until they find out where we came from."

"Not they," says he; "they won't have the patience."

We return Home

I thought Billy's reasoning far from conclusive, for if they meant to spy on us they would do so, and could not tell whether we were going home or not. However, it did not appear that they had any such intention, for by this time they were out of sight, and very thankful we were that they had drawn away from us, for towards midday the wind dropped, and the vessel lay almost idle for a long time, her sail hanging very limp and sad. If the canoes had been near us now, we could not have got away from them, and thinking of this made me haul down our sail and unship the mast, lest they should be seen from some elevated place in the island we had just left—a tree-top, maybe, for the surface of coral islands is mainly flat. We could see our own island very clearly, the mountain standing up against the sky; but I began to be afraid that we should

not reach it that day, because of the calm, and we could not go fast enough with paddles alone. I did paddle for a while, in order to increase our distance from the coral island, which became dimmer on the horizon until we could scarce see it; but I had begun to think that we should have to spend the night out at sea when, as the sun sank, a breeze sprang up, which, if it held, would bring us to our island, I guessed, very soon after dark. We hoisted the sail, and sped along very merrily, being perfectly enchanted with the qualities of the *Fair Hope*; but distance at sea is very deceptive; we were farther away from our island than we thought, and it was long after dark before we arrived at the little sandy beach, though not so dark but we could see the giant form of the mountain upreared against the stars, and so we did not lose our way. We were very tired, and when we had moored our vessel to the rock we employed for this purpose, we left everything in her, food and weapons and all, being desirous of nothing but to get back to our house, eat our supper, and go to bed.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

OF THE SEVERAL SURPRISES THAT AWAITED BILLY AND THE NARRATOR AND THE CREW OF THE *LOVEY SUSAN*; AND OF OUR ADVENTURES IN THE CAVE

"I say, master," said Billy, as we toiled up towards our house, "you and me'll think twice afore we go a-cruising again. I ain't never been so tired in my life, and I shan't be awake to eat no supper."

"Very well," said I, "we won't trouble to make up our fire, but——"

Unexpected Visitors

The words died on my lips, and we both stood stock still at the same moment, for there had come to our ears on a sudden, from the direction of the house, the sound of loud and boisterous laughter. Little John yelped, Billy clutched my hand, and you will scarce believe it, but we were both trembling like leaves in the wind; for imagine if you can what a shock it was to us, after our loneliness on the island, to hear the laughter of men.

"They've got here first," says Billy in a whisper presently.

"Who?" said I.

"Why, the savages," he said. "They've spied on us. We'd better go back for our spears and things."

I agreed that this was a prudential measure, and we trudged hastily down again to the canoe, and took our spears and bows and arrows, and then retraced our steps, the dog accompanying us. We crept up with exceeding caution until we reached a spot whence we could overlook the hollow in which our house was situated; but or ever we got there we were aware of a red glow, as from a huge fire, and when we came to the summit of the crest and looked down the long slope towards the hut, near half-a-mile away, we saw that in front of it a very large fire was kindled, which lit up all the country around, and on the fringe, so to speak, of the illuminated space certain dark figures moved.

"They've made the fire ready to cook us," says Billy, his voice trembling very much.

"Nay, they're cooking already," I said, and showed him that they had set our great tripod over the fire, and something dangled from it roasting.



"They've stole one of our pigs," said Billy in great anger; indeed, his first fear was now swallowed up in this new emotion. He spoke pretty loud, and the dog, knowing from his manner that something was amiss, began to yelp. I bade Billy hold his peace, for we must creep silently towards the house and discover who these visitors were: and since the dog might betray us if he yelped as we approached, we thought it best to tie him to a tree; he would doubtless yelp there, but the visitors would suppose he was a wild dog. We had just left him tied up when I remembered that if his yelping brought the wild dogs about him he would very soon be torn in pieces, so we had to go back and loose him, and then Billy took him in his arms and said he would keep him quiet, which he did.

We crept along, being careful to take cover from the trees and shrubs, and

so not following a straight path, but working round somewhat until we came to the back of our fowl-house, whence we could see and overhear what was going on. But before we got there we had another amazing shock, and a very disconcerting one too, for as we were walking Billy all of a sudden clutched me by the arm and whispered, "That's Hoggett," and then he uttered that profane word which I had never heard upon his lips since the first day we came to the island. And sure enough, when we came to the fowl-house, and could both hear and see them, grouped about the fire beyond it sat or lay or stood a dozen of Billy's once shipmates on the *Lovey Susan*, the mutinous crew of my uncle's ill-fated vessel. Some of them, being on the farther side of the fire, we could not see clearly: but on this side there was Hoggett, Billy's especial enemy, and Wabberley; and Clums the cook, attending to the fine pig, one of our best, that was roasting; and Chick, and Pumfrey the ship's carpenter, and others whose names I need not write. Billy was for fitting an arrow to his bow and shooting Hoggett that instant, but I forbade him, in a whisper but peremptorily, for the two of us could not hope to get the better of a dozen, when they had firearms too, for I had spied a musket standing against the wall of the hut, near to where Hoggett was lying. Besides, I own I felt a certain tenderness towards these men, rough and brutal, aye, and treacherous, as they were; for they were men of our race and speech, and to hear my own language from the lips of Wabberley brought back to me those evenings when he feasted my uncle with his stories, so that he gave me thoughts of home. However, I felt a natural indignation at seeing these uninvited guests making free with our property, and after hearing somewhat of their talk I ceased to feel any kindness towards them.

They were talking, I soon discovered, about the house and its owners, and Hoggett declared that he was certain sure it belonged to savages, an opinion which Wabberley instantly controverted.

"Have I, or have I not, been in these here South Seas afore, Tom Hoggett?" I heard him say, and Hoggett growled that he *said* he had; whereupon

Wabberley continued, "Well then, I ask you again, didn't we leave they two striplings on this very island?"

"You're right, there," says Hoggett, "and one of 'em the sauciest, snarliest son of a" (here a dreadful word) "that ever escaped his proper lickings."

("That's me," whispered Billy, in a great rage.)

"True, but handy all the same," said Clums. "He could do a thing or two with his tools, and I warrant you he made this;" and so saying, he took up Billy's toasting-fork, and held a yam to the blaze.



"Twas Billy made it, sure enough," said Pumfrey, "for the other chap couldn't ha' done it."

"No, not him," said Wabberley. "He was a overgrown weed, he was, all stalk and no head to it, and I reckon if the truth was known he made this; any fool could do it," and he took up, as it chanced, one of the two-pronged forks that I had made, and of which I was a little proud at the time.

"That's true, Nick," says Joshua Chick, "and what's more, shipmates, no savage ever made a fork in his life, and lor' bless you, didn't we find a hairbrush and a comb, and what savage ever wanted such, d'ye think? And that there pig-sty, now, ain't that like the one where you was brought up, Pumfrey, only a bit rougher, maybe?"

This question was very much resented by Pumfrey the carpenter, who declared hotly that he had built pig-sties, not lived in 'em, and whoever made this pig-sty was a very poor hand at it. To this Wabberley assented, and went on to say that the dirtiest savage as ever breathed would have been ashamed of the miserable things we had made in the way of pots and baskets and other things. It was plain that they had pretty thoroughly ransacked our hut, and I was on thorns lest they should have discovered our secret store-house below, which it appeared, from what followed, that they had not done, and thankful I was. One of the men asked what we lived on, for we couldn't eat, he supposed, nothing but pork and chickens, and they had found nothing else, except the yams in the pig's trough, we having put all the rest of our fruits and vegetables in the store-house.

"Ain't there plenty of trees on the island, donkey?" said Clums. "You may take your davy there's bread-fruit and bananas and cocoa-nuts and such like, and they pick 'em when they want 'em."

"But where are the young devils?" said Hoggett. "Ain't that there pig done

yet, Clums? The smell makes me want to get my teeth into him."

"One more turn," says Clums, "and then we'll have a better supper than we've had many a day."

"I say, where are the young devils?" says Hoggett again. "D'ye think they see us a-coming and sheered off?"

"Like as not," said Wabberley, "but we'll find 'em to-morrow, and they shall get our dinner for us, d'ye see. I believe in taking it easy and letting the youngsters do the work, I do. Did you get all the yams out of that pig's trough, Clums?"

"I did," says he, "and there must be some more growing somewhere, and 'tis to be hoped things ain't so short as they are in our island, mates. Did you ever know food go so fast? There seemed enough for thousands when we landed there, and you wouldn't ha' thought a score of men would ha' made such a hole in it."

And then they fell a-talking of the eight or nine men they had left on what they called their island, and I judged from their discourse that provisions being short with them, these twelve had come away to discover a more plentiful land, having promised, if they found one, to return and fetch their shipmates. Pumfrey reminded them of their promise, adding that the men would certainly starve if they were not brought off, whereupon Hoggett declared with an oath that he for one was not going to tug an oar for twenty miles in a leaky boat, to bring off a lot of useless blockheads who would soon eat them out of house and home. We pricked up our ears at this, Billy and me, hearing for the first time that our visitors had made up their minds to abide with us, and Billy ground his teeth, and whispered that we should have to fight 'em. One of the men—I think it was Wabberley—asked what about the mountain? and said he didn't like the notion of living where he might be boiled or roasted any day. At this Hoggett made a

mock of him. "Ain't it years since we left they boys here?" he said. "Does it look like boiling or roasting, 'cept for pigs? These here burning mountains ain't always a-working, that's plain, and this one here may be asleep for fifty years to come."

And then they ended their discourse for a time, devoting themselves to the roast pork and the yams of which they had deprived our pigs, sighing also very heavily for beer; and finding no cocoa-nuts handy for quenching their thirst, and being too lazy to fetch any (besides, it was dark), two of them went with pots in their hands to the lake, on which there was a very pretty reflection of their fire, and brought them back full of water. Billy chuckled so much at this that I was afraid he would be heard; but I was amused too, for there having been no rains lately, we knew what the effect of drinking the water would be; and, indeed, the next night we heard the men condoling with one another, and it was plain that when they were seized in the middle of the night with griping pains, they believed one and all that they were poisoned.

They had eat such a monstrous supper that they were fit afterward for nought but swinish slumber, and the most of them lay where they were, never intending to stir until the morning. Two or three, however, took up their quarters in the hut. We did not observe that they set any kind of watch, which was certainly a point of carelessness, and Billy said it would be easy enough to steal upon them in the night and kill them all, but this of course was not to be thought of. When we saw that all was quiet we stole away back to the canoe, both to get our own supper from the surplus of our provisions, and also to have a sleeping-place. Since we did not know how long this rascally crew would remain on the island, we thought we ought to convey what smoked fish and salted pork we had in the canoe to the thicket on the side of the mountain; as for the bread-fruit and cocoa-nuts, there was no need for us to trouble about these, the trees being exceeding well laden with them. And considering that it would be foolish to let the men see our canoe, when we had taken the food up the mountain, very toilsomely, we being so tired, we worked the canoe round

the island with extreme care, until we came to the little cove in the cliff which we had seen near the archway in our voyage of circumnavigation. There we slept by turns till break of day, finding it a matter of the greatest difficulty to keep awake when our turns came for watching; and when it began to be light we unshipped the mast, and clambering along the base of the cliffs we made our way gradually upward until we reached the thicket, where we deemed it best to remain in hiding. We heard nothing of the men all the morning, and guessed that they were not in very active trim after their medicinal draught of the night before; but in the afternoon we heard them talking to one another from various parts of the island, from which it was plain that they were searching for us. Once, indeed, they came so near us that we were fearful of being discovered, and kept very close in the depth of the thicket; but they passed us by, and I wondered that they had been brave enough to come so far up the mountain, remembering their panic on the day they landed.

Dispossessed

Making our meals chiefly of salt fish, we grew very thirsty, and did not dare venture down to the woods where the cocoa-nuts grew, lest we should be seen. But we thought we might creep round the mountain, until we came to the place where the hot spring fell towards the Red Rock, and there we filled some large leaves with the water, and let it stand until it cooled, and then drank it, without any harm. And as we returned to our hiding-place I chanced to see some pieces of that rock I have before mentioned, what Billy called the fizzy rock, that which belched forth great clouds of poisonous fume when it was touched with water. The sight of this set an idea jogging in my head, which I did not tell at that moment to Billy because of his natural impatience; but when it was dark, and we had got down safely to the place of the former night's watching, and assured ourselves from the men's talk that they had no present notion of leaving the island—at this time of night, I say, I communicated my notion to Billy, and he applauded it with great enthusiasm. As soon as ever the first glimmer of light came, therefore, we might have been seen very busy

gathering lumps of this rock, which we piled in two heaps, one about the spring near the top of the mountain, the other about the spring that flowed down the lava bed. We worked very hard at this, and I observed with great satisfaction that the cloud of steam above the mountain was a trifle thicker this day than it had been for some time past. Then we waited until the men were at their breakfast (we could see them easily from the edge of the thicket, which commanded a view of the house and its surroundings), and when they were in the midst of it, we hasted to these springs, Billy to one and I to the other, and began to topple into them the fragments of rock which we had gathered, being exceeding careful to keep to the windward side. The wind was blowing, as it did nearly always, in the direction of the house, so that when the dense and filthy smoke rose from the rock we had cast into the water, it was carried away into the interior of the island.

A Stratagem

Having set this storm a-brewing, as you may say, we made haste to regain our place in the thicket, whence we could see what went on below. We were delighted beyond measure, and Billy began to caper, as he always did when pleased, when we saw the men spring to their feet and, leaving their breakfast, set off in a mighty hurry toward the beach. We had not seen the place where they had left their boat, but guessed from the direction of their flight that they had drawn it up at the east end of the sandy beach, near the lava tract, indeed, at pretty nearly the same point as they had landed at three years before. We perceived that one or two of the men halted as they ran, and turning about, looked up at the mountain and then called to their fellows. Though we could not hear their words, the distance being too great, we guessed that they were shouting to their comrades to wait a little, in case the apparent explosion turned out to be of no account after all. But the other men did not halt, nor even slacken their pace, and Billy and I laughed a good deal to see Wabberley, who was much the fattest of them, yet easily outstrip the rest, so much did panic lend lightness to his heels. Their manifest terror appeared to shake the

resolution of the few hardier spirits who were inclined to pause. Without any further delay they sped on after the others, and when they had disappeared for a little from our view behind the rocks, we saw a boat put off very soon after, going towards the south, whence we presumed it had come. But it had not gone far when it stopped, and we saw at the same moment that the fumes were being dissipated in the air, which perhaps made the men think that the danger was over. We could not venture to go again to the spring above the lava tract, which was plainly to be seen from the sea, but we went back to the other spring, where we were perfectly screened, and hurled great quantities of the rock into the water, so that we were nearly overcome by the acrid fumes. But we persevered until we had raised an immense cloud of smoke, much denser than before; and running to the thicket to see the effect of our handiwork, we were almost beside ourselves with joy when we saw the boat proceeding at a good pace towards the south-east. We watched it until it had finally disappeared, and then we hastened down to our hut, wondering whether it had suffered any damage at the hands of our visitors, and also whether they had left any of their own belongings which would be useful to us, being exceeding jubilant also at the wonderful success of the trick we had played on them.

We Regain our Own

When we came to examine our little demesne, we were in a great rage, for the men had not only killed our finest pig and two or three of our chickens, but had also turned the hut upside down, as people say, and ransacked everything. Of course they got little for their pains except the food, and they had not discovered our cellar, nor even the pit outside the hut where our bread-fruit pulp was stored, what there was left of it, for since we had used the cavern for a store-house we had been under no necessity to keep the pit replenished. They had left behind them nothing but one musket, which had no doubt been overlooked in their haste, and a cap which Billy declared was Hoggett's, though I myself thought it was Wabberley's. The musket was useless to us, having no powder or shot, though it would make a capital club; and as for the

cap, whether Wabberley's or Hoggett's, neither Billy nor I was in the least inclined to wear it, being very much worn, and filthy to boot, not fit to be compared to our own light and cleanly bonnets, which we wore pretty constantly now, to preserve us from sun-stroke.

Though we had not suffered any great damage, I was very much disturbed by this sudden visit of the seamen. We had heard enough of their talk to guess that they had been driven to make their expedition by scarcity of provisions, for had they been living in ease and plenty they would hardly have risked so long a voyage in a leaky boat. Whether they had visited other islands first we could not tell; but I could not help fearing that if it was dearth that had impelled them, they would come again, braving the dangers of the volcano. Cowards though they were, they would certainly come to their senses before long, and when they considered that we had a fair-built hut, and a plantation, and a piggery and fowl-house, which had plainly received no hurt from the mountain, they would be pretty sure to come back if they found no means elsewhere of stocking their larder.

"Perhaps they think we have gone away from the island," said Billy, when I talked over the matter with him. "They will think Old Smoker frightened us too."

I saw there might be some truth in this, but I said that if it were so, they would probably keep a careful watch on the mountain for the future, and if they saw no signs of its breaking forth they would return, confident of enjoying the fruits of our labours.

"But we won't let 'em," cried Billy, stoutly. "Didn't they leave us, the brutes, when they believed we should certainly be boiled or roasted? Didn't they steal our raff? Did you hear 'em say they'd make us fetch and carry for 'em if they caught us? We've done all the hard work and they'll come and enjoy it, will they? Not if I know it."

"We shall have to fight them then, Billy," I said.

"Well," says he, "and so we will; and we'll make some more spears and arrows at once."

"But some of them have got muskets," I said, "and bows and arrows will be poor weapons against them."

This made Billy look glum for a moment or two, but then his face brightened again, and he said, "I don't believe they've got many muskets. They were all put in the round-house, don't you remember, master? The Captain's orders. They stole one or two when we were all sixes and sevens in the storm, and I don't suppose they've got much powder and shot either, maybe none, for they're sure to have used some, and it's a long time ago."

This seemed to me very reasonable, and I thought that if we were within our walls we might defend ourselves very well for a long time against the men, even if they had a musket or two. But I wished we could in some way strengthen our defences, and my mind went back to my notion of cutting a moat around the hut, which would be of great assistance to us; but the difficulty of cutting it was no less than before, and I was afraid if we started it we should never get it done. Furthermore, the only condition of our making a successful defence at all was that we should not be taken by surprise as we had been this time, and I said to Billy that we must never go a voyage again.

"Well, and I don't want to," says he, "unless we can sail to England. I didn't like the look of them brown fellows with the painted faces, and did you see the sharks' teeth stuck in a ring round their hair? We're better off here, master; and here we'd better bide."

We Strengthen our Defences

We had been putting our place in order while we talked thus, and then we

had our breakfast, eating indeed some of the food which the men had been preparing when we drove them away. And after we had done our customary morning's work—fed the pigs and fowls, gathered ripe cocoa-nuts, and so forth—we set to work at once to make some new arrows and spears, and bows and strings also, in case the others broke; and all the while we were doing this, Billy talked very bravely about the great fight there would be if the rascals came back. I said nothing to damp his ardour, but my thoughts were very busy with a part of the subject which he seemed not to consider, namely, what we should do if it came to anything like a regular siege. I did not doubt we could do much execution among the enemy from behind our walls if they stood to be shot at; but they could very well avoid this, and since there would be many of them against us two, they could strictly blockade us; and though so far as food went we could defy them for a long time, having our concealed stores below, yet the need for constant watchfulness, day and night, would in a short time wear us out. When I asked Billy what we should do in that case, he said, "Why, run out, and let 'em chase us; we could dodge them big chaps well enough, and I reckon we can run a deal faster." It was easy enough to show him that the hunted life we should lead would be most wretched and precarious; but he having suggested that we might escape set me on thinking whether we might not indeed elude the enemy, at least for such time as was needful to find some defence or shelter.

We had, of course, the means of descending into our cavern; and this was so well stocked with food that we might live there for a long time; but our disappearance would immediately be discovered by our besiegers (so I called them in advance), and they would know our whereabouts the moment they entered the hut. The cavern, therefore, could not be a permanent habitation. But it came into my mind again that we had never thoroughly explored the tunnel leading from it, nor found whether it had an outlet, though we suspected it had; and I thought that if there was such an outlet, or if we could make one, our case would not be so hopeless as at the present time it seemed.

Accordingly, we determined to descend into the cavern, and make another exploration, going together, as we did the last time, both for the company's sake and for better security in case of encountering any danger. So we heaved up the covering of the shaft, and having made half-a-dozen torches, enough to last us for several hours, we went down, leaving Little John on guard, passed through the cavern, and came into the low and narrow passage.

Adventure in the Cave

When we arrived at the place where the second passage entered this from the right, we turned into it, and walked up an ascent, as I had done in the darkness, until the floor suddenly took a dip downwards, and then by the light of our torch we saw a considerable pool of water, extending farther than the light would carry. We debated for a little whether we should attempt to wade through this, and concluded that we would not do so until we had failed to find a way out in the other direction. Accordingly we retraced our steps, and went down the tunnel, until we came to the wider part where on our last visit we had seen water. The water was lower than it had been then, and we were able to go farther, and when we came to the brink of it, we heard very distinctly the sound of waves rolling in, so that we knew we could not be far from an opening to the sea. And, indeed, peering across the immense cave to which we had come, we saw far off a segment of blue sky, and knew that the object of our search was gained.

We stood at the edge of the water, surveying the cave by the light of our torches. We saw that there depended from its roof certain shining things like icicles, of rugged form and differing in length, which I have since learned are called stalactites; and, moreover, there were large boulders and masses of broken stalactites standing up out of the water. Billy gave a shout when he saw this, and cried that he would skip from rock to rock until he came to the mouth of the cave, and defied me to race him; but the torch I was carrying was now burning low, and I stayed to kindle another before going farther; and,

moreover, I doubted the wisdom of such feats of agility, for it would be easy to miss one's footing and fall into the water, and if we both did it our torches would be wetted and we should not be able to light ourselves home. I had, indeed, just called out to him to come back, when a dreadful shriek ran through the cavern, and raising my torch above my head, I saw Billy scrambling up a tall and rugged rock that stood ten feet or more above the water, a good way from where I stood. He had dropped his torch, and I saw him but dimly by the light of mine, and could not discern any cause for his terror; but that there must be a very great cause I knew well, for Billy was brave enough. He continued to shriek and call, though his voice rang so in that hollow vaulted space that I could not at first make out any words; but having started to approach him when I heard his first cry, going from rock to rock as quickly as I could, I was presently able to see a number of long tentacles clinging to the rock on which he was perched, and others waving horribly above the surface of the water, as if some blind creature were groping for its prey. And even as there came to my mind the recollection of that loathly monster from whom I myself had barely escaped, and I stood as if fascinated by those hideous antic limbs, I saw the vast bulk of the beast appear above the surface, and rise gradually behind its tentacles up the rock.

Billy was by this time perched on the very summit of the rock, and when he saw the monster ascending towards him he let forth another dreadful cry which roused me from the sort of trance into which I had fallen. Grasping the torch with my left hand and my axe with my right, I leapt over the low rocks that stood between me and Billy, scarcely keeping my footing, and began to hack with all my strength at the shapeless mass, which made such a resistance to that poor clumsy axehead as a thing of leather might make. It did not appear that my strokes were of any avail, for the tentacles crept higher and higher; and looking up when I heard another scream from Billy, I saw that one of them was beginning to twine itself about his leg. And then all of a sudden, while I was bringing my axe down once more on the monster, Billy made a leap upwards,

to catch at a stalactite that depended from the roof of the vault, not far from his head. He must have been pretty near beside himself to do what he did, for if he had caught hold of it he could not have held on long; and what did in fact happen was that the stalactite broke off with a sharp snap, and down came Billy and it into the water. I thought this might be the best thing that could happen, for he could swim like a fish, and the monster would take some time in letting itself down from the rock; but when Billy rose to the surface, and I called to him, I saw by his feeble movements that he must have been hurt, so I sprang to a low rock near which he had come up, and held out my axe for him to grasp, which he did, and so I got him on to the rock, though not without some trouble, it being scarce broad enough for both of us. And immediately afterwards I observed that the monster had left the big rock and disappeared into the water, on which I cried to Billy to be of good cheer, because I was sure my continual chopping had wrought some damage on the monster and maybe killed it. But the words were scarce out of my mouth when we saw, by the ruddy light of my torch, a tentacle appear above the water not three feet away. This put me in a shudder lest we were in a perfect den of the creatures, and I called to Billy to jump across the rocks, if he could, back to the entrance to the tunnel, so that he at any rate, being now the weaker, might be out of harm's way. His terror lending him strength, he gathered himself together and leapt from rock to rock as he had done before, while I seized upon the axe which I had dropped beside me when I landed on the rock, and chopped away in a kind of frenzy at the tentacles which were brandishing themselves, you may say, at several places around me. As soon as I saw that Billy was safe I gave up the contest and sprang after him, and I was never so thankful in my life as I was when I stood beside him at the end of the tunnel.

We were neither of us in any mind to linger there, lest the monster and his brood came to attack us, for we were now so terrified that we would have believed them capable of anything. This was the second time that we had been balked of finding an outlet to the sea, and our experience had been such that

we should scarce attempt it again. We hurried back through the tunnel, and had not gone very far when we had another alarm, for whereas it had been dry when we descended, there was now a little stream of water running down, which increased as we advanced until it became almost a rivulet. At first I thought that the plug had come out of the pipe leading from the lake into the shaft, but when we came to the junction of the two passages, we saw that the water, which was now above our ankles, was pouring out of the right-hand passage, and not from the one that led from the cavern. This eased our alarm, but we did not stay to consider of any attempt to discover the ultimate source of this little torrent, but hastened on until we were once more in our hut; and then we knew by the mighty pattering on the roof and all around that a very heavy rain was falling. Indeed, when we opened the door we saw that it must have been raining ever since we departed, for the ground was exceeding sodden, and the trench about the hut was half full of water, being scarce deep enough to carry off the drainage. Of course the rain had put out the fire which we kept constantly smouldering in the grate a few feet from our door, and though a hot meal would have been very comforting after our fright and the wetting we had got, we could not make one ready, because we had no dry wood in the hut, nor indeed did we care to light a fire in it, having no chimney to let out the smoke.

A Mystery Solved

It continued raining for two or three days, greatly to our discomfort; and we made up our minds to two things: first, to have a stock of firewood ready dried; second, to build ourselves a better grate, which we could cover in with pottery ware, and thus prevent the fire from being ever extinguished. During these days we observed, as we had done before, that the lake did not rise above the high-water mark, though the rain was the heaviest since we had been on the island; and when I sought once more to account for this, and remembered the torrent pouring down the passage, it came all of a sudden into my mind that I had the true reason of it. The passage, as I have said, rose

continually from the cave inwards. Well, I guessed that its upper end opened into the side of the lake, but it then rose until its highest point was pretty nearly on a level with what we called the high-water mark, and after that descended again. If it was so, it acted as a siphon, the water not flowing down the passage until the lake rose to the same height as the highest part of the passage. When I tried to explain this to Billy he said it was all gammon, because if there was an opening from the lake into the passage the water would keep on flowing through until it couldn't help but run over. He could not in the least understand that water could never rise above its own level until I showed him by means of two tanks made of pottery, one large and the other small, and then he owned that I might be right, though he said it seemed to him like saying that a ten-pound weight wouldn't send up a five-pound weight if they were put in the opposite pans of a balance.

However, my discovery (supposing my reasoning was correct, and we could not prove it)—my discovery, I say, was of no practical advantage to us, indeed, rather the reverse, for it seemed to show that the tunnel from the cavern to the sea might be sometimes impassable, so that as a way of retreat from our hut it was doubly useless. When I pointed this out to Billy he said, "Never mind, master. We shall only have to fight all the harder inside, that's all," which shows how hopeful he always was. The only comfort I had was to think that our fears and anxieties might never be justified, and that Hoggett and his crew would never more visit us.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

OF THE ASSAULT ON THE HUT, IN WHICH BOWS AND ARROWS
PROVE SUPERIOR TO MUSKETS

The period of rainy weather which we suffered set me on to think again of that project of digging a moat which we had formerly abandoned. Several considerable rivulets flowed into the lake from the high ground around, of which one, that came down the slope nearest the red rock, had a pretty long course, and by the time it fell into the lake, forty or fifty yards from the hut, was almost a river. Observing how it washed the soil along with it, it came into my head that we might perchance enlist it in our service, and make it do a great part of the work of widening and deepening the trench. Of course Billy must ask his customary question, "What's the good?" following this up with another, more pertinent. "How *can* we, master? The river—if you call it a river: *I* don't—don't run anywhere near the trench."

"That's true," I said, "but we can make it."

"How's that?" said he.

"Why, by building a dam across it, and so turning its course where we please," I said.

"Oh, more building," says he. "What a one you are, master, for keeping on a-doing things! What's the good? I lay you a cocoa-nut that before you get your dam made, the rain stops, and then where'll you be?"

I think I have already shown that Billy was always a good deal better than his word. He used to remind me of that young man in the Scripture, who

refused when his father bid him do something, but "afterwards repented and went," and was more to be admired than the plausible sneak, his brother, who said to his father, "I go, sir," and then did nothing of the sort. I once told Billy about this, and he was very much interested, never having heard it before, and said he'd like to know that man, and asked me if I could tell him any more things like that. Accordingly I told him at different times all that I could remember of the Bible stories, and the one he liked best was the story of David, who took his admiration greatly, and whom he always called "the little fellow," thinking of Goliath.

However, to return to our dam. Billy helped me very diligently to pile up a dam of rocks, which was pretty laborious, for we had to haul them a good distance, and since it rained all the time we were constantly drenched, and I wonder we did not take an ague. We were about three days in doing it, and then, sure enough, as soon as it was done, the rain ceased, and Billy turned a triumphant countenance upon me, and asked what I thought of that. But I had the better of him next day, for the rain came again, and we saw with great delight that the stream was diverted by the dam into the narrow channel we had cut to bring it to our trench, and before long it was flowing through this in considerable volume, and fell into the lake. It nobly answered my expectations, for the loosened earth was not only more easy for us to dig with our rude spades, but it became mud as soon as it was dug up, and was washed away. We began to deepen the trench into a moat at the two ends opening on the lake, working backwards to the middle; but before we had done very much the rain ceased again, and the rivulet dried up. However, we were fairly come to the wettest part of the year, and the rainy days were more than the fine ones, so that in the course of a few months we had made good progress, and had indeed widened and deepened the whole trench, though not near so much as I should have liked. The part directly in front of our door was the deepest, and we made a kind of drawbridge, of the nature of a hurdle, to throw over it; not at this time, however, attempting any contrivance for raising or lowering it.

Though we went about our daily work with great regularity, we were never, I think, quite so cheerful as we had been before the visit of our whilom shipmates. The thought that they might come back kept us continually on the stretch, so to speak; we went up to our watch-tower, one or other of us, not twice a day, as before, but three or four times, and we never went to bed at night without an uneasy feeling that when we awoke we might find our enemies upon us. For several nights, indeed, Billy and I took turns to watch, though we soon gave it up, partly because it was so fatiguing, and partly because, when we considered of it calmly, we thought it very unlikely that the men would arrive in the darkness, for, not knowing the coast, they might very easily run upon a rock and lose their boat, a calamity which they would not risk.

One day, I know not how many months after we had scared away Hoggett and his friends, Billy had gone up Flagstaff Hill to take his turn at looking out, and he came running to tell me that he had descried a small object on the eastern horizon. I immediately accompanied him back to the station, and when we got there, he told me that the object was scarce any bigger than when he first saw it, so that if it was a boat, which we could not yet determine, it was moving very slowly. The day was very hot, so that no one would wish to put forth any great exertion, least of all the crew of the *Lovey Susan*. We watched for a long time until we made out that the object was indeed a boat, and moving with oars alone, there being not a capful of wind. It was heading straight for our island, and we saw that it was a ship's boat of European make, and not a native canoe, so that we had no doubt it contained Hoggett and his fellows.

"Let's try and scare 'em with the fizzy rock," said Billy; but though we raised a dense cloud of smoke by this means the boat held on its course, and we saw that this device at least had lost its terrors.

"I wish Old Smoker would wake up," says Billy. "Wouldn't I like to go down and poke up his fire, that's all! Or to blow it up with bellows would be better still."

I could not help thinking it a little unlucky that the mountain-top had been for some time clear of smoke, which, indeed, was perhaps the reason why the men had ventured once more to make the voyage. Finding our stratagem of no avail, we ran down to the hut to put it, so far as we might, in a posture of defence, judging by the slow progress of the boat that we should have time. We took several of the fowls and one pig into the house, unwelcome inmates though they were; the rest of the pigs we let loose, taking our chance of recovering them later; we saw that our bows had sound strings, and laid our arrows in readiness; and then we returned to Flagstaff Hill, to watch the boat. Our own canoe, I had almost forgot to say, lay in the little retired cove on the east side of the island.

Return of the Crew

When the boat drew near to our coast, we lost sight of it, and could not tell where the men would land; but we guessed that they would make for the little bay on the south-west, where the landing was certainly the easiest. Accordingly we hastened towards that spot, and having got to the cliffs we saw the boat at some little distance from the shore, so as to avoid shoals or rocks, as we guessed, and going in the very direction we had surmised. When they were opposite the bay they pulled the boat's head round, and came in very well, and running her ashore, landed, all but two men whom they left in the boat to guard her. I saw with great apprehension that the rest of the party were armed, some with muskets, others with cutlasses and other weapons, which they had taken into the boats when they left the *Lovey Susan*. And, moreover, there were more men than had come before. They mounted the cliff more briskly than I had expected to see them do it, and when we perceived, ourselves being hidden all the time, that they were making a bee-line, as people say, for our

hut, we immediately made all speed back, lifted the drawbridge when we had crossed the moat, and took it with us into the hut, where we set up the door, and pulled out the plugs from a good many loopholes in the walls, both that we might have a little light, and also to be in readiness to defend ourselves.

Through the loopholes we spied the men presently, coming towards us from the high ground between us and the cliffs. "They are coming mighty fast," says Billy. "Won't they sweat! What's the hurry, I wonder?" Their pace was indeed more rapid than I should have chosen on so hot a day. They were coming straight towards the house; but all on a sudden all but one of them turned aside into the wood on their right hand, and while we were wondering why they had gone out of their course, we saw some of them swarm up the cocoa-nut palms that were on the fringe of the wood, and knock down the fruit to their comrades below, who immediately broke them open and quaffed the liquor.

"Them's our cocoa-nuts, master," says Billy, with indignation. "They're poaching."

But I paid no heed to him, being intent on watching the one man who had not swerved from the course with the others, but came straight on. It was Hoggett. I observed that he looked about him with great curiosity as he came nearer, and having reached the edge of the trench he stood and pulled at his beard, looking this way and that like a man that is puzzled. It was plain he saw that the appearance of the place was somewhat altered since he saw it before, and from the glances he cast at the hut I thought he seemed to question whether there was any one in it or not.

Hoggett

"Shall I shoot him, master?" says Billy eagerly in my ear. I own I was tempted to say yes, for we could have killed him easily, he being but a few yards away, and the loss of their leader would very likely have so much

daunted the others that they would have withdrawn themselves. But I could not bring myself to take him thus unawares, nor indeed did I wish to be the first to open hostilities, so I bade Billy hold his hand; and immediately afterwards Hoggett hailed us in seaman's fashion. "Ahoy there!" says he, and putting my mouth to the loophole I shouted "Ahoy!" back, and we laughed to see the start he gave, though if he hadn't expected an answer, why did he shout, as Billy said. But if he was startled it was only for a moment, for he lifted up his voice, which was a very boisterous one, and with many oaths bade me to come out, calling me by name, and when I refused he cursed me again, uttering terrible threats of what he would do to me if I did not immediately obey him. The others, hearing the shouts, left the wood and came straggling up, and when they called to Hoggett to know what he was about, he shouted that the rat was trapped, at which Billy could contain himself no longer, but called out, "Don't you be so sure of that, you thieving villain!"

"So there's two of you, is there?" shouts the man, who had not known up to this moment that more than one was in the hut, and then he unslung his musket, and, taking good aim, fired through the loophole at which I had been speaking, which he could very easily do, the range being so short. But of course his taking aim had given me time to slip away, and the slug passed clean through the hut, doing no damage, but merely striking the wall on the other side, and setting Little John barking furiously. I was somewhat amazed that after all these years the men had any powder and shot left, and considered that they must have husbanded their stock with remarkable care. However, I did not lose any time in replying to Hoggett, but went to a loophole near the roof, which was pretty well concealed on the outside by the thatch that overhung the wall an inch or two; and standing on the little platform beneath it I fitted an arrow to my bow and let fly, aiming to hit the fellow's shoulder, for I was loath to take his life. It happened that just as I shot he shifted his posture, so that the shaft, instead of striking his shoulder as I intended, transfixing his forearm; whereupon he dropped his musket with a howl as much of rage as of pain, I think, and

pulled out the arrow, while the rest of the men, who had plainly not looked for anything of this sort, instantly took to their heels and ran until they were out of range. Hoggett was a man of sterner mettle, and held his ground, shaking his fist at the hut, and vowing with horrible imprecations that he would have his revenge. Billy was fingering his bow very restlessly, and asked me if he might shoot now, but I would not let him, for at present we were in no danger; so Hoggett, having picked up his musket, was suffered to go and rejoin his comrades, which he did at length, stopping at every few yards to hurl more curses at us. Then they stood in a group at the edge of the wood, and seemed to take counsel together.

"Wabberley ain't so fat, master," says Billy all of a sudden.

I owned that he had fallen away somewhat.

"And Chick's pretty near a skellington," Billy goes on. "And Pumfrey——" He broke off, then cried, "Why, master, I do believe they're famished."

The Interlopers

Indeed, having leisure now to observe the mariners more carefully than it had been possible to do before, I saw that they were all very woebegone in appearance, and not at all equal to what they had been. They talked together for some time, and there did not seem to be perfect agreement among them, for they grew very heady, and their gestures began to be so violent that we looked for them to come to blows, and Billy was delighted at the prospect of seeing them fight. The chief parts in their discourse were taken by Wabberley and Hoggett, and I saw the former point more than once towards the mountain, which, as I have said, was clear that day. We could not even guess at the subject of their deliberation, but presently the group broke up, and the men went severally in different directions, and quite disappeared from our view. We durst not leave the hut to follow them, lest they were practising a trick on us, to

entice us forth; and so we remained for the rest of that day in a miserable state of uncertainty, not knowing whether they had sailed away, or what they were doing. However, when it began to be dark, we saw through the trees towards the cliffs the glow of a fire, and guessed that they were camping; and not long afterwards Little John growled, and then we heard the squeal of a pig, by which we guessed that some of the pigs we had turned a-loose had come back to their sty, and one had fallen a victim, which we were quite unable to prevent. But as soon as it was full dark I thought it pretty safe to go forth and spy out what they were doing, so I straitly charged Billy to keep a good watch, and went out, creeping along very stealthily by the edge of the wood as long as I could, until I came to a place where I could easily see the men. They were, as I expected, sitting around the fire eating their supper, and there came to my nostrils the savorous odour of roast pork. I wished I could draw near enough to them to hear what they said, but this I durst not do, because the top of the cliff here was pretty open, so after a little I went back to the hut, and we had our own supper, and then settled on what we should do for keeping guard during the night.

The Mariners Depart

Neither of us had much sleep, for when our turn of watching was done, we were uneasy at the chance of being attacked in the darkness, and so slept but fitfully. However, nothing happened to alarm us, and in the morning when we looked forth we could see none of the men, and supposed that they were either still asleep or had already gone a-hunting their breakfast. But when the sun rose in the heavens and we had not yet seen a man of them, we fell into that same uneasiness that we had felt before, until I could endure it no longer, but resolved to sally out and see what had become of our visitors. I told Billy to be ready to pull the drawbridge from the moat if he should see any of the men approaching, and when he asked how I should get over if the bridge was gone I told him not to worry about me, because, knowing the island as I did, I could find some remote spot, and hard of access, if I should be pursued.

Accordingly, I left the hut, but instead of going directly towards the cliffs, I made my course at first towards the mountain, intending to make a circuit and so come near the place where I had last seen the men. But I had not gone above half the distance when, looking over the sea, I was beyond measure amazed to see the boat departing under sail and oars, only instead of returning to the eastward, whence it had come, it was going westward. It was soon hidden from my sight by the shape of the cliffs, but I made great haste to go up to our watch-tower, whence there was a view all round the island, and perceived with as much puzzlement as joy that our enemies were in very truth sailing clean away, and not merely cruising about the coast, as I thought might be their design. I watched until the boat was almost out of sight, and then went back to the hut to acquaint Billy with our surprising good fortune. He immediately asked me whether I had counted the men, and when I said that I had not thought of doing so, and besides the boat was already too far off when I saw it, he cried, "Then I take my davy 'tis a trick, and they have left some behind to trap us." This fairly startled me, for such a notion had not come into my head; and though I thought it unlikely that the boat would have gone so far if the men's intention had been to return, yet I saw it was needful we should be still on our guard. However, when half the day was gone and we had seen never a sign of the men, but on the contrary some of our pigs came back and entered their sty like wanderers returning home, we thought it was ridiculous to be scared at mere fancies, and resolved to set forth and see if any man had indeed been left. We took our bows and arrows, and our axes in our belts, and went abroad very valiantly, yet with caution; but though we spent the rest of the day in searching the island, we found no man, nor indeed any trace at all of the seamen's visit save their camp fire and signs of cooking, and also a jack-knife, which one of them had without question left by mistake.

When we were pretty well assured that we were still alone on the island, we debated together what had brought the men back to our shore, and why they had so soon gone again, especially after Hoggett had been wounded and had

uttered such terrible threats of vengeance.

"What could they do, master?" says Billy. "They couldn't conquer us so long as we stayed in the hut, and they couldn't starve us out, because they'd have starved first; and 'tis my belief that, what with the trees having no fruits to speak of, and Old Smoker, and the griping water of Brimstone Lake, they considered this island to be an uncomfortable sort of place, and so sheered off."

Story of the Mariners

We afterwards discovered that Billy's guess was very near the truth, and for the better understanding of my story, I deem it convenient to relate here what we only learnt at a later time. The seamen of the *Lovey Susan*, when they left us on the island the first time, went away to the south-east, and by and by came to a small island, uninhabited as ours was, but pretty well furnished with fruit trees, and there they took up their abode, and for many months lived in plenty, their fare, in addition to the fruits, being fish and birds—when they could catch them—and pigs, of which there were a few. They made simple grass huts for themselves, not taking the trouble to build substantial houses, and when this was done, they being not at all diligent, did nothing else but quarrel among themselves, and their laziness and improvidence in due time found them out. They lived very comfortably while their supplies of food lasted, but they hunted down the pigs until one day they were astonished to find there were no more; and as to fish, that was very plentiful at certain seasons and scarce at others, and during the time of plenty they did not trouble about curing any—at least, only two or three men did, one of whom was Mr. Bodger, and these gave up doing it when they found that the others expected to share with them. But their principal food at all times was bread-fruit, because they got less tired of this than of cocoa-nuts and other fruits; yet they were so reckless that they consumed the fruit when it was ripe without any thought for the morrow, having no notion of preserving it. The season of bread-fruit being over, they subsisted on cocoa-nuts, but they being a score of ravenous men, and the island small,

they had well-nigh consumed all the cocoa-nuts before the next bread-fruit ripened; thus they had at one time more than they could eat, and at another very short commons, and at these times they became very sour in temper, and there were constant bickerings and recriminations amongst them.

One day a fleet of canoes filled with savage warriors came to their island and the savages having landed, there was a sharp fight betwixt them and the mariners, in which the latter came off victors by virtue of their firearms, though not without suffering considerable loss, two of them being killed and nearly all wounded. When we heard of this fight, Billy and me, we guessed that the savages were those we had seen one day from our watch-tower, though, of course, we could never prove it. Saving for this fight, the mariners were unmolested on their island; but in course of time the scarcity of food drove them to make voyages in search of islands that would afford better sustenance, which, however, they failed to discover. Then it was that one of them proposed that they should return to our island, which they knew from what they had seen of it to be fertile—at least, in parts—but they had so clear a recollection of the terrors of the volcano, especially Wabberley, who had been scalded the worst by the boiling water, that they were some time in making up their minds to the voyage, but did so at last. This was the occasion of their first visit to our island, when they discovered our hut, and were driven to panic and flight by our invention of an eruption. The boat being leaky, they had not ventured to lengthen their voyage, lest they should not be able to get back to their own island, where there was at least present security, and where they had left some of their number. Thither they returned, and lived there as best they could until the pinch of want again compelled them to set forth. Having seen from the slopes of our island the dim line on the western horizon betokening other land, they determined to sail thither; for though they suspected that their enemies the savages might have come thence, the bolder spirits among them thought it better to risk sudden death at the hands of savages than slow starvation on their island prison, especially as there was a chance that they might find friendly

savages on some island or another. Accordingly they did what they could to patch up their boat for the voyage, and set forth, all of them this time, for four being dead—two slain by the savages and two by disease—the boat would hold them all. Their design was to touch at our island on the way for rest and refreshment, and see, also, whether there were still signs that it was inhabited, for on their former visit they believed that we had been driven away by fear of the volcano, so that they did not think of settling on the island themselves. But when they landed, and Hoggett saw that, so far from being scared away, we had remained—or, at any rate, returned—and improved our settlement, he was for capturing our hut and entering into possession of the island, and was deterred from attempting this design only by finding that we could defend ourselves and by the overruling of his companions when they found, on roaming over the island, that it was not near so fertile as they had supposed. They did not discover our yam plantation, and feared that their case here would very soon be no better than it had been on their own island. Accordingly they sailed away, westward, as I have said, to accomplish the purpose with which they had set forth.

All this, I say, we did not learn till a good while afterwards, and having set it down for the better understanding of those that read, I will now return to the place where I left our own story—like a child standing in a drawn circle and forbid to move till he is told. We were greatly rejoiced to find that our visitors had quite left us, and went with cheerful hearts about our work, a part of it on this day being the gathering together of our swine which we had released. Some came back of themselves; others had struck up acquaintance with some of the wild pigs that were still on the island, and appeared to be indisposed to return to civilization, though one did indeed come in what I thought was a shamefaced way above a week after all the rest, and him I called the prodigal son.

"The what son?" says Billy.

"The prodigal son," said I; and then I told him the story, which he heard with the same eagerness and pleasure as he heard all my stories, whether out of the Bible or out of profane history. When I came to that part where the wretched young man "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat," Billy interrupted me, saying it was clear they did not feed their pigs half so well in that country as we did, and he warranted that Wabberley and the other seamen would be pleased enough if they got as good food as our pigs, for he persisted in believing (which turned out to be true) that the men were famishing, and he went on to declare that he was sure they would come back again.

"For why?" says he. "Why, they know we've been here these ever so many years" (it was about four by my reckoning), "and living comfortable, and wherever they go they'll either have to work, which they hate, or to fight, which will be worse, for their powder and shot won't last for ever, and I wonder they've any left at all. They must have been uncommon careful of it."

I did not think that Billy's prediction would come true, for they had certainly found no great stores of food on our island, and if it was food they were seeking they would surely suppose that, though we were alive, we had no more than supplied our own needs. However, there is no folly in being prepared for anything that may befall, so Billy and I set ourselves to think very seriously again of what we should do if our hut were besieged closely for any considerable length of time. Our situation would not be pleasant, between exasperated besiegers on the one side and the terrible monsters on the other, and I set my wits to work very earnestly to see if I might devise some means whereby we might extirpate those hideous creatures and so clear a way to the sea. To make an attack on them with our weapons held no great promise in it, for, as Billy said, they seemed to be terribly tough, and while we were disposing of one, others might cling around us and lug us to perdition. Besides, the very sight of the monsters made our blood run cold, and Billy said he would sooner face a thousand stepmothers than one of them, though he thought he might prefer one monster to three Hoggetts.

Experiments

It was after the matter had been beating in my head for several days that the notion came to me to try how the fizzy rock would affect the creatures. We knew what dreadful choking fumes came from it when it was thrown into water, and it seemed to me not impossible that these fumes might dissolve in water and poison it, and 'twould then be only a question of getting a sufficient quantity to destroy the whole nest or lair of the monsters. Considering that it would be a very laborious matter to bring down to the cliffs enough of the rock for our purpose, we determined to make a trial of it first, and the creature we selected for the *vile corpus* (which is pretty nearly all the Latin I remember) was one of those robber crabs which I think I have mentioned. We caught one on the shore, and put him into one of my pots, which we filled with water and then cast in one or two lumps of the rock. There was a great fizzing and spluttering, with dense and suffocating fumes, and when they had cleared off and it was safe for us to go to the pot, we found the crab perfectly black and quite dead, and when Billy took it out of the pot he declared that the water stung his hand. We were very well satisfied with this trial, and immediately set about collecting a great quantity of the poisonous stuff, bringing it down from the mountain in baskets which we slung at our backs, and heaping it up on the cliff just above the entrance to the cave. I proposed that we should carry it down to the shore, and convey it to the monsters' haunt in our canoe, but this Billy would not hear of for a moment, avouching that he would sooner be eaten by savages than hugged by the slimy arms of the beasts.

Billy is Reflective

We had been digging out the rock, and carrying it to the cliff, for a matter of two days when a terrible storm of rain came on in the night, and when we got up in the morning and went to the cliff, we saw that all the rock we had so toiled in collecting had spent itself, and left a black desolation all around the

spot where it had lain. This gave us a great deal of annoyance, as much at our thoughtlessness as at the thing itself; but we did not give up our design, resolving rather to be the more careful in our preparations. It took us a very long time to assemble as much material as we had before, because we had to dig deeper into the side of the mountain for it, and when we got it we covered it over very scrupulously, so that the rain could not touch it. Billy remarked that of course, after our taking all that trouble, there would be no more rain for a month, and he was right; but I pointed out to him that we should have been very foolish if we had not taken these precautions, and he said it was a pity you could not tell things beforehand, adding, as if it had never struck him before, that you never could tell what might have been, because all we knew was what was. And then he was silent for a time, and when he spoke again, he said: "Ain't it terrible, master, to think you never can catch a minute what's gone?" Billy so seldom said anything of a reflective nature that I looked at him in some alarm, with a kind of superstitious fear that he was sickening for something; but I was relieved in a moment when, in the same breath, he said: "It do make you eat hearty, though."

When we had heaped up on the cliff a good many hundredweights of the rock, we waited for the flow of the tide, and then, choosing a place where the cliff ran down very steep and straight to the mouth of the cave, we flung the stuff into the water between the mouth and the rocks where we first encountered the shoal of monsters. We watched eagerly to see what happened, and saw a vast number of bubbles come to the surface, and a certain quantity of smoke that floated away on the breeze, but not near such a smother as we had experience of, which made us hope that there was all the more poison in the water. There was a slight current at the foot of the cliffs, setting past the cluster of rocks towards the channel between Red Rock and the island. We walked along for a little space, in the same direction as this current, to see if there was any sign on the surface of the water of our experiment having had any effect. For some little while we saw nothing, and

had begun to believe that the monsters were proof against what we had fondly hoped was poison, when we observed some tentacles appearing above the water by the rocks, and also at the base of the cliffs, and by and by the palpitating bodies of the monsters themselves, crawling up as if the water did not very well agree with them. We pelted these creatures very hard with stones and lumps of the strange rock, and though we missed pretty often, yet we hit them pretty often too, and had lively satisfaction when we saw them loose their hold and tumble back into the water as soon as the rock began to fizz. But we could not see that any of them were killed, and had to conclude that the water about the rocks was too deep, and the current moved too fast, for our poisonous substance to work its full effect, and so we went back disappointed, with the problem of making a safe way through the tunnel to the sea as far from solution as ever it was.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

OF THE END OF THE SEA MONSTERS; AND OF THE EVENTS THAT
LED US TO RECEIVE THE CREW AS OUR GUESTS

We had failed to destroy the monsters from the cliff top, and I concluded that we must still fail, unless we could, find some means of attacking them in an enclosed space, where there was no current to carry away the water as soon as it was rendered poisonous. It was Billy who suggested the plan which we ultimately found successful. Though he had refused point blank to approach the cave in our canoe, he would not mind, he said, "having a go" at the monsters from the tunnel, for there at least we had dry land to run back to, whereas if the

canoe were caught in the embrace of one of the large creatures there would be little chance for us. And since we had already learnt that the monsters came into the cave, as well as haunting the rocks outside, I agreed, when Billy suggested it, that even if we could not kill them outright we might make the water in the cave so exceeding noisome that they would depart thence and seek more savorous quarters. We saw great difficulties in the way, first, to the conveying a sufficiently great quantity of the rock to the cave; then the possibility of heavy rains falling before we had accomplished our task, with the consequent rise of the water in the lake and the flooding of the tunnel, which would not only render it a perilous place for us ourselves, but would use up, or decompose, as they say, the material we had collected before we got it to the proper place. As to the first difficulty, we were already so well accustomed to hard work of various kinds that we thought nothing of it; while for the matter of the rain we could only take our chance and resolve to be as philosophical as possible if all our labour was undone. With this in mind, we determined to collect the lumps of rock first of all in our hut, and not to begin to convey them through the tunnel until we had as much as we wanted: which accordingly we did, going backwards and forwards for many days between the hut and the spot on the mountain-side where we found an inexhaustible supply of the rock. When we had got together a sufficient quantity, we carried above two-thirds of it in baskets to the entrance of the cave, and very laborious it was, because the way was so rough and in places so narrow, and we barked our shins and elbows pretty often. But it was done at last, and then we laid up a similar heap on the cliff, at the same spot as we had put it before.



End of the Monsters

When all things were in readiness, we went along the tunnel one day, carrying torches in our hands, until we came to the place where we had put our heap of rock, at the brink of the pool. Now that the moment for our great enterprise was come, we were in a fever, I assure you, both from the importance of what we had taken in hand to do, and from our shuddering horror of the monsters. We held our torches above our heads, searching the cave for signs of them, expecting every moment to see the hideous tentacles emerge from the black water at our feet, and fancying we saw these dreadful enemies on all the rocks that strewed the floor of the cave. "What are we waiting for?" says Billy in an awful whisper, and seeing that certainly nothing was to be gained by delay, we stuck our torches into crevices in the wall, and then with two great heaves cast the pieces of rock into the water, and retreated instantly into the tunnel to escape the choking fumes that arose. We had to go a good way before we felt ourselves to be in safety from them, and indeed it promised to be so long before we could venture to go down to the cave again that we thought we might as well return to our hut and run down to the cliff, to see if any of the creatures had been driven forth. Accordingly we made great haste, and when we came to the cliff and looked over, we saw first several of the smaller creatures floating at the mouth of the cave, and quite dead as far as we could tell; but immediately afterwards there came slowly swimming out a

huge monster that far exceeded in size and ugliness that which had seized me on that day when we climbed down the cliff for eggs. Whether it was the same that had nearly caught Billy I know not, because we never saw that clearly; but we were perfectly amazed at the hugeness of it, being as big round as my aunt's round table in the parlour, and its tentacles stretching on all sides like the roots of an immense oak. Though we were far above it, and in safety, we shuddered when we beheld it, and our cheeks became pale; I saw that Billy's did, and he told me afterwards that I was as white as a ghost. We both felt beyond measure thankful that we had been so mercifully preserved from falling a prey to this terrible giant, which could have crushed the life out of us in a few minutes.

The monster swam slowly along until it came to the rocks I have before mentioned, and there it heaved itself up until the greater part of it was out of the water. "He's going to sit there till he's got the stink out of his nose," said Billy, "and then he'll go back, and all our work's thrown away." I feared that it would be as Billy said, and saw that we should have no security unless the monster were driven clean away or else killed outright. We took up some of the lumps of rock we had collected on the cliff and hurled them at the creature, but it had so lodged itself that we could hit nothing but its tentacles, and our missiles seemed to do them no hurt. If the creature would only expose its body, a great round bag of jelly as it seemed, we might shoot arrows into it and perhaps find a mortal spot. I bade Billy run back to the hut to fetch our bows and arrows while I still kept the monster in sight, and when he returned with them, we hurled pieces of rock just beyond where the creature lay, on the seaward side of it, hoping that the fumes would drive it from its perch towards us, so that we might take a fair aim. And that is what happened, for the monster after a little shifted its posture, and moved slowly away from the poisonous fumes that beset it, back towards its old haunt in the cave. "Now we've got him," says Billy, in great excitement. "You shoot better than me, master; you have a go at him while I keep on flinging the rock t'other side of him, to keep him on the

move." Accordingly I shot arrow after arrow at the great central mass, as fast as I could fit them to the bow, while Billy flung stone after stone just beyond it. He cried out in amazement when the arrows clean disappeared in the creature's body, and yet it moved, and he asked me in a whisper whether I didn't think it was the devil himself, and so couldn't be killed, except by God. But I bade him continue his throwing, and I shot at least a dozen arrows, I think, before thought the creature moved more slowly, as if it had suffered some injury; and it being then close up against the cliff, directly below us, I said to Billy that we would topple down on it the whole of the lumps that were left, and see if that would not deal the finishing stroke. This we did, casting over above a hundred-weight of the stuff, some of which struck the creature, and the rest fell with great hissing and smoking into the water around it. The stench almost overpowered us even at the height we stood, and we withdrew for a little, but returning and peering over we saw the monster floating without any motion, and its tentacles curled up most strangely around it. "I do believe he's dead, the villain!" cried Billy joyously; and though we stood watching for some time longer, there was no motion in the beast, at least no motion of its own, for we saw that it gradually drifted on the current towards the Red Rock; and then we hastened away across that part of the island until we came to the point opposite the ledge, where we could look down into the narrow race between; and we had not been there long when the monster, perfectly inert, was swept around the corner and through the channel, and so carried along past the north side of the island until we lost sight of it, and knew that we should see it no more.

For several days after this some of this family of monsters were cast up dead on the shore, together with a great quantity of fish of all kinds, so that we were in no doubt of the efficacy of this remarkable mineral. Indeed, Billy startled me by saying one night, just as I was going to sleep, "I say, master, what a fine thing that stuff would be for doing away with mother-in-laws and Hoggetts and such!" I told him this was a horrible notion, and he owned that it

was, and he supposed it would be murder and he would be hanged for it. "But," says he, "suppose Hoggett and that lot come back and fight us, and we kill one or two of 'em—and we can't be sure our arrows won't go straight—would that be murder, eh?" I replied that I thought it was justifiable to kill a man if fighting in self-defence. "Well then," says he, "I don't understand it, not a bit. You kill a man when he's shooting at you, and might kill you if you ain't first, and that ain't murder; but if you kill him with fizzy rock, so that he don't have a chance to kill you, that *is* murder. What do you make of that, now?" I own I could make nothing of it (though perhaps I might nowadays), but said he had better go to sleep; and he cast that up at me afterwards, saying that whenever he wanted things explained I told him to go to sleep because I couldn't think of what to say, which was not true in general, though it was on that occasion.

But to return to my story. We found that we had killed or driven away all the noxious creatures which had made their home in the cave, and since we took care to fumigate the cave at intervals, we were never troubled with them again. The having a direct and safe outlet from our hut to the sea was a great source of satisfaction to us, for now if at any time we should be hard pressed above, we could very easily make our escape and so free ourselves from immediate danger. To this end we brought our canoe round from the nook where we had kept it on the other side of the island, and having taken it into the cave, we made what you may call a dock for it by piling some rocks together above high-water mark, behind which we could lay it up without much fear that it would be discovered if any one should enter the cave from the sea.

Daily Tasks

After this we resumed our normal way of life, going about our daily business with a regularity which no new alarm interfered with for a very long time. We were accustomed to measure the time, so far as we did it at all, by the bread-fruit season, calling it summer while this fruit was ripening, and winter when we

had plucked it all, for we were always careful to lay up a good store of it, both for ourselves and our animals. Our pigs and our poultry thrived very well, so that we had to enlarge their dwellings; and I will say here, in case I forget it, that by devoting some part of our time to hunting, we came very near to exterminating both the wild pigs and the dogs; and we found that as they grew less, the wild fowls increased mightily, because of their greater security. We did not put ourselves to any trouble to molest them, both because they were still difficult to approach, and because we had enough of our domestic poultry to supply our own wants. We had discovered that these fowls were exceeding fond of a kind of small grain that grew near our yam plantation, and to which we had given little heed because it was no use for our own food. But seeing that our fowls liked it, we began to cultivate it, and kept a good quantity of it stored in the cellar beneath our hut. We kept there also a large supply of our other foods—yams, bread-fruit, cocoa-nuts, smoked pork and fish, and so forth; and also all our spare implements which we had not in constant use, namely arrows, fish-hooks, pots and pans, in short all the things we had made, keeping in the hut itself only those things which we used constantly, and enough food for the day. I do not know whether I have mentioned one use to which we put our fowls. We kept the feathers of those we killed, and also those that fell in the moulting time, and in fights, for they did fight sometimes; and having cleaned these as well as we could we stuffed them into pillow-cases made of leaves, and so had comfortable rests for our heads at night. We used to take advantage of rainy days to patch our clothing, which was by this time, as you may guess, the strangest motley that could be seen; and besides the overcoats I have mentioned before, we made ourselves leggings of raw hide, of which also we made covers for our chairs.

So another season passed over us. We were as happy as any two men could be in like circumstances, I believe; we enjoyed perfect health, and had discovered for ourselves what great pleasure comes from simply *doing things*. We had quite given up any thought of being rescued or ever seeing our native

land again, and though there were times when I at least pined for the dear ones at home, I was always inestimably thankful for Billy's companionship, but for which I do not think I could have supported the loneliness.

A Chase

It was towards the middle of the winter season, that is, when we were just beginning to think of planting our yams, when, going up one morning to our watch-tower, a task we never once omitted, I spied a number of dark objects on the sea to westward, which I very soon discovered to be canoes filled with savages. They were approaching our island, and I thought at first they might pass us by as the fleet had done before; but as they drew nearer I observed that there was a ship's boat among them, or rather ahead of them, and with white men aboard, and when I had watched for a little while I could not doubt that the canoes were chasing the boat and were very near overhauling it. Indeed I saw them spread out as if to envelop it, but then there was a shot fired and I saw the smoke hover over the boat, and the canoes paused in their course, and the boat drew away from them, only, however, to be pursued again as soon as it was out of shot range. I counted ten canoes, and each held, as I reckoned, above twenty men; the white men, whom I had already guessed to be the seamen of the *Lovey Susan*, being no more than about fifteen or sixteen.

Billy was not with me on the watch-tower, it being his turn to cook the dinner; but seeing that it would be an hour or maybe more before the boat and the canoes could reach the island, I made great haste back to our hut, and acquainted Billy with what I had seen. "I hope the savages will catch 'em," says he at once, but agreed with me that we must prepare ourselves to meet a greater danger than any that had yet fallen to our lot, for we could not doubt that so great a horde of savages would easily overcome our few countrymen if they landed, and then, if they found our hut, they would most likely turn their attack upon us. Indeed, it seemed to me that our only chance of safety lay in

the annihilation of the seamen before they could leave the shore, for we did not suppose that the savages would come inland into the island of the burning mountain, unless they had great provocation or incitement to it. All that we could do was to let the pigs loose again, and take up the drawbridge from our moat, which latter, however, we did not do until we had been to the cliff to see whether the boat was indeed making for our island. When we got there we found the crew at that moment landing, in the desperate haste of men frantic with fear, and after we had seen the first of them scrambling up the cliffs where they were easiest to climb, we ran back to our hut very quickly, pulled up the drawbridge, and set up and barricaded the door. We had seen that the first of the canoes was but a few yards from the shore, and from the fierce outcries and war-whoops of the savages we knew that they were resolved upon blood.

I considered with myself whether we ought to lend assistance to the men of our colour; but when I thought of the way in which they had treated us, and indeed reckoned up the heavy score we had against them, I could not believe that their quarrel with the savages was any affair of ours, and so resolved to let them fight it out between them. And when the seamen began to appear on the top of the cliffs, and made straight for our hut, I saw that the fight would after all perhaps not be so one-sided as we had first imagined, for several of the men had muskets, and muskets were greatly superior to any weapons the savages carried, besides the fear they inspired in ignorant breasts. The seamen, I say, made straight for our hut, and I counted sixteen of them; Chick was ahead of all the rest, he being a little man and light of foot; but Wabberley, big as he was, was not far behind, being as craven a soul as ever I saw; and then came the rest in a group. When they reached the edge of the moat, and found there was no means of getting across it save by leaping down and scaling the opposite side, which would have taken a long time, they were in a great stew, and some began to run frantically up and down to see if there was not some spot where the crossing was easier. But Hoggett came to the part opposite our doorway, and cried out in a most affecting voice, "Master Brent, Master Brent,

sir, let us in, sir, for mercy's sake, or we shall all be murdered, sir."

"Yes, 'tis 'Master Brent, sir,' 'Please, sir, would you be so kind, sir!' now," says Billy with a sneer.

"If you please, sir," begins Hoggett again, almost echoing Billy's mockery "the savages are right on our heels, sir, and we're Christians, and you wouldn't see us all slaughtered like pigs, sir."

"Why shouldn't I?" I cried through a loophole. "What reason can you give why we should interfere?"

Here Wabberley cried out in terror that the savages were coming, and we saw several dusky forms appear in the distance. Hoggett, who was not without a certain courage, and coolness too, turned to the men and bade them post themselves behind the pigsties and fowlhouse, and let the savages have one shot to daunt them, but not more, from which I guessed they were very short of powder and shot. Almost in the same breath he continued his pleading with me, and I own he sickened me when he declared he repented of the wrong he had done, and if I would only let him in, like a "kind Christian gentleman," he would fetch and carry for me all the rest of his days. I think I might have yielded if he had not been so abject, which I did not need Billy's mockery to tell me was mere feigning; but I resolutely refused, and then we saw Hoggett in his true colours again, for the savages beginning to close round, he gave a glance at them and then poured out upon me the most horrible vituperation and foulest language I ever heard from the lips of any man, and then ran to join his comrades who were ensconced behind our outbuildings.

A Fight with Savages

The savages came on in a pretty compact body, brandishing spears and clubs, many of them having bows and arrows, and all looking exceeding fierce, their skins being tattooed in strange and hideous patterns, their hair bushed up

like a thatch supported on what seemed to be a row of shark's teeth. There was much shouting and gesticulating among them, and from the manner of their pointing I guessed that they were mighty surprised at the sight of our hut and its surroundings, and indeed they came to a halt at some little distance from the moat, and seemed to be deliberating what course to follow; and all the time the seamen, who had regained something of their courage now that they were behind cover, closely watched them, but never offered to fire. The clamour of the savages increased to a wondrous degree, and I believed they must be working up their courage to charge, and presently the group widened out until it was near a half-circle in shape, and then the naked warriors, near two hundred in number, rushed forward with most furious whoops, their leader being a man of great stature and especial intricacy of tattooing. They had come within about eighty yards of the seamen when I heard Hoggett give the word to fire, and there were instantly several shots, but not so many shots as muskets, by which I saw that there was shortness of ammunition, as I suspected. The half-dozen shots, however, were enough to bring the savages to a pause, not because of any damage done among them, for the muskets of those days were not near so good as the rifles which I hear some of our men carried of late in Spain; but because of the noise and smoke, which are as terrifying to savage people as they are to animals. When the seamen had fired they began instantly to put in fresh charges, and the savage chief stirred his people up to attack again; but I observed that some of them had already drawn back, in fear of the muskets. However, others, though they did not advance further, stood their ground and began to discharge arrows and spears, which at first did no hurt at all, because the seamen were pretty well hidden; which seeing, the savages spread out so as to encircle the outbuildings, and then began to discharge their weapons again, the white men no longer being all sheltered. What shrieks of joy there were when the savages observed that one or two of their missiles had got home! Taking new courage from the sight, they surged forward with blood-curdling yells, and had come within about fifty yards of the pig-sty when Hoggett again gave the word to fire, and this time they hit one or two of the

savages, and again brought them to a halt.

"I don't think much of them for fighters," said Billy, who had been watching these proceedings very eagerly through his loophole. "Why don't they rush in while the rascals are priming their guns? They're just a lot of donkeys, that's what they are."

Asylum

But I saw that this second halt of the savages was only as a gathering up of strength, for they were now frenzied, as well with delight at the wounding of two of the white men as with anger at the damage done among themselves. Even before the seamen had had time to charge their guns again I saw the rush beginning, and I could not doubt that this time the savages would overwhelm the little company of white men, or at least do terrible execution among them. And in that moment my mind was made up for me, as it were without my consent to it, though I believe I must have felt in my inmost heart that it would be a crime to stand neutral while men of my own colour were butchered before my eyes. However that may be, certain it is that all of a sudden I ran very fast to the door and pulled it open, and then bidding Billy come after me and bring his bow and arrows, I caught up the drawbridge, threw it across the moat, and leapt over, calling to Hoggett to bring his men into our hut as quickly as might be. The sight of me suddenly sallying forth seemed to strike the savages with amazement, for they paused in the middle of their onset, and thus gave time to the seamen, not only to finish their priming, but also to make steps in retreat towards the hut; and as they came, Wabberley being first—as might be expected—Hoggett and Pumfrey and two or three more of the braver sort formed themselves into a rearguard, covering the retreat with their levelled muskets. However, before the second of the wounded men had come over the drawbridge the savages got the better of their astonishment and rushed on with horrible yells, whereupon I ranged myself alongside of Hoggett and the rest, calling to Billy to come too, and wondering why he had not yet joined me.

Then we shot all together, the men with their muskets and I with bow and arrow, but I could not see what the effect of our shots was, partly because of the smoke, and partly because the savages were now such a wild mob that everything was confused. But in a moment I saw the big chief leaping with great strides before his men, who were close at his heels and no more than thirty yards from the moat. The seamen were helpless, for they had fired their pieces and could not recharge them in time; but I plucked another arrow from my quiver, and fitting it to my bow took as good aim as I could at the chief; and thankful I was that I had had a good deal of practice at what Billy called our guy, for when I let fly the arrow it sped very true, and struck the savage in the left side of his chest, just below the shoulder joint, and he fell upon his face, though I knew by his howling that he was not dead. The fall of their leader fairly daunted the rest of the savages, and they halted, and we seized this breathing space to get all the men across the moat, and then I caught up the drawbridge and ran behind the men into the hut, and we had got the door into its place by the time the savages came to the moat. When they saw that they were baulked they let forth the most astonishing cries I ever heard in my life, like the yelping of dogs rather than the cries of men; and while some carried their chief away, others ran round towards the lake side of the hut to see if there was any door there, or any weak spot there or at the other sides where they might attack us. And then, looking through a loophole, I saw seven or eight prostrate forms on the ground, the victims of the seamen's muskets.

The hut was very dim inside, all the light being what came through the loopholes, we never having made a window: but little as it was it was enough for Hoggett, and one or two more, to see to charge their pieces, and putting these through loopholes in different sides of the hut, they fired and so scattered the savages, who ran swiftly out of gun-shot. We saw them meet together a good distance off, towards the cliff, and one of the seamen said they were holding a parliament, and he hoped they had punishment enough and would make up their minds to go back to their own island.

Observing that the seamen were very intent on watching these proceedings, I turned to find Billy, to ask him why he had not come out with me when I bade him, for I thought his backwardness was due either to cowardice or to flat disobedience, and I was as much astonished at the one as at the other. I could not find him at first, for the hut was pretty well packed, and indeed the air already began to be foul and oppressive; but I did find him, and when I asked him in some heat what he meant by it, he took me by the arm and whispered in my ear, "Why, you forgot we hadn't covered over the hole into the cellar, and I reckoned we didn't want 'em to know about that, at least not yet a bit." And then I shook him by the hand and thanked him for his thoughtfulness, and when he said in great surprise, "Why, master, that's nothing," I did not dare to tell him the unkind thoughts that had come into my mind, for I was sure he would have been very much hurt by them. Certainly it would have been a terrible calamity if the men had discovered our secret chamber, and I dare say 'tis due only to Billy's presence of mind in that matter of hastily covering over the shaft that I am alive to pen these lines to-day.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

OF THE DISCOMFITURE OF THE SAVAGES, AND THE UNMANNERLY
BEHAVIOUR OF OUR GUESTS

There we were then, I say, sixteen seamen and our two selves, with Little John, cooped up in a house built for two, with no air nor light but what came

through the small loopholes in the walls. It was desperately unpleasant; at least, I found it so; as for the seamen, maybe they felt it less, being accustomed to the closeness of 'tween decks, though to be sure they had lived an open life for so long that they had almost had time to forget the fore-castle of the *Lovey Susan*. There was a great babblement among them, congratulating one another on their lucky escape and on their having found quarters, cursing the savages very heartily, and hoping they would now sheer off. I do not remember that I heard a word of thanks to us for helping them, except from poor Mr. Bodger, who came to me and, in a manner more meek and quiet even than when he was aboard the *Lovey Susan*, said it was like heaven to find me again, after the terrible life he had led among the seamen. It was from him I learnt what I have already related about the men's doings on the island where they landed, and of what had happened subsequently to their last visit to us, which was as follows. They had gone to one of the islands to the westward which they had seen from the slopes of our island, and made friends with the savages there, which they were able to do because, having firearms, the savages thought to make use of them in warfare against their enemies. For a time the seamen lived right royally among them, having food and quarters on condition of this military service; but becoming insolent and puffed up with their own importance, they presently offended the savages, and crowned their misdeeds with refusing to fight any more for them, which they did because their ammunition was running short. Learning from a savage girl that had a partiality for Pumfrey that the tribe were minded to enslave them, they determined to slip away by night in their boat, and come back to our island, to see whether their notions about it were well founded, I mean as to the scarcity of food on it; and they did this, but their departure was discovered before they had gone very far, and with the morning light they saw that they were pursued by their infuriate employers.

Besieged

Mr. Bodger did not tell me all this, and what I have related before, at one time, because we were too busy watching the proceedings of the savages, and

debating about them, to hold long discourse undisturbed. The issue of their deliberations appeared to be that they would make no attempt to carry our defences by main force, which indeed would have been a hopeless undertaking, but to invest us strictly, being no doubt confident in their numbers to overwhelm us when we should issue forth, as we must some time do, when the pressure of hunger compelled us. The whole body of them split up into five little camps of about forty men each, who posted themselves in a half-circle about the front side of the hut, and out of range of the seamen's muskets. One of these camps, however, was placed, very likely out of bravado, a good deal nearer to our hut than the rest, and Hoggett declared with an oath that he would have a shot at them, only he did not care to waste the powder, his stock being all but gone. "Where's Brent?" cries he. "*Mister Brent*," says Billy at once. "Is that there young scum of a Bobbin a-talking?" cries Hoggett. I caught Billy's arm to keep him from answering, fearing lest Hoggett should deal brutally with him; and Hoggett said with a laugh, "Where's *Mister Brent*, then?" "What is it?" said I. "Send one of your arrows amongst those reptiles, will you?" says he, in a tone that I did not at all relish, so that I was on the point of taking him up pretty sharply, only I thought better of it, for what was the use of making a bother when there were so many of them? Indeed, I was already not a little disturbed in my mind, foreseeing that if the fellow would put on this insolency of bearing so soon, we should go through rough water presently. However, to come back to my story. I was not at all disposed to shoot an arrow at Hoggett's bidding; yet I thought it were a good thing to show the savages that we had our eyes on them; so I said, "Billy, maybe you will kindly show Hoggett what you can do." "Do you bid me, master?" says the boy: I call him "boy," though he was at this time, I suppose, eighteen or nineteen years old. "I ask you, Billy," said I: whereupon he took his bow and an arrow, and went to one of the loopholes, and there was pretty nearly a fight among the men for places at the others, for there were not enough for all of them. As for myself I could see nothing, but I heard the twang of the bow-string, and immediately afterwards a great shout of laughter from the men, which Billy told

me was occasioned by the sudden leaping up of the savages among whom the arrow fell, and their scuttering like rabbits to a safer distance. I do not doubt their amazement, for their own bows were small compared with ours, and had not near so long a range.

"Well shot, Billy!" cries Clums, the cook of the *Lovey Susan*, and a good tempered man on the whole, but a perfect child in the hands of Hoggett, who was angered by his praise of Billy, and sharply bade him "hold his jaw." "Why didn't you make a window in this cursed hole?" he cried; "I can't see nothing." "We'll open the door," said I, "for they're out of range now, and we can shut it again before they get near." Accordingly we opened it, and I was very thankful for the fresh air, and the men, spying in one corner the little pile of cocoa-nuts that we usually kept there, seized upon them, and in their haste to drink the juice broke them carelessly, so that a good deal was spilled. "Give me water instead of that muck," cried Hoggett; "maybe Mr. Brent will kindly show us what he can do that way," and having thus mocked me he shouted a great guffaw, which some of the men imitated, though one or two looked ill-pleased. I had much ado, I assure you, to command my temper, but I did command it, and afterwards remembered a saying of my uncle, that to lose your temper is to give a weapon to your enemy. I showed Hoggett our water-pot, and bade him be sparing, for that was all we had, and he answered with an oath that he would drink as much as he pleased; but Chick then spoke up, bidding him not to be a greedy swine, and Hoggett growled out some answer; but I observed that he did not drink much, and so I learnt, what I afterwards confirmed, that Chick had some sway over Hoggett, I suppose from his speaking little, but always to the point.

We thought it prudent to shut the door when night fell, in spite of the closeness of the atmosphere; and I never in all my life spent so horrible a night. Some of the men, I know not who, took our pillows, so that Billy and I were no better off than the most of them, and we lay side by side on the floor, except when we took our turn at watching, for the whole company was divided

into watches as on board ship. We knew that the savages kept watch also, for we saw the glow of their camp fires, and Billy said he wished he could have seen how they made the fire, he having never ceased to feel disappointment because he had failed in that particular. There was nothing to disturb us during the night, but I rose in the morning so sick and miserable that I thought I should die if I had to endure the like again. We opened the door as soon as it was light, and quaffed the air as if it was nectar; and the seamen having roused up, clamoured for breakfast, and soon finished all the cocoa-nuts we had in the house; and they took off the lid of our great breadpan, as we called it, and seeing the bread-fruit paste there, cried out to know what it was, and when I told them, nothing would satisfy them but that Billy should take some of it out to our oven, which was near the hut, and the fire still smouldering. There was little danger in Billy's doing this, because the savages were still at too great a distance for their arrows to reach us, and if they came nearer he would have time to run indoors; but I did not like his acting as servant to these men, and said so, whereupon Hoggett asked fiercely whether the boy was not a stowaway, and who was he to put on airs, and he would show him, and so forth; and I thought it was better for the sake of peace and quietness that Billy should cook a little bread for them.

There we were, cooped up all that day, and before night all our food and water were gone, and the men grew very testy, and in a most unreasonable manner turned their vexation on Billy and me, demanding why we had brought them into the hut to starve. To this I found myself quite unable to frame a suitable answer, being perfectly overcome with the sheer ingratitude of the men; but when it was dark I said that Billy and I would go out and get some water and also a few cocoa-nuts. I did not purpose to go out by the door at the front of the hut, but to cut a hole in the slope of the roof facing the lake, that side not being watched at all by the savages. It was no very long business to make a hole of the right size, the seamen's cutlasses aiding our own tools, which they scoffed at a good deal. But when we were on the point of going

forth, Clums asked me where I should get the water, and when I said from the lake he begged and prayed me not to do so, because he said it griped them so horribly. However, I told him that boiling it was a means of making it harmless, and then he said go, and "God bless you!" which was an exceeding strange saying on his lips, which were commonly cursing and swearing. Billy and I went out through the hole, and the men handed out pails, and with these we went down to the lake, and filled them, and returned, the savages being no whit the wiser. And the pails being let down, the men kindled a small fire on the earthen floor, so as to boil the water, while we went into the woods to gather some cocoa-nuts. We talked on the way about the strange change which had come over the posture of our affairs, wondering very much what the issue might be. The savages would no doubt contrive to subsist on plants which we had never used for food, and if they went a-prowling they would discover our plantation of yams; but we had already dug up the most of these and stored them in our cellar with the bread fruit, and I could not think there was enough fruit left on the trees to support so large a throng of savages for any considerable period. Still, there was enough to last them until we were all starved, unless we disclosed our secret store below the hut, which I was exceeding loath even to think of.

This second night was not quite such a torture as the first, the hole in the roof giving us the much-needed ventilation; but next day the men were more quarrelsome than ever, and I was in a constant fear lest they should set to work to break each others' heads, which might have rid us of some arrant rascals, it is true, but it might also have put an end to Billy and me. They vented some of their ill-temper on Little John, who had not taken kindly to them, and showed himself so exceeding fierce when they kicked him, that they would have killed him only I prevented them. The savages had made no other attack on us, but neither had they given any sign of removing themselves; rather the contrary, indeed, for they never let their fires out, and they had started to build themselves little shelters at the edge of the cliffs. Hoggett began to talk of

sallying forth and seeing if we could not work such mischief among them as would send them packing, and though Wabberley and Mr. Bodger were the loudest against this, Wabberley waxing most movingly eloquent in describing the dangers of the plan proposed, the others were so desperately weary of the situation that they consented to accompany Hoggett, the time chosen for the attempt being just after it became dark. But while we were waiting as patiently as we might for the day to end, it came into my head that we might find the fizzy rock as efficacious in scaring the savages as it had been with the seamen; and since Billy and I had gone out and come in safely the night before, we might issue forth on this coming night, and get enough of the rock to make a very good smoke in the morning. While Billy and I were consulting about this in whispers, one of the men—I think it was Pumfrey—proposed that we should all steal out at dead of night, and creep down to the boat and the canoes, and make off in the darkness, leaving the savages marooned on the island. This notion at first met with acceptance from some, but Chick, who said little ordinarily, spoke up very strongly against it, arguing that there was little chance of all of us getting to the shore unperceived, and asking how we knew the canoes were not guarded. He said also, very pertinently, that if we did get away, we could not take all the canoes, and the savages, when they discovered our departure, would set off in chase, and being more expert with the paddles they would soon overtake us, we having now next to no powder and shot for the guns; and to clinch it all, he said that if we were caught in the open it was kingdom come for all of us, on which Wabberley declared that Chick was very obliging in putting the case so plainly, and he for one would live and die with Chick. Whereupon I said there was no need for any one to die, at least not yet, and offered to go out with Billy in the middle of the night and put in action the plan I had formed for driving the savages away. Hoggett and some of the rest looked at me with great suspicion, and Hoggett said, "How are you going to do it?" and I hesitated at first whether to tell him; but reflecting that he was bound to know I told him that we had the means of making a great smoke and smother, and so might delude the savages with the belief that the mountain was

active. There was a very grim look on Hoggett's face when, silencing some of the men who were beginning to speak, he asked again how we could make that smoke and smother, and I saw no use in attempting to conceal it, and so told him about the extraordinary rock we had discovered. His eyes glittered as I was speaking, and when I had ended he would not suffer the other men to speak a word, but bade me do as I had said. "Do it proper," says he, "and we'll see."

The Savages are Scared

Accordingly, in the deep time of night Billy and I clambered out through the hole in the roof and set off with our spades up the mountain side, to dig out enough rock to make a big smoke as soon as it was light. Billy said it was a pity I had told the men about the rock, and he was sure harm would come of it; but I showed him that our case could scarcely be worse than it was, shut up in a narrow compass with such unpleasant companions, and that if we drove the savages from the island we should at least have liberty of movement, and as for what was to happen after, we must leave it to Providence, at the same time saying that the seamen would surely not remain long on the island when they found it was not very plentiful in food, so far as they could tell. "That's all very well, master," says Billy sorrowfully; "but there's enough to keep 'em until the fruits begin to ripen again, and there's all our pigs and fowls, which they'll eat up as sure as a gun, and we shan't be able to breed no more. Still, I don't see what we can do, unless we poison the whole lot of 'em, same as we did the monsters, and I suppose you won't agree to that." I said that I would not, and then reminded Billy that we had triumphed over many difficulties and dangers in our four years' residence on the island, and I did not in any way despair of coming safely through this present predicament; and so we went on up the mountain side, not hurrying or taking any particular care, for we knew the savages would not be in this part of the island, having a very wholesome dread of the volcano.

Being come to the place where the deposit of fizzy rock was, we worked a great quantity of it loose with our spades, and carried it to the neighbourhood of the springs, where by the dawn we had two great heaps. As soon as it began to be light we threw the rock bit by bit into the water, Billy at one spring and I at the other, being careful to keep out of sight from below, for we knew that every eye in the camps of the savages would be turned to the mountain as soon as they saw the smoke. It happened that the cloud of steam over the summit was somewhat denser than it had been the day before, which was all in favour of our design. We were favoured, too, by the stillness of the air, for, there being no wind, the fumes that rose from the rock hung about the mountain and did not float away, though that was also a disadvantage to us, inasmuch as we could not avoid the poisonous stench. We had to hold our breath and rush into the smoke in order to keep the springs constantly fed with the rock, and I began to feel very ill, and, going to see how Billy was faring, I observed that his skin was a greenish colour, and so I bade him to desist and to come with me and peer over to see whether our trick had wrought upon the savages as we hoped it would. We saw that they were standing in a great throng watching the smoke; but they did not as yet appear to be infected with panic, which, when I thought of it, I considered to be due to the absence of the rumbling noises that commonly accompanied the action of the volcano. Since we could not in any way make such a noise as would counterfeit the natural rumbling, I racked my brains to think of any other means by which we might work upon them the beginnings of fright, for I was sure that if we could only start them it would not be long before panic fear got hold of them, and then it would sweep them away. Running back to my spring, to cast more rock into it, I observed that there were some big boulders a little higher up, below the edge of the crater, that appeared to be insecurely poised. They were at the top of a gentle slope, which fell away afterwards into a sheer precipice several hundreds of feet in depth. I wondered whether the boulders I have mentioned could be seen from the savages' camp, and creeping up the slope to see, I found that the savages were quite out of sight; whereupon I hastened down to Billy, and after throwing

into the springs enough rock to last a good while, we went together to the top of the slope, and shoving with all our strength against one of the boulders, we set it rolling down. The moment we had started it we went to another, and so on, until there was a sort of cascade of rocks sliding down the slope and then plunging over the edge and crashing down at the foot of the precipice, the sound coming very faintly to our ears.

Though we chose only the smaller of the boulders, the larger being utterly beyond our strength to move, the haste with which we worked made us very hot and weary, and when we paused to rest for a moment we thought we heard shouts of alarm from below, and then all of a sudden there was silence. Heaving over one more boulder we hastened down to the place from which we could see the savages while ourselves unseen, and when we got there they had all vanished. "We've done it, master," said Billy, panting, "and much good 'twill be to us." But I was by no means sure that the savages had actually gone, thinking that maybe they had merely shifted their quarters; accordingly I did not think it proper to go down at once towards our hut, but remained for some while longer feeding the springs with the rock. However, when we were again feeling very sick because of the fumes, and went to some distance for purer air, we caught sight of the fleet of canoes making for the westward, the savages paddling with great energy; and being very joyful at the success of our stratagem, though somewhat apprehensive of what was to ensue, we descended the mountain-side and came again to our hut. The seamen had already issued from it, and were standing on the cliffs watching the departing canoes; but as we approached them we observed signs of discontent and anger among them, instead of the gladness we expected. And when we came to them several of them cried out that the savages had taken their boat, and now they were marooned; and Hoggett came up to us with a very truculent mien, and said that he now knew how we had tricked him when he first came to the island—I mean on his first visit to us—and he wanted to know what we meant by it, and but for us he might have stayed on the island with his mates and lived hearty, instead of near starving as he had done, and we had better not try no more tricks on him, or he'd show us, and a great deal more to the like effect, with plentiful oaths and very foul language. I affected to laugh it off, saying that at any rate our trick had cleared the island of savages, whereupon he broke out again: "Yes," says he, "and they've robbed us of our boat; and now we've got to stop here, and goodness knows how we'll live, for you two

fools ain't had the sense to grow enough for all of us. I want my breakfast, I do, and there ain't nothing in that there cabin, and you'd better look alive and get me something, or I may come to eating you." This speech made me very indignant, when but for us Hoggett and the rest would without doubt have been butchered by the savages; but since it was plain that we were to live with him and them I saw that no good would come of quarrelling, so I laughed again, and said if he was patient he might have a breakfast of pork and potatoes (by which I meant yams) and maybe an egg or two, unless the savages had scared our hens from laying; and he looked very well pleased at this, and called to the other men, telling them what the breakfast was to be, and then he stuck his hands in his pockets and swaggered off among them, saying to us as he went not to be long about it, because he was hungry.

Billy fairly gnashed his teeth as we went to our hut. He was much more put about than I was, resenting on my behalf the domineering airs that Hoggett put on. "There you are," says he, "what did I say? This ain't our island no more. You ain't the king, and I ain't the prince, or whatever you call it, but it belongs to Hoggett."

"Oh no, it doesn't," said I; "Hoggett doesn't become the owner just because you and I, to humour him, give him his breakfast."

"Breakfast!" says Billy scornfully; "yes, breakfast, and dinner, and supper, and bites in between; and as for humouring him, you might as well humour one of they monsters we poisoned, he'll only squeeze you the harder."

Dreams

I laughed at Billy, for I believed that by showing ourselves friendly we should gain the friendliness of the men, so that, if we were destined to live on the island together, we might form a peaceable if not a happy community. I dreamt of a little republic, in which all should have tasks corresponding to their

talents, so that what little labour was required should fall very lightly on individuals. I dreamt also of making a boat large enough to carry us all, and sailing away some day to England, or at least to some place where we should fall in with an English ship. And I dare say in these my day-dreams I saw myself as the head of this little republic; not an autocrat, but a kindly and benevolent protector, to whom the others would look up, knowing that his whole heart was set on their good. It was in this frame of mind that I willingly helped Billy to prepare a sumptuous repast for the men, slaying a pig and several fowls, and boiling yams and eggs. They ate with mighty good appetite, and I am sure thoroughly enjoyed the meal, though Wabberley did grumble in the middle of it, because we had no beer. Some of them mocked and jeered at our clumsy crockery and other utensils; but Clums spoke up for us on this point, saying that a pot was good enough if it didn't run out, and he only wished he had had such things in the island where they had been.

Mr. Bodger

For the rest of that day the men roamed about the island, and one or two of them plucked up courage to climb the mountain, though they turned back before they came to the crater. They discovered our plantation of yams, and were pleased to express approval of the manner in which we had fenced it in, and Pumfrey said it must be enlarged now, for we could not grow enough there to feed them all. This brought home to me the fact that our solitude was henceforth to be peopled, and though I might please myself with dreams of ruling over a little republic, I own I felt a sort of regret that the happy life Billy and I had led together was encroached on and perturbed, a feeling which grew into positive abhorrence before the day was out. The men came punctually back to the hut for meals, and Clums, who was a good-natured fellow if he was let alone, lent a hand to their preparation, so that the work did not fall wholly on Billy and me. And it was during the latter part of the day that I heard from Mr. Bodger more particulars of the miseries of his life on their island. They had saved him at the first, it appeared, merely because they thought his

seamanship might be some time useful to them, but when he never had an opportunity of doing anything in that way they used to taunt him, and ask him why he hadn't stuck to Captain Corke and Mr. Lummis, and dealt very evilly with him in many ways. It was plain to me that not only had he no authority over them, such as a ship's officer ought to have, but that he went in mortal terror of Hoggett, so that if it came to a tussle between Hoggett and me I could expect no help from Mr. Bodger.

I observed during the day that there were always some of the men in the hut, or reclining against the wall outside, and it came into my head that they were guarding it, so that Billy and I could not barricade ourselves in it as we had done before, and keep them out. I smiled at this, for having let them in of my own accord, and under no compulsion, I did not think of going back on this, even though the savages were departed. I thought we should not be so discommoded at night, because we had not only the hole in the roof, but could also keep the door open, there being no longer any fear of molestation by wild dogs. In my mind I was planning to build other huts, as soon as I could persuade the men to it, so that Billy and I might have our own to ourselves, which was very much to be desired, considering what stores we had beneath it, and the access to our canoe, now laid up in Dismal Cave. But just before dark, when we had had our supper out in the open, and were thinking of turning in, and I came with Billy to the doorway of the hut, there was Hoggett standing in it with his elbows stuck out and his legs a-straddle, and Wabberley and Chick just behind him. He did not offer to move aside for me, on which I smiled and said we had not foreseen that he would be our guest or we might have made the doorway wider; and then he took a step forward, Wabberley and Chick moving into the doorway, and thrusting his head out until his nose nearly touched mine, he said, very loud: "Look 'ee here, you Brent," says he, "this here place is now mine, d'ye see? and I'm a-going to let in my friends and no one else, and to-night I'm not a-going to have any one in but Mr. Chick and Mr. Wabberley and one or two more, and you two young fellows can just rig

up a bunk outside, along with Bodger and the rest."

"That's rather a poor return for hospitality, isn't it, Mr. Hoggett?" I said as pleasantly as I could, though I was raging inside.

"I don't want none of your fine talk, Brent," says he, "and as for Billy Bobbin, if he makes those eyes at me I'll knock his head off."

"No, you won't," says Billy, nimbly stepping back out of reach. It appeared that he had not been able to keep out of his eyes the fury which burnt within him.

Hoggett glared at him, and called him foul names, and then turning to me he cried: "I've said my say, and I tell you if I catch you inside this cabin to-night or any time, I'll flay you alive. You hear that, Mr. Chick?"

"I do," says Chick.

"You hear that, Mr. Wabberley?" says Hoggett again.

"I do," says Wabberley.

"Well, then, Brent has had fair warning, more'n he gave me," says Hoggett, "when he sent an arrow through the fleshy part of my arm."

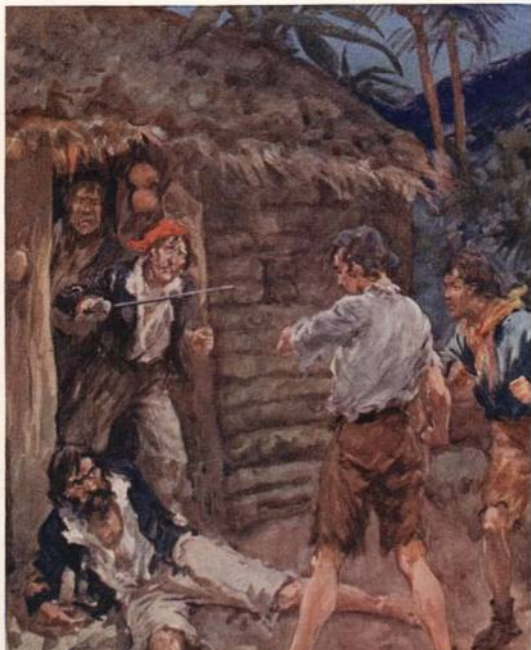
"That's a lie," cried Billy; "you had more warning than I'd give you."

Turned Out

Hoggett in a fury caught up a musket that stood against the wall, and was presenting it at Billy, but I knocked it up, and bade him, in a very different tone from what I had used as yet, have a care. He seemed surprised at my firmness, and put down the musket, and then, seeing that the other men had come up, and were standing at watch in a little knot, I turned to them, with the intent to

appeal to their sense of justice, believing that if I could once get them to break away from Hoggett's dominance all might be well. But I had not spoken a dozen words when Hoggett, who, as his words had shown, was longing to pay off his score against me for wounding him that time, aimed a blow at me, which, however, I saw coming out of the corner of my eye, so that I was ready for it, and parrying it with my left arm, I dealt him such a blow upon his body that he fell doubled up at the doorway. In a moment Chick sprang across him, cutlass in hand, and made for me, and Wabberley came after him, and Hoggett called on the other men to seize me; and though Billy sprang instantly to my side, I saw that the odds were too great against us, and that we had better run for it. I stepped back just in time to escape Chick's cutlass, and at the same time Billy thrust his foot in front of Wabberley, so that the big man came down very heavily on his face; and then we sprinted across the drawbridge, and pulled it after us, so that the men that pursued us were brought up on the brink of the moat, and could do no more than shake their fists and curse us. Billy and I went on leisurely with Little John, who had come after us, and considering what we should do we determined to betake ourselves to the thicket on the slope of the mountain, and it was quite dark before we got there. We made ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night, being strangely reminded of our first coming to the island and the fears and terrors of that time; but we had no such disquietude of mind now, and I think in our hearts we were both glad to have broken with the seamen. When I reproached myself for not having the presence of mind to resume possession of our hut immediately after the savages had departed, Billy said it wouldn't have been much good, because the seamen could not choose but stay on the island, their boat being gone, and things would have come to pretty much the same pass; but he had no sooner said it than he let forth a sharp cry of dismay: "Our canoe, master!" And then I remembered that, having laid our canoe up in the cave, we had no means of getting to her, now that the entrance to the cavern was barred, for we could not climb down the face of the cliffs, nor had we any other boat or raft to carry us there by sea. This was a very staggering situation to be in, and Billy said it

was a shame that after we had been so happy all these years we should have all our troubles over again. Sleep overtook us before we saw any way out of our difficulties, which stared us in the face when we opened our eyes to the new day.





"I DEALT HIM SUCH A BLOW THAT HE FELL DOUBLED UP
AT THE DOORWAY."

**"I DEALT HIM SUCH A BLOW THAT HE FELL DOUBLED UP AT
THE DOORWAY."**

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

OF OUR RETREAT TO THE RED ROCK, AND OF OUR VARIOUS RAIDS
UPON OUR PROPERTY

We had one great advantage over the seamen in that we knew every yard of the island, and so could find our food without searching. Billy laughed when he thought of them having to get their own breakfast, and wishing they had not driven us away; but I said that they had not intended to drive us away, but that Hoggett expected to daunt and cow us, and so make us his bond servants. "Well, he *must* be a fool," says Billy, and chuckled again to think that his old enemy had over-reached himself. Presently we saw that I was right in my

surmise, for we heard men shouting in different parts of the island, and guessed they were seeking us; but we kept close all that day, feeling pretty sure that the men would not come up the mountain until they had searched other parts.

We were not idle this day, for we at once set about making a raft to carry us round to the cave, using saplings and creepers for this purpose, fashioning them into a kind of hurdle which we hoped would support us well enough, or at least one of us, for the short voyage. We laughed again to think that when we should have got our canoe again, we might if we pleased sail clean away from the island and seek another home without let or hindrance from the seamen; but we never had any serious thought of this, Palm Tree Island being now our very home. As for what our course of action was to be, we very earnestly considered that while our fingers were busy with the raft. It was plain we could not fight the men, for they had muskets and powder and shot enough to kill us, being only two; and we were without any weapons save our axes, which we always carried in our belts, all the others being either in the hut or in the cellar below it. If we did not fight them, we must nevertheless be either friends or enemies; friends we could not be while Hoggett maintained his present insolency, and as enemies we could but keep out of their way. But I saw we should lead a terrible life if we remained on the island and were harried from place to place, and hunted down, and maybe captured and made slaves of in the end. We might, to be sure, go and live in the cave, where it was little likely that we should be discovered, and if we were we could no doubt make a very good defence; but we did not relish the prospect of skulking, so to speak, in the dim purlieus of the cave and tunnel while our enemies were ranging the island free, and enjoying the full use of what we had laboured so hard for. "I can't a-bear to think of Hoggett drinking out of *my* mug," says Billy, with a rueful countenance, "and blunting *my* spears, and wasting *my* arrows, and eating our pigs, too, master. What if they eat 'em all, as they did in their own island, and don't leave none for breeding? Oh, that Hoggett! Wouldn't I like to drop some fizzy rock in his water and poison him!"

This was indeed a thing to be thought of, and we made up our minds at least to secure some of our pigs and devise some secret place where we might keep them. But the first matter to settle was our own habitation, and it was near the close of the day before the notion came into my head that we might choose the Red Rock, which being severed from the island would be quite inaccessible, except by a bridge, and when we had possession of our bows and arrows we could easily prevent them from throwing a bridge across. It would have been quite foreign to Billy's nature and habit if he had fallen in with this plan without demur, and he said at once that Red Rock was quite barren, save for a few stunted bushes which were of no good either for shelter or food. "But," I said to him, "we shall have our canoe, and we can carry stores in this from the cavern to the rock, and we can make shift to put up some sort of shelter against the weather, which isn't very bad."

"That's true," says he, "but when our stores are all used up, what then? We've got enough in our cellar for three or four months, perhaps, and I lay Hoggett would like to get hold of some of our salted pork, as good as bacon any day; but it won't last for ever, and what then?"

"I can't see so far ahead," said I. "We can live very comfortably for three or four months, and perhaps longer, and by that time something may have happened."

"Yes," says he, "Old Smoker may start work again, and if he does I hope he'll go strong, so that they'll be scared out of their wits and drove to make a raft or boat or something to get away."

Having determined on this, therefore, we made great speed with our raft and finished it before dark, but not soon enough to set off that same night, nor indeed did we much wish to do so, because we had not forgot the monsters

that used to live in the cave, and though we had seen none since we poisoned them, we were still squeamish about approaching in the dark. Besides, we should need torches to light us up the tunnel to our storehouse, and for these we had to collect some of the candlenuts, and some dry grass for tinder; the flint and what we called the steel Billy always had in his pocket. We made these preparations before we lay down to rest, resolved to start as soon as ever we saw any sign of dawn in the sky. This resolution, as often happens in such cases, caused me to sleep fitfully, and it was in one of these wakeful spaces that a notion jogged in my head of a plan whereby we might get even with the seamen and come into our own again. I thought of it over and over again, and it excited me and tickled my fancy too; but I determined to say nothing about it to Billy until I had pondered it more carefully, so that I should be ready to meet all the objections which I knew he would raise.

It was still dark, but there was a sort of silent stirring in the sky, betokening dawn, when I waked Billy, who was snoring very happily upon his back, and told him we must convey our raft down to the shore, if we would come to the cave before the men were about. He got up at once, and we carried the raft between us across the island, being careful to keep a good distance from the hut, which made the way longer but surer. Being merely a kind of hurdle, the raft was not heavy and gave us no trouble by its weight, though it was troublesome to get it over the steep places we had to pass on our way down to the shore. However, we came there without mishap, at the sandy beach, and launched the raft; but when I stood upon it I saw that it would not support Billy as well, and I proposed to him that I should go to the cave alone and bring back the canoe for him. This he flatly and with great vehemence refused, saying that I might never get there, what with sharks and long-legged monsters, and that he wasn't going to be left behind, but would share everything with me. When I asked him how he would go, the raft not being strong enough for two, he said he would catch hold of it and swim along, and as for sharks, he would kick out very hard and so scare any that came, and we always had our axes.

But now I took a firm stand, and said plainly that I would not allow any such thing, nor did I yield to Billy's pleading that I would permit him to make the journey alone; and so I set off, and not to make a long story about a short voyage, I arrived safely at the cave, and found the canoe just as we had left her behind the rocks. Then I went back for Billy, and when we came to the cave again we lit our torch (we had brought only one, having material for plenty more in the cavern), and proceeded up the tunnel until we reached our storehouse, where we first of all had a good breakfast, thinking all the time of the seamen above, perfectly ignorant of what was going on beneath them. We spoke in whispers and moved very quietly, so that the men should not hear us, and get an inkling of our whereabouts; not that there was much danger of this, perhaps, for if they did hear a sound it was like to make them more fearful than inquisitive, and Billy said they would be sure to think it was Old Smoker talking to himself, and they might then leave the hut as a dangerous place. But I thought it best to run no risks that we could avoid, and so we moved very softly, as I have said.

We spent the whole of that day in conveying stores down to our canoe, finding it a very laborious and tedious business, because the narrowness of the first part of the tunnel, and the roughness of the way, did not allow us to bear such heavy loads as we might have done in the open. We felt an itching curiosity to know what the men were doing, and how they took our disappearance, and Billy said it would be great fun to sail round the island and show ourselves to them, for we could run back to the cave at any time, and they would never know where we had gone, the cave not being visible from above, and the cliff unscalable. But our posture was too serious for mere fun, especially as I did not wish the men even to know we were still alive, because of that notion which had come into my head; and it was for the same reason that I had resolved not to attempt to transport our stores to the Red Rock until the dusk of evening, when the men would have given over their roaming and returned to the hut. When we rested from our work, and ate our meals, we

paddled the canoe out to the mouth of the cave, where we could be in the sunshine and fresh air, and away from the exceeding noisome stench made by our torches; and it was really a pleasant enough day, the seamen not being able to molest us.

Retreat to Red Rock

Accordingly, as soon as it was dusk, with a promise of a full, clear moon, we set off, and paddled our well-laden canoe to the north side of the Red Rock, where, as I have said, was the only landing-place. Having moored our vessel securely to a peak of rock, we set to work to carry our cargo up the steep path, and found this the hardest task we had ever undertaken, so that though we toiled pretty nearly all night we had not above half emptied the canoe by the morning. It was very stupid of us to work so hard, as we saw when we had tired ourselves out to dropping, for being on the side of the rock furthest from the island we could not be seen from thence, and might have taken three or four days over the work if we pleased. The manner of our carrying the stores up was to load baskets and strap them to our backs; but one part of the ascent was too steep for us to climb thus laden, and we then tied the baskets in turn to the end of a rope, and one climbed up first and hauled the baskets after him, with much bumping against the rugged side, which made me fear lest we should lose a good deal. However, nothing was lost save two or three cocoa-nuts and the lid of one of my pots, which was full of bread-fruit paste, so that I was glad it was only the lid and not the pot itself. The danger thus narrowly escaped taught us a lesson, and when it came to our largest pots, instead of trying to carry them up full, we emptied their contents into the baskets, and so made several light loads instead of one heavy one, thus avoiding a particular mishap.

When morning came, as I say, we had carried up but half our cargo, and having by that time perceived that there was no need for haste, we refreshed ourselves with one or two cocoa-nuts we had, not lighting a fire to cook

anything else, in case its smoke should be seen by the seamen. This consideration somewhat damped our liking for our new abode, for we had been so long accustomed to good and well-cooked meals that the prospect of living on nothing but cocoa-nuts, as on our first coming to the island, was mighty displeasing; and, moreover, we had only a very few cocoa-nuts, not having stored many of these because we could get them from the trees all the year round. However, I told Billy that I thought we could light a fire at night, for it was scarce likely that the men would be abroad in the darkness at one of the high parts of the island, from which alone the top of the Red Rock could be seen, and he was comforted at this, saying that he didn't mind cold breakfast and dinner if he had hot supper. After our frugal breakfast we laid ourselves down to sleep, under the shadow of an overhung rock, and did not waken until the sun was very high. Being then exceeding thirsty I remembered the water we had found at the bottom of a cleft when we first came to the rock, and we let down a pitcher by a rope into one of the clefts, and when we drew it up we found it full of delicious cold water with scarcely any taste to it; and though, remembering the water of Brimstone Lake, we drank sparingly at first, we found that it did us no hurt, and indulged ourselves with more copious draughts than we had ever taken since we had lived on the island. We waited until the heat of the day was past before we resumed our unlading, and we did not finish it until next day, sleeping pretty near all through the night. When we had got everything up—bread-fruit, yams, salted flesh and fish, ropes, spears, bows and arrows, strips of hide and bark cloth, and sundry other things which we thought we might find useful—we packed them as snugly as we could under ledges and in hollows, and covered over the perishables with cloth to keep off dew and rain, and then we thought about ourselves, and how we could make the barren rock a habitable place. It would be easy enough to build a cabin or lean-to against the rocky wall if we only had the materials; but there was nothing serviceable to be found on the spot, and to get them we must venture back to the island. This we could only do in the hours of darkness, or immediately after dawn, but the idea of this rather pleased us with its

venturesomeness, and being now equipped with our weapons we were bold enough. In the early hours of the morning, therefore, we paddled round through the archway until we reached the rock by the lava beach, where Billy had perched on our first day, and leaving Billy and Little John to guard the canoe, I went into the woods with my axe, carrying also my bow and arrows, to cut some saplings and rushes, and some creepers to bind things together. I promised Billy I would come back after a while and let him take his turn, but I had not been working above half-an-hour, I should think, when he joined me, saying he was sure the canoe would be safe, because it was hidden behind the rock, and there was nothing to bring the men to that part of the island, because he would take his davy they never bathed, of which indeed I myself had had good evidence; and besides, he said, he had left Little John to guard it. I was glad of Billy's help, for between us we cut a good deal of material in a very short time; but I did not like leaving the canoe to the sole charge of the dog, and resolved not to come again in the morning, but only in the evening, there being much less danger of meeting the men then. Accordingly I did not wait until we had got enough material for our purpose, but said we would finish the job another time; and we carried the stuff to the canoe, making two journeys to do it, and so got back to the Red Rock safely.

We spent the rest of that day in making, with the things we had brought, a kind of trellis-work to serve as the front and side walls of our lean-to, for the back wall was the rock itself. We had not near enough to finish the job, but enough to keep us employed all that day; and a little before dusk we set off again to paddle to the island to fetch more. And this time, as soon as we had got enough saplings and reeds and things, we went on to the smaller cocoa-nut grove, there being a very good moon, purposing to carry away a few ripe cocoa-nuts for our own consumption; but when we were gathering them from the trees it came into my head that we might as well begin upon that notion I have before mentioned, which was nothing less than to starve the seamen into repentance and humbleness of spirit. I had not as yet told it to Billy, but I had

pondered it myself, and thought I saw my way to it, and so I now began suggesting to Billy that we should strip the trees of all the ripe fruit. "What's the good, master?" says he at once, as I knew he would: "it will take us a long time to carry 'em all to the canoe, and we don't want 'em, not really."

"No," said I, "but Hoggett does want 'em," and then I told him my drift. I was afraid he would spoil it all with shouting, for he opened his mouth wide to let it forth, but remembered himself in time, and so shut his mouth on a sort of hoarse croak, which might have seemed to any one that heard it the croak of some strange animal or bird.

"My eye!" says he, "that's prime, master. However did you think of it? But we'll have to come pretty often, because these here cocoa-nuts get ripe so fast. 'Tis lucky the bread-fruit ain't in season yet, and the yams is nearly all gone; but there's the pigs and fowls, drat it, and if they use all them up too we'll never get no more."

Stealing no Robbery

"That's true," I said, "but we shall maybe be able to get some of them by and by. At any rate, let us get the cocoa-nuts now, and we need not trouble to take them all to the canoe. We will take just what we need, and hide the rest in the undergrowth."

Accordingly we stripped the ripe fruit from all the trees at this spot; there were only about half-a-dozen; and having concealed all the nuts but two or three that we wanted for our own refreshment, we carried these to the canoe, and paddled back to the Red Rock, where we broiled some fish steaks for second supper, our work having made us hungry, and so to sleep.

Next day we finished our lean-to, making walls and roof of the trellis-work I have mentioned, and being very tired we went to sleep without paying another visit to the island. I thought we were doing very well, and the only thing

that gave me any concern was our canoe, for we had no very safe harbourage for it on the rock, and if a storm came I was afraid the sea might wash it from the ledge on which it lay, and then we should be in a lamentable fix. However, as we usually had some warning of bad weather, in the low flying of seabirds and other signs we had become used to observe, we determined at the first warning to take the canoe into the cave and lie up there until the storm was past. Of course we could not do this if the storm broke upon us suddenly in the night, but in that matter we must simply trust to Providence.

All necessary work on the Red Rock being done, we began to find time hang somewhat heavy on our hands. Our asylum (as I may call it) was no more than some two hundred feet square; at least, the habitable part of it was no more: and having explored every get-at-able corner of it, and finding nothing to reward us except a few seabirds' eggs, we had nothing to do; and to lie about looking at each other was vastly uninteresting. We clambered to the highest point, and there, under cover of a craggy rock that overhung the island, we looked over the domain from which we had been expelled, and I scarce think Adam himself was more grieved at the loss of Eden than we were now. We could not see our hut, but a great part of the island between it and the sea, to the westward and southward, was open to our view, and of course the mountain, and the long slope that ran downwards from the crater to the archway. Once or twice we caught glimpses of the seamen as they roamed the island, and then Billy's wrath and indignation knew no bounds, and he pleaded with me to land and post ourselves behind trees, and shoot the men with our arrows, but this of course I would not consent to, having besides in my mind a better way of dealing with them. And I bade Billy remember that they must be very uneasy at not lighting on any traces of us, to which he replied scornfully, "Suppose they are, what's the odds? They'll soon believe as how we are drowned, and then they'll be jolly enough, using our things and all."

"Maybe they'll be afraid of seeing our ghosts," I said.

"That would frighten 'em, wouldn't it?" says he. "Fancy old Wabberley, now, seeing a thing all white come creeping along, making gashly sounds, and all that; wouldn't he holla and cry for mercy! I wish we could turn into ghosts for once, only I suppose we can't till we're dead, and I don't want to be dead, do you, master?"

The next night chanced to be stormy, with a high wind, and we heard that strange howling I have before mentioned, and of which we had never discovered the cause, for it was clear no dogs made it, there being none now on the island. But on sailing our canoe to the cave, for safety's sake, we learnt at last what made the noise, which was nothing less than the wind blowing across the mouth of the cave. Billy said the sound would frighten the men as well as any ghost could do it, and I think he was himself pleased to know that the explanation was so simple and natural.

The weather cleared next day, and we returned to the Red Rock. Being determined to set off for the island that very night, and begin to put into practice the scheme I had been forming in my mind, we had a good sleep in the afternoon, and embarked in the canoe just after sunset. The moon was up, but we did not suppose the seamen would wander from the hut at night-time, and the moonlight would help us. When we landed, we went up to the cocoa-nut grove, and began to strip the trees of all the nuts, ripe and unripe, starting with those that were furthest from the hut, and so were the least likely to be known as yet by the men. We conveyed the nuts, in the baskets we had brought on our backs, to the canoe; and then, Billy being still mighty concerned about the pigs, lest they should all be killed and eaten, we determined to go very stealthily towards the hut, to see if we might anyways get a pig from the sty, and also to learn what the men had done about our settlement. Spying down upon the place, we saw that the door of the hut was open, and that the drawbridge was not laid across the moat, so that we supposed all the men were sleeping within. But as we drew nearer, and came close to the fowl-house, we were surprised by great snores proceeding from it, by which we knew that some of the men

had made it their lodging, though we could not guess what they had done with the fowls which they had turned out. They had let them loose, as we afterwards discovered, never supposing that they would have any difficulty in catching them when they wanted them for food; and we were very much amused when we learnt of their anger and amazement at finding that the fowls had betaken themselves to inaccessible places, so that they never had but two or three all the time they were on the island.

I thought there would be too great a risk in trying to purloin one of our pigs, the sty being not above a dozen yards from the fowl-house, but Billy would do it, and assured me he would get one of the young ones as easy as anything. Accordingly I let him go, and sure enough he came back in no long time carrying one of the piglets close in his arms, and I had not heard above one feeble squeal, the reason I heard no more being that Billy slipped into the little pig's mouth a bit of cocoa-nut he happened to have in his pocket. But Billy himself was in a furious temper, telling me, when we had gotten ourselves safe away, that he had seen his best axe, and his own wooden spade, on which he had carved the initial letter of his name, lying close by the pig-sty, and he was perfectly overcome with anger at the thought that his very own tools were being used by these sacrilegious hands. Nothing would satisfy him but that he must go back and bring them away, which he did, and we took them and the pig down to our canoe, and paddled back to the Red Rock, very well satisfied with our night's work.

The next night we paid another visit to the island, and this time we went to the plantation of yams, finding, as we half expected, that the men had already made some depredations on it. Having brought spades as well as baskets, we dug up a good many of the yams that remained, and carried them to the canoe in two or three trips. We continued these expeditions night after night, finding a certain fascination in them, and being tickled with the thought that while the men were lapped in slumber we were gradually depriving them of their means of subsistence. "'Tis just like housebreakers, ain't it, master?" said Billy gleefully

once; "only there ain't no watchman to cop us. And what's more, it ain't wrong neither, for a man ain't doing no wrong if he takes what's his very own." Night by night we drew nearer to the hut, and had worked so often without the least alarm that we flattered ourselves there would soon be no more fruit to gather, and then, as Billy said, Hoggett would begin to starve.

One night, the seventh or eighth, I should think, since we began, we had brought our canoe to the strip of sand beside the lava beach, and had gone up to a small clump of trees which we had not been able to strip completely the night before. Billy had gone aloft, being nimbler in climbing than me, and I was about to follow him, when all of a sudden he called out, quite loud, his surprise making him to be off his guard, that there wasn't a single cocoa-nut left. Immediately afterwards I heard him say, not so loud, "Oh geminy, now I've been and done it!" and began to slide down very rapidly; but in a moment I heard a loud crackling of twigs close by, and then a shout, "Here's the devils!" and I knew that the men were upon us; it was plain they had observed how the fruits were disappearing night by night, and had been on the watch for us. Billy came down the tree more quickly than any monkey could have done, with great damage to his hands and still more to his breeches, as we afterwards discovered, the bark-cloth with which we had patched them being clean torn away, so that "the rent was made worse," as the Bible says. His feet were no sooner on the ground than we set off a-running with all our might towards the canoe, and we had not got above fifty yards when some of the men broke from cover and ran after us, shouting the most terrible curses. We had to go about two hundred yards before we came to the edge of the cliff, but being much more nimble on our feet than the seamen we did not lose ground, but rather gained; and arriving at the edge, we immediately began to descend towards the sea, in such haste that I am sure no two men ever came so near to breaking their necks. The cliff, as I have said before, was exceeding steep and rough, and the descent was all the more perilous because it was night, though moonlit; and to this day I marvel that we came safe to the bottom. There was nothing

that could be called a path; we could only scramble down as best we might, trusting to luck, or rather to Providence; and though we escaped with our lives, and our limbs sound, yet our feet and legs were pretty badly cut by the sharp edges of rock. The seamen, when they came to the brink, did not dare to follow us, but caught up stones and hurled them down upon us, and if they had been able to take good aim we must certainly have been killed. However, we came safe to the beach and to our canoe, into which we leapt and paddled away as quickly as we could, and the men spying us set up a great howl of rage, and I was vexed they had seen our vessel, but it could not be helped. They ran along the top of the cliff watching us, the moon being up, as I said; but we disappeared from their view so soon as we had come beneath the cliffs, and then, so that they should not know of our refuge on the Red Rock, we lay for a good while in the entrance to Dismal Cave, not proceeding further until we thought the men would have returned to their quarters.

Billy was exceeding vexed to think that his careless outcry had had so untoward an issue. "I could knock my head off, master," he cried passionately, and when I asked him what good that would be he said, "Well, I couldn't stick it on again, could I? Only I have got a silly tongue." I told him that he need not reproach himself, for I was sure the men had been on the watch for us, having no doubt observed the nightly disappearance of the fruits. "Yes," says Billy, "but if they hadn't spied us they might ha' thought they was taken by goblins or such," to which I replied that I did not think goblins fed on such substantial fare, and so by degrees I brought him to a more tranquil frame of mind. I thought it very likely that the men would now guess what our purpose was, and gather in all the foodstuffs that were left, so that there would be none for us to venture for; wherefore we must leave the further working out of our plan to time. Accordingly, we went no more from the Red Rock to the island, except once, and that was to get another pig as mate to the one we had already captured. We delayed to do this for several days, until we thought the men would not be so carefully on guard as they would be immediately after their discovery of us;

but when we did venture to land and creep near to the pig-sty, we feared our errand was impossible, because the men had lit an open fire near the hut and we saw two of them on watch. However, Billy said he was not going to be beat, and he asked me to go into the woods and make a terrible noise, which he thought would draw the men away, and so give him an opportunity of seizing the pig. I would not consent to this at first, for it seemed like leaving the dangerous part of the work to Billy; but he insisted that he could get the pig more easily than I could, which was true, and so I agreed at last, but thought of another way instead of making a noise, and that was to go into a clump of trees on the other side of the hut from the pig-sty, and there strike a light, which I doubted not would be seen by the men. Knowing the country as I did, it would be easy to escape down to the canoe, which we had left this time in the little cove on the east of the island, guessing that the men would make for the sandy beach if they suspected our presence. There was a risk, of course, that not all the men would be drawn towards the light, but we had to chance that, and so I departed, bidding Billy have a very great care.

The plan answered perfectly to his expectation, only it took somewhat longer than he thought, for I was not so used to striking fire as Billy, and I failed so many times that I feared I should never do it. But at last I got a light, and set some dry grass on fire, and there was a mighty blaze, and Billy told me afterwards that the moment they saw it the men who were on watch jumped to their feet and ran towards the hut, not being able to reach it because the drawbridge was taken away. I myself heard their shout, and having thrown some more grass on the fire, I sped away towards the east, and waited for Billy at the edge of the wood on the cliffs, wondering how he would come, whether across the lava tract or the very much longer way round the mountain. I heard the shouting continue for some time, but it seemed to be going away from me, at which I was very glad; and after what seemed a very long time, I heard a little noise close at hand, and holding myself on my guard I saw Billy staggering along under his burden, and when he came near, he said he was

sweating horrible, the pig being uncommon obstinate. To deaden the sound of its squealing he had stripped off his shirt and smothered the pig's head in it, and he had come right across the lava tract, having seen that the men had all gone in the other direction, towards the sandy beach. We carried the pig between us down to the canoe, and lay there all night, not daring to paddle away until just before dawn, for we could not return to the Red Rock by the west side of the island while the men were astir, for they would have seen us, nor could we go the other way because of the current. But we guessed that not having spied the canoe where it had been before, the men would imagine we had some lurking place on the island, and after a time would not keep watch on the shore. Besides, the moon would go down before morning; and so, when it was still very dark, we left our hiding-place and paddled quietly round the island, and came to the Red Rock without having been observed.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

OF ATTACKS BY LAND AND SEA; AND OF THE USES OF HUNGER IN
THE MENDING OF MANNERS

We calculated, Billy and I, that there was enough food left on the island to last the men for about a month, or perhaps longer with careful husbanding; but from what Mr. Bodger had told me of their ways on their island, and from what I knew of them myself, I did not suppose they would practise any stint until they felt the pinch of want. I own I hoped they would not, and if that seems a hard saying, you must remember that I had a deep purpose, namely to recover possession of our own, which was itself laudable, and also to teach the men a

lesson whereby they and all of us would profit. It was necessary to the success of my plan that they should come to the verge of famishment before the bread-fruit season, for if they endured until the fruit was ripe, they would have plenty of food for three or four months thereafter, and I could not view with patience the prospect of remaining sequestered on the Red Rock for so long. Having done all we could, it would have been simple foolhardiness to risk complete failure by making useless visits to the island, and we endured what was a kind of imprisonment on the Red Rock as patiently as we could, leaving it only once to bring more stores from the cavern.

We were, I assure you, mighty weary of our life before the day came when our whereabouts was discovered. I know not how long it was, but I guess five or six weeks. Having nothing better to do, we often went to the edge of the Red Rock, where we could overlook a part of the island from behind the vantage of a boulder, and we sometimes saw the men moving from place to place, taking care ourselves to keep out of their sight, at least I took care, Billy being less prudent, so that more than once I had to drag him down when he began to climb the boulder to have a better view. Of course we could have been seen any day if the men had climbed the mountain, but they never did this. I learnt afterwards that they had scoured every accessible part of the island for us, and after a time suspected that we were on the Red Rock, and kept a watch on it, but saw never a sign of us until the day of which I am now to tell.

Discovery

Our dog, Little John, seldom barked unless there was something to trouble him, and we had taken care since we had been on the rock to keep him as quiet as possible, so that the men might not discover us through him. But it chanced one day that one of the pigs broke loose from the place where we had tethered him, and began to run in a very stupid fashion, not heeding in the least the danger of falling over a crag and dashing himself to pieces. Little John no sooner saw the mad antics of the creature than he set off in pursuit, barking

furiously, and Billy set off too with a shout, taking great enjoyment in the chase after our period of idleness. He came up with the pig just as it had arrived at the very edge of the plateau, and caught it, and at that very moment I heard another shout, and looking over I saw two of the men just at the edge of the wood near the rocky ledge of which I have spoken before. It was plain that they had seen Billy, though he dropped out of sight immediately he heard the shout, and they came forward until they stood at the edge of the cliff, being separated from the rock only by the narrow gap. "That's where the young devils are hiding," I heard one of them say. "Didn't I say so, Bill?" Their words came very clearly to me, for sailor men have not very dulcet voices. "Hail them, Jack," says the other, and the first man put his hands to his mouth and let forth a stentorian "Ahoy!" which might have been heard a mile away. At first I paid no heed, but when he shouted again I saw no good that could come of further concealment, so I climbed up on to the boulder, being followed by Billy as soon as he had put the pig back into safety.

"What do you want?" I cried down to them. You would have laughed to see their faces. Our sudden appearance seemed to have nonplussed them, for they stood staring blankly up at us, as not knowing what to say. Then says one to the other, "Go and fetch Hoggett," and the fellow immediately set off and disappeared into the wood, running towards the hut. The other man stood on the same spot, gazing dumbly at us, and never once offered to address us, and we sat down on the boulder, Billy smiling and dangling his legs in the most careless way. Presently we saw Hoggett and pretty near all the men coming through the wood, and Hoggett had his musket, and I thought that they must have started before the messenger came to them, or they could not have got to us so soon; no doubt they had heard the shouting. Well, Hoggett comes along, with Chick and Wabberley close behind him, and when he got to the edge of the cliff below us (it was two or three hundred feet) he lifts up his voice and cries out, "Hi, you Brent, you come ashore sharp now, d'ye hear?" I thanked him very courteously for his invitation, but said I was very comfortable where I

was, upon which he cursed me heartily, and cried out again, "You come sharp now, and no nonsense, or I'll come and fetch you," winding up with that opprobrious word which I had cured Billy of using. The threat was such an idle one that I smiled at him, and Billy laughed heartily, and putting his thumb to his nose, spread out his fingers in that gesture of derision which I have observed small boys to use, and which I thought he should not have used at his age, being at this time, as I reckoned, not far short of twenty years old. What with my silence and Billy's mockery, Hoggett flew into a terrible rage, and clapping his musket to his shoulder, he let fly at me; but I was too far above him for him to take a good aim, he being never used to fire except on the flat, and the slug struck the rock a good many feet below us. Still, we did not know but he might have better luck next time, so we got down off the boulder and disappeared from sight, and sat there listening to the furious outcry the men made, Hoggett in particular declaring he would flay us alive when he caught us. The men talked together for some while, and then, when the sounds ceased, we peeped over and saw them returning in a group whence they had come.

We saw no more of them that day, or the next, but on the second day, in the afternoon, when Billy got on the boulder to take a look round, he called to me that he spied a raft coming towards us from the direction of the cave, with Hoggett and half-a-dozen more aboard. I could see that Billy was a little alarmed at this, for he always had a great dread of Hoggett; but I told him not to be disturbed, for I was sure from our vantage ground, and with our bows and arrows, we could easily beat them off if they landed and tried to clamber up. "Things are going well," I said to him. "They have actually begun to work at last, and pretty diligently, too, to make that raft in less than two days." "But what's the odds to us, master," says Billy, "if they have begun to work? I think it's a very bad sign, I do." "We shall see," I said; and Billy looked very much puzzled, for I had not told him my design in its fulness, because I wished to get a certain assurance of its success first.

It was soon plain that we should not be put to the trouble of defence, and we had a hearty laugh at the coil in which the men soon found themselves; for coming pretty close to the shore, they were caught in the current which ran very swiftly through the narrow gap, and despite the desperate efforts which they made with their paddles, the raft, which is at all times a clumsy vessel, was swept along and twirled this way and that, and the men were in such extremity of danger that they ceased to gaze at us, and bent all their energies to prevent the raft from being dashed against the rocks on either side and shivered to atoms. They were carried right through the channel, and pretty nearly to the natural archway, before they got the least control over the raft, and even then they could only manage it enough to steer clear of the sides of the arch, and so win to the open sea. By that time the current had lost the most of its force, and we knew very well that if they paddled out to the left, and made a sufficiently large circuit, they might gain the north side of Red Rock, even with so clumsy a vessel as theirs, and discover our landing-place. However, they had been so greatly discomfited that I was not much surprised when, instead of steering to the left, they allowed the raft to drift past the promontory, and after a little while they disappeared from our sight, having clearly determined to return to the place where they had embarked.

But though this attempt had been so signal a failure, I saw very clearly that we must not be content merely to smile and do nothing, for if they were to take thought and go about the enterprise in a reasonable way, they might very well come to our landing-place some time, and then they might seize our canoe, a loss which we could not contemplate without dismay. Accordingly, Billy and I spent the rest of the afternoon in a very serious talk, the issue of which was that in the middle of the night we descended the rock and launched the canoe, in which we set off, and, rounding the archway, came opposite the lava beach. This we examined as well as we were able by the light of the stars, for there

was no moon, but not perceiving what we sought, we paddled on very quietly until Billy told me in a whisper that he spied it on the sandy beach; and there, indeed, was the raft, drawn up above high-water mark, and no one attending it—at least, no one that we could see. We had talked over this point very anxiously, for if they had set a guard over the raft our scheme would be brought to nought; but we both agreed that it would be very unlike them to take this precaution, and, besides, there was not a man of them who would consent to undertake the office of night watchman so far from the hut while the others were enjoying their repose; and so it turned out.

We passed on without landing, until we came to a sort of dell in the cliff, where we knew there grew a great quantity of long grass and rushes. We landed there, and having pulled up many armfuls of the grass, which we did very easily, the soil being thin, we loaded it into the canoe, and then returned to the place where the raft lay. For some little while we waited, listening for any sound that might give token of wakefulness among the men, but hearing nothing, we ran the canoe lightly in shore, and having landed, we carried our grasses and laid them beside the raft. Then we went on further until we came to a patch of thick scrub, where we broke off a quantity of small branches, and these we laid beside our other material, going and coming as quickly as we could.

Making a Bonfire

Our purpose, as you have guessed, was to burn the raft, so that we should not have that to fear again, nor did I suppose the men would make another, for it must have cost them many pangs to break through their indolence to make this one, and if it were destroyed nothing would persuade them to undergo the toil again. We knew, of course, that the raft would be wet, at least on the under side, where it had not been exposed to the sun after they beached it; but in order to assist the fire we purposed to kindle, we had brought some of our candle-nuts and some cocoa-nut shells and husks, which are highly inflammable

and would give a very fine blaze. But when we came to lift the raft so as to push our fuel under it, we found that we could not in any wise raise it, for it was bigger than we had supposed from seeing it in the water, and would have needed five or six men to move it, I am sure. However, we set to work to scrape a hollow in the sand beneath it, or rather several hollows, in which we laid the fuel, and we heaped on the top side also a good quantity of cocoa-nut husks. We had taken the precaution to bring a smouldering torch with us, so that we should not make a noise in striking a light; and after we had spied round very carefully to make sure that we were not observed, we crouched down on the seaward side of the raft and blew the torch into a flame, and then thrust it into the fuel, first at one place and then at another. We waited only long enough to see that the fires were fairly kindled, and then we hastened at once to the canoe, and paddled out to sea for some distance. The fire might blaze and burn itself out without being ever seen by any of the men; but it was possible that some of them were awake, and if they were they could not fail to observe the glow in the sky, and then they would assuredly come over the hill to learn the cause of it. It was for this reason that we drew off from the shore so far that we should be outside the circle of light when the raft was fully ablaze.

The night was calm and clear, and the sea so still that we were able to keep the canoe at the same spot with but a touch of the paddles now and then. It was some time before we saw any considerable flames; indeed, we began to fear lest the wood of the raft were too damp to kindle properly, and Billy whispered in my ear, "Don't I wish we had some turps, or some of that pig fat we've got in our cellar. That would make something like a blaze." However, I told him he must be patient, and a little while after the flames burst from beneath the raft and licked the sides, and we heard a mighty crackling, the wood being wet, and at last a monstrous big flame and a thick column of smoke rose up into the sky, and I could hardly restrain Billy from shouting in his joy, he saying to me, in tones much above a whisper, that he had never seen

a bigger bonfire, even on Guy Fawkes day, and he thought it must be something like the Fire of London. (I discovered afterwards, when I had time to remember it, that Billy did not in the least know what the Fire of London was, but knew only the phrase; and when I told him that a great part of the city was burnt down in that historical calamity, he asked me whether that was just another of my stories, like Robin Hood.) It was indeed a very fine sight in the blackness of the night, the glow lighting up the long slopes leading up from the beach, and being reflected magnificently in the sea.

About half-an-hour, I should think, from the time when we first kindled the bonfire, we saw some of the seamen hastening down the hill, and the glow striking the barrels of the muskets which one or two carried, I deemed it expedient to withdraw a little farther from the beach, though in truth it was unlikely we could be seen. We lay to again, and observed the men draw near to the fire, some standing about it helplessly, one or two trying to scatter the fuel with the barrels of their muskets; but they could do nothing, the great heat preventing them from coming close enough, and besides, we saw Hoggett pull them away, and heard him cry out to them that they were fools, because they would only spoil the muskets and not put out the fire. And Ernulfus himself could not, I am sure, have cursed us more comprehensively than those seamen then did (you will find his curse in Mr. Sterne's ingenious book), and not merely did they curse us, but they added sundry strange extravagant threats of what they would do to us, some of these things being so horrible that Billy wanted to answer them back, only I prevented him, for besides being merely amused at these big words from men who were perfectly impotent to harm us, I thought that silence would work better for the further acting of my plans.

We stayed until the fire was nearly burnt out, and then got us back to the Red Rock, exceeding pleased at having destroyed the only means, as we thought, whereby the seamen might come at us. Another week ran its course, we remaining quiet in our habitation, cruising a little off the north side in the twilight and early mornings, but not going again to the island. We kept a look-

out on it from the vantage ground of the boulders, and once or twice caught glimpses of the men in the copse or on the cliffs, but they did not come near to the rock again, and I own I began to feel a little downhearted, for if they could eke out their food much longer the bread-fruit season would come, and then my plan would be ruined. Once or twice, too, we heard sounds as of chopping wood in the copse, and we thought that the men were after all going to build a raft, which did not give us any concern, for even if we could not burn it, we could prevent them from getting a footing on our fortress. However, it was not a raft, as we learnt one day. We were sitting at our dinner one afternoon, and, as we always did (I forget whether I have mentioned it), we had tied up Little John, who, though a very good dog in many things, could never be taught to know the difference between "mine" and "thine" at meal times, so that Billy said he was afraid the beast would always be a heathen. He had reason enough to know, after a little experience, that his turn to feed would come after us and before the pigs, so that he was accustomed to stand in perfect quietness while we ate; wherefore when on this afternoon we heard him growling very deeply, and saw him strain at his leash, we wondered what was amiss with him.

A Bridge

"I guess it's Hoggett," said Billy all of a sudden, and up he jumps and runs to the boulder and peeps over. "Goodness alive, master!" he called to me, in a low tone; "they've been and made a bridge!" I was up in an instant, and springing to Billy's side I saw that the men were dragging up the slope from the wood a long sort of hurdle, very like our drawbridge, only longer and stouter. They were hauling it to the edge, where the cliff approached within twenty feet of the ledge on Red Rock, and if they should throw it over the gap, they would have an easy passage-way from the island to our fortress, nor did I see any means of preventing them, for while we were shooting at some of them with our bows and arrows, the rest could come across; and though we should still have the advantage of them, being above them and with good defences, I did not like to think that it was even possible for them to get a footing on our

ground. The narrowest part of the gap was almost directly below us, so that if we had some heavy stones we might hope, by casting them down on the bridge, either to smash it, or to render the passage so perilous that no man would venture to make it. Though there were a great number of large rocks about us, there were none small enough to be dislodged or hurled; but I remembered having seen a number of loose stones in a fissure about half-way across our plateau, and seeing that it would be some minutes before the men came to the gap with the bridge, I bade Billy fetch as many of these stones as he could carry in a basket, while I held the men at bay.

When he was gone about this, I fitted an arrow to my bow, and taking as good aim as I could, I let fly at the foremost of the men, there being eight of them carrying the bridge, four on each side. But not being used to shoot downwards at so sharp an angle, I did not hit any of the men, though the arrow stuck in the wicker-work near the end of the bridge, and the arrival of this silent messenger (and yet eloquent) made the men drop their burden and stand irresolute. Hoggett and Pumfrey at once raised their muskets to the shoulder, but they could see nothing to aim at, and though they must know, of course, that the arrow had come through one of the many gaps above, they could not tell which, and their ammunition was much too precious now to be wasted on a chance shot. However, they still held their muskets ready, no doubt hoping that I would show myself, and so give them a target; but finding after a while that this hope was vain, they lowered their weapons, and I heard Hoggett call to the others to take up the bridge again and make haste to bring it to the gap. Then, knowing that they could hardly raise their muskets again, take aim, and fire, before I could drop under cover, I leapt up in full view of them all and cried in a loud voice that I would shoot the first man of them that offered to cross the gap. It was almost an error to do this, for Hoggett was pretty near being too quick for me. Just as I sank down again behind the boulder his musket flashed, and I heard the slug strike with a thud against the rock. I moved a little away to another place, and saw Hoggett making all haste to prime his weapon, while he

shouted to the others to rush forward with the bridge and fling it across the gap. At this Joshua Chick, who was the only man that ever stood up against Hoggett, cried in a fierce manner, "You come and lend a hand yourself," with an oath at the end; whereupon Hoggett, who did not want for courage, flings his musket down and, shoving Chick aside, takes his place at the bridge, and, roaring "Now!" the men forgot their fears, and raised a seamen's cheer, and with a mighty heave flung the bridge across the gap, having tied ropes to each end of it to prevent it from falling into the gulf if they missed their aim.

Now my mind was firmly made up that no man should cross the gap if I could help it, and recognizing that Hoggett was the men's leader, and that without him they would scarce attempt anything, I took steady aim at him, not intending to kill him, for I had another fate in store for him, but to hit the arm by which he held the bridge. I was by this time a pretty good marksman at a target, whether stationary or the running man, but the necessity of aiming down-hill clean put me out, so that instead of hitting Hoggett's arm, my arrow pierced the calf of his leg. He let forth a terrible curse, and, loosing his hold on the bridge, clapped his hand to his leg and pulled out the shaft, then sat down upon the ground and began to bind up the wound with a strip torn from his shirt. The moment of my hitting him was the same moment when the bridge was thrown across the gap, and I hoped that it would fall from the men's hands into the channel, but it had been well aimed and fell plumb on the ledge. However, when the men saw Hoggett wounded, and pretty badly, to judge by his language, they drew back, none of them caring to be the first to venture on the bridge and to encounter an arrow from above. Hoggett roared to them to go on, but every man looked at other to lead the way. He cried to Wabberley, but Wabberley was much in the rear; and then to Chick, but Chick was not on this occasion obliging; indeed, I observed him, being a small man, hiding himself from Hoggett's gaze behind Wabberley's more massive frame, and Wabberley trying in his turn to put Chick in front of him. This backwardness on the part of the men inflamed Hoggett to an excess of rage, and he swore that as soon as

he had bound up his leg he would cross that bridge and teach those young (here a very bad word) that he was not going to be played with no more.

While he was still tying up his wound Billy staggered up with the biggest basket slung over his back, filled with five or six jagged lumps of rock weighing, as I guessed, about a dozen pounds apiece. He was panting very much, but asked, "Where's Hoggett?" and when I told him in a word that the bridge was thrown across and Hoggett intending to invade us, he cried, "I'll show him!" and immediately slung the basket off his back, and seizing one of the stones, hurled it over the plateau to the bridge below, and when he did so I peeped through a crevice to see what was the issue. The missile struck the ledge about two yards from the end of the bridge, and then bounding off, fell into the gap, but we did not hear the splash as it entered the water, because the sea itself made a pretty loud noise as it raced through the narrow channel. The men shrank back when they saw the stone, fearing no doubt lest another should light on the head of some one, and they were less inclined than ever to pay heed to the words of Hoggett, who had roared himself perfectly hoarse. I told Billy what I had seen, and bade him try again, and the second stone he cast, heavier than the first, plunged into the gap without striking either the bridge or the ledge. Of course both these shots had been made pretty much by guesswork, Billy hurling them over without exposing himself, and only able to judge the general direction. When I told him the result of the second cast, he waited a moment or two, to recover breath and to wipe the sweat from his brow; and then he took up another big stone, and jumped to the very edge of the plateau, where there was no cover at all, and setting his teeth, put all his strength into the throw. The bridge was a pretty good target, being not less than three feet wide, and Billy's aim was so true that the stone hit the bridge not far from the further end, causing it to jump so much that it lay very awkwardly askew across the gap, threatening indeed to slip into the sea. At this Hoggett jumped up and rushed to the bridge to pull it back into its former place; but meanwhile I had taken another stone and, doing as Billy had done, flung it with

all my might, and it fell about the centre of the bridge, making it jump again just as Hoggett was stooping to clutch it. Billy was at my side instantly with another stone, and he aimed this time exactly at the further end of the bridge, purposing, as he told me, to hit this and Hoggett too, and he succeeded so well that the seaman, bold as he was, started back as the missile sprang up and almost struck his head. Before he could recover himself I had hurled another stone down, and I had the satisfaction of seeing this, falling a little sideways on the bridge, which was already shifted from its first position, shake the end of it clean off the cliff, and though Hoggett, braving all things, leapt forward and caught at the rope, he was too late; the bridge fell into the gap, and we heard quite plainly the splashing sound it made as it came to the bottom.

The Enemy Retreat

All this time the men had been looking on in a dazed and silly way, not one of them offering to help Hoggett to save the bridge they had been at such pains to make; indeed, the moment it fell into the chasm I observed Wabberley very gently slink away towards the wood. It was always a great cause of wonderment to me that this big wind-bag of a man was tolerated, let alone made a comrade of, by Hoggett, who was neither a coward nor a wind-bag, except when he was mouthing futile threats against me and Billy. But I have lived a good many years since then, and have seen other instances of the same sort. However, to keep to my story, the men stood for a little while, unable to say a word to the ravings of Hoggett, who, between the pain of his wound and the bitter disappointment at his rebuff, was as near frenzy as ever I saw a man; and then, seeing, I suppose, that nothing was to be gained by staying, they presently departed, Hoggett last of them all, walking very slowly and with a limp. I saw one or two of the men turn back to speak to him, but he waved his arms and roared at them, so that they very soon faced about and left him to himself; in some circumstances would-be sympathizers only aggravate a man's trouble. So Hoggett went, baffled and solitary, never turning aside until he came to the edge of the wood, and then the passion that he had been brooding

on broke all bounds, and he wheeled about suddenly, and shook his fist most vehemently at us, shouting words which in the distance I could not catch. I think we should have laughed at this exhibition of impotent wrath if he had done it before; but there was something, I know not what, strangely moving in the spectacle of this big rough man walking alone, unable to endure the speech, or even the presence, of his friends, and then at last overcome by the force of the feelings working within him. Neither Billy nor I spoke for a full minute after he had vanished into the wood, and then Billy struck a new note.

"Chick's skinnier than ever," says he.

"Wabberley isn't," I said.

"Not so far as you can see," says Billy; "but I warrant he is if you could see him with his clothes off. Them big men take a lot of thinning."

"You think they are hungry, then?" said I.

"I don't think; I'd take my davy on it," says he. "They've eat all our provender long ago, you may be sure, and all the pigs except our two, and it ain't the fish season, nor yet the bread-fruit; and if we wait here a bit longer they'll just be skellingtons, and all we shall have to do will be to bury 'em."

I smiled, for I did not think it would come to burying yet, and Billy asked me what there was to laugh at, for he would not care to demean himself by burying such rascals; and then I considered whether to tell him the further part of my plan, and decided to wait yet a little. I was in no more doubt than he was that the men were beginning to feel the pinch of want, which had urged them to their late desperate assault, they suspecting, I suppose, that we had full stores which we were hoarding from them. A week or two more, I thought, and my scheme, by the very flux of time, would be brought to maturity. Meanwhile I deemed it well to make another visit to the cavern to replenish our own stores,

and I saw with concern how low our stock was falling; indeed, if I had not seen by their haggard look that the men were already in straits, I should have been anxious about the possibility of us two holding out any longer than they.

Suppliants

It was about ten days, I think, after that business of the bridge, when one morning, an hour or two after daybreak, we heard a loud shout from the cliff opposite our rock. A hurricane had been blowing during the night, as bad as any we had had since we came to the island, and worse than any since the mariners came; and the wind had been set in that direction in which it gave that deep and melancholy organ-note from the mouth of the cave. It sprang up so suddenly that we had no warning of it, and could not sail to the cave; but very fortunately the north side of the rock was not exposed to the tempest, so that our canoe suffered no hurt. Billy and I had slept very little, being very much put about to keep ourselves dry; but when the fury of the storm abated towards morning, we fell asleep, and were awakened by the shout I have mentioned. Seizing our bows and arrows, we ran to the edge of the plateau, and peeping through a crevice in the rock we beheld Wabberley standing some little way from the brink of the cliff, and holding up a stick to which was tied a frayed and tattered shirt.

"A flag of truce, Billy," said I, and I am sure the tone of my voice must have betrayed my inward elation.

"No, it's Pumfrey's shirt, master," says Billy. "I know it by the blue spots. What's he stuck it on to the silly old stick for?"

"For a flag of truce," I repeated; "to show he's an envoy come to sue for terms of peace, perhaps."

"I don't know what them there words mean," says Billy, "but you look uncommon pleased about it, so I suppose it's all right. But I say, master, look;

there's the whole lot of them among the trees yonder. What's in the wind now?"

I told him that we should soon see. We had not yet shown ourselves, and Wabberley continued shouting, sometimes, "Ahoy!" sometimes my name, always prefixing the respectful appellation "master," and not calling me plain "Brent," as Hoggett had done. Since the main group of men were pretty near a furlong from us, and we were far above them, I thought we might safely show ourselves; whereupon we mounted the boulder, and the moment he saw us Wabberley waved his flag and came a pace or two nearer. Here I will set down, as near as I can remember them, the exact words of the conversation (if such it can be called) that ensued.

"What do you want?"

"Why, sir, d'ye see, we're terrible short of grub."

"Well?"

"Pretty near starved."

"Well?"

"Only scraps for the last three days."

"Yes?"

Here he paused, finding little encouragement in my monosyllables, and though he was usually glib enough, it was not easy, I dare say, to be eloquent when he had to shout so that his voice would reach to us so far above him. But he now assumed a most solemn and lugubrious expression of countenance, and cried—

"Dying fast!"

"What of that?"

"Can you do summat for us?"

"Do what?"

"Give us some grub."

"Why?"

"You wouldn't see your old shipmates starve!" (I wish I could convey with

my pen the accent of surprise, pain, reproach, which trembled in his voice.) "You wouldn't see your old shipmates starve!" says he.

"Why not?"

At this his jaw dropped: he was struck dumb; he stared up at us for a little, and then, lowering his flag, he turned and went slowly back to the wood.

"My eye! This is prime!" cried Billy, hugging himself with glee. "Why not?" says you, and he ain't got no answer, 'cause there ain't none, at least, not a good one. Speaking short's much better than squirting a lot of words about, like my mother-in-law does—or did, for she may be dead."

When Wabberley got back to his companions, I observed that there was some discussion among them, and by and by another man left them, carrying the flag, and I saw that this was Mr. Bodger. He came up as Wabberley had done, and asked very humbly if he might speak a word with me. I bade him say on, and he then told me, in more words than Wabberley had used, but with no more essential matter, that they had come to the end of their food, and without some assistance from us would in no long time starve to death. Now you may think that, Mr. Bodger being an officer, I ought to have yielded, at any rate so far as to take him into company with Billy and me; but I would not do this, because he was a weak man, who could only swim with the current, and I knew very well that if the seamen got the upper hand of us again, Mr. Bodger would not only do nothing to help us, but would consent to any indignity and oppression that might be put upon us. Accordingly, I gave him as short answers as I had given Wabberley, and when he began to whine and plead for himself I dismissed him very abruptly, and he turned away dejected. At this, the men who had been lurking among the trees swarmed out in a body, and rushed towards the edge of the cliff, and for a moment I thought they meditated another attack; but I saw that they were without arms, so I did not change my posture, but waited where I was until they came to the brink, and set up such a

clamour, all speaking at once, that I could not distinguish what any one said.

"Where's Hoggett?" says Billy, and I had already noticed that neither he nor Wabberley was now among them: indeed, I had not seen Hoggett at all since he went away with a wound in his leg. I observed that privation was telling heavily upon them, and I own I felt a touch of commiseration for Clums and one or two more of the better disposed among them; but I hardened my heart, for if my plan was to succeed I could not afford to show the least mark of weakness or complaisance. There being a great clamour, I say, I raised my hand and made a gesture for them to be silent, and then said that I would come down to the ledge and speak to them at closer quarters. Billy begged me not to do so, but I told him to hold bow and arrows ready in case he perceived any sign of treachery, and then walked down the shelf of rock until I came to the ledge and stood within about twenty feet of them. The hungry look in their eyes, now that I saw them close, was very dreadful to behold; but I stiffened my countenance to a great severity, and told them that there was no reason that I could see why I should not leave them to the fate they had brought on themselves. They had committed crimes, I said, for which they would assuredly have been hanged in any land where law and order reigned; and I reminded them of their base ingratitude when their very existence at that moment was owing to Billy and me. Then cutting my speech short, for it is ill work baiting folk in desperate misfortune, I merely added that I could not endure to see even such wretches as they were perishing with hunger, and that I was willing to help them, provided they would accept my conditions. At this their eyes lighted up with hope, and a babel of cries arose, all shouting assent, and I think I heard one voice say, "God bless you!" But commanding silence again I bade them not to be so ready with their assent until they had heard my terms, and I explained to them that they must needs change quarters with us, they abiding on the rock, whence they would have no means of escape, we returning to our proper abode on the island. I said further that I would provide them with a sufficiency of food, but that they must work for their living, and I ended: "These

are my terms; you can take them or leave them."

They were silent when I had finished speaking, and looked at one another with a mixture of doubt and wonder. Then Chick, whose eyes were at greater variance than ever, I suppose because he was so pulled down in his health by want—Chick steps forward and says, "But if we come on to this here rock you may leave us to starve," and another man joins in, "True, we shall be in a trap."

"You are right," I said. "You will be in a trap; you will have to trust me, and being villains and traitors yourselves, you find that a hard matter, I doubt not. Go away and talk it over. If you want to speak to me you can hail the rock; but let no man, I warn you, come armed from the wood, for he will certainly be shot."

And with that I left them, and went slowly up to rejoin Billy.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CREW ARE PERSUADED TO AN
INDUSTRIOUS AND ORDERLY MODE OF LIFE

I have never seen a face more woebegone than Billy's was when I came to his side, and there was a world of reproach in his eye. I told him the main drift of what had passed before. "I know," says he; "I heard it. What's the good?" "Why, my doubting Thomas," said I, "the good is this: that we shall have our island to ourselves again." "I take my davy we won't," says he. "If you let 'em come across that there gap they'll turn round on us as soon as there's enough of

'em, and then where are you?"

I told him that coming across the gap was out of the question, because we had destroyed their bridge, and I did not wish to wait while another was a-making. My purpose was to convey the men from the island to the rock in our canoe, not all together, but one by one, so that there would be no risk of their overpowering us. Billy was pleased to say that this was a pretty good notion, but he fell gloomy again in an instant, and when I asked him what other objection he had to make, he said, "You said as how the men would have to work for their keep, but how can they work on this old rock? Don't we know there ain't nothing to do? And if there was anything, they wouldn't do it, bless you, not unless you stood over 'em with a whip." I told him that in that case they would certainly get nothing to eat, and was proceeding to explain what I designed concerning their work when we heard a hail, and saw the men coming in a group from the wood. "Now don't you go for to be too kind, master," says Billy, as I went down to meet them. "They'll only think you're a silly ass." I smiled at him, and promised I would make a very stern taskmaster, and bade him again to be ready with his bow and arrows; and then I walked very leisurely down to the ledge, and asked the men whether they had come at any resolution.

"We have, sir," says Chick, as respectful as you please. "We've had a quorum" (Where did he get the word, I wonder?), "and what we says is this: you're a kind gentleman, and your good uncle afore ye, and——"

Here I called to him not to make a speech, but to say what he had to say in few words; and one or two of his mates roughly scolded him, and bade him come to the point; whereupon without more ado he told me that, relying on my promise to give them food, they were ready to accept my conditions and take up their abode on the rock.

"And Hoggett and Wabberley—what about them?" I said, having seen from

the first that these two were not among them. They looked from one to another as if reluctant to speak, and then Pumfrey said bluntly, "They won't come, sir," and when I asked why not, he said he didn't know; they only said they wouldn't, with a great deal of cursing and swearing.

"Very well," said I, "then you must make them come. Every one of you must come to the rock, Hoggett included. If he and Wabberley won't consent, you must overpower them and carry them to the rock like parcels."

Terms

They looked very munched at this, and I could see that they still held Hoggett in some dread. They began to talk in undertones among themselves, and thinking to quicken them I turned on my heel, telling them pleasantly to think it over. On this they broke forth into cries, beseeching me to let them come across at once, because they were so hungry; and when I said that I could permit none to come until every man of them was ready, Colam and one or two more of the boldest swore that they would not starve for the sake of Hoggett, and Chick vowed that he would make Wabberley see reason, or he would know the reason why. Whereupon, to encourage them, I said that I would give them a little provision as an earnest of my engagement; and calling up to Billy, I bade him bring down a little smoked pork and fish, as well as a quantity of bread-fruit. At this the men cheered with an unfeigned heartiness that I found infinitely moving, and they cheered again when Billy appeared, carrying very unwillingly, as I could see, the small quantity of provision I had ordered. And then those men must needs go about to ingratiate themselves with Billy, choosing the wrong way, as ignorant and foolish folk often will. "That's never little Billy Bobbin!" says one. "How he's growed, to be sure!" says another. "Fancy little Billy turning into such a fine figure of a man!" says a third; and all the time I think they hardly knew what they said, their eyes being fixed on the things he carried. Billy's round face became as red as a lobster when it is boiled, and his eyes flashed fire, and for a moment I thought he was

going to fling his burdens over the ledge into the sea; but he put a curb upon himself and brought the things to me, and then, as though no longer afraid of doing hurt to my property, he stood at the very brink of the ledge and cried, "Yes, I'm Billy Bobbin, and I've growed, and I won't have my master put upon; and if I ain't as handsome as Pumfrey, I ain't got a squint like Chick—and this is our grub what we smoked and such with our very own hands, and you ought to go down on your bended knees and say grace for it, and for what you are going to receive——"

I interrupted Billy at this point, being quite amazed at his outburst, the like of which I had not seen since we fought about that matter of the three-legged stool. "Nobody could make them thieving villains truly thankful," he said under his breath, and when I bade him throw the food across the gap among the men, he did it with a certain viciousness at first, and chuckled when a piece of salt fish struck Pumfrey in the face. But he became sober the moment he saw with what eagerness the poor wretches picked up the food, and as they began to hasten away with it to their fire, and some even to eat the dried meat raw, he offered them much useful instruction in the best way of cooking it, especially the bread-fruit. Before the men went, I told them to convey their muskets and what ammunition was left down to the lava beach, and lay them ten yards above high-water mark, promising to come and fetch them. And I added, in the solemnest tones I was master of, that if a man of them was to be seen on the beach when I came there, a little after midday, I would withdraw my offer, and of that I gave them fair warning. Billy was much more easy in mind now, and said he thought there might be something in my plan; indeed, he was eager to set off almost at once, without waiting for the time I had appointed. However, I managed to persuade him to wait until we had eaten our dinner, and then we launched the canoe, and in due time sailed round the island to the lava beach. There was no one to be seen, except one man whom we spied disappearing into the woods as we arrived; but on the beach above high-water mark, as I had said, the muskets were laid neatly in a row, the powder-horns

with them. We paddled in until the water was shallow, not designing to beach the canoe, and then Billy leapt overboard and ran up the beach, I meanwhile handling my bow to show that he was covered. He returned with four muskets, and told me that there were four more to bring, so that one was missing, there having been nine when the men came to the island. As soon as all the muskets, together with the powder-horns and bullet-pouches, were stowed in the canoe, I set up a loud halloo, at which the men started out of the wood in which they had been, I doubt not, watching us, and came towards us, and when they were near enough I cried to them that the muskets were one short, and asked whose it was, to which the answer, as I expected, was that it was Hoggett's. Then I asked where Hoggett was, and they told me he had barricadoed himself in the hut, and refused to give up the musket. I asked about Wabberley.

"Here I be, Mr. Brent, sir," says the man himself, coming from the rear of the group; "and right down glad I am, d'ye see, sir, to know as how you be a-going to feed us proper. Ah! how I do remember your good uncle, and the dear lady your aunt——"

Hoggett is Obstinate

I could not endure this, both Chick and Wabberley in one day stirring up memories of the home I should never see more, so I peremptorily commanded him to cease, and said that as he was Hoggett's particular friend he had better employ his eloquence in persuading Hoggett to give up his musket with the rest. I told him that a bargain was a bargain, and as the bargain was that all the muskets were to be delivered, the men would receive only half rations until the full tale was made up. This incensed them very much against Hoggett, and they were in the mind to deal very hardly with him had he been in their power; but one of the men said that he still had a very meagre supply of food in the hut, which could not be eked out beyond a day or two; whereupon I determined to wait, knowing that the men would be eager enough to bring Hoggett to terms so long as they were kept on short commons. I told them to come to the rock

before night for another meal, and then we set off in the canoe, and conveyed the muskets to the cave in the cliff, and left them at the entrance of the tunnel, after that returning to the Red Rock.

We spent the next two days in carrying back to our storehouse a certain part of our provisions, leaving on the rock no more than would suffice the men for a single week. We took back also our pigs, which we left at the entrance of the tunnel, thinking that a few hours of darkness would not hurt them. These comings and goings were watched very curiously by the men, who would have liked to know where we went after we passed from their sight beneath the cliff; indeed, afterwards they put questions to Billy, who, however, would never give them the least particle of satisfaction on that matter. Each day we gave them two meals, and the knowledge that it was Hoggett who prevented them from enjoying plenty made them exceeding bitter against him. But they told me that he was deaf to all their entreaties, and kept himself close shut in the hut, only cursing when they spoke to him, and threatening to blow out the brains of any man that offered to molest him. However, on the third day, in the morning, one of the men came to the ledge all breathless, having run all the way from the hut to be the first to tell me that Hoggett had yielded, being, in fact, very weak and ill from his privations. Soon after, the others came up with his musket, and then one of them asked me, in name of them all, whether I would not come to the island and rule over them there, promising to obey me faithfully in all points. When this was being said, I saw Billy looking at me with great anxiety, lest this offer of a kingdom (which was already my own) should seduce me from my purpose; but there was no need for him to fear, because I knew the fickle and unscrupulous nature of these mariners, and that they could never be trusted until they should be subdued by the wholesome discipline of work. Accordingly I refused this petition, announcing that on the next morning, soon after daybreak, I would begin the transport of them to the rock, bidding them come one by one unarmed to the sandy beach, to be taken off in the canoe. I think if they had known what a bare, inhospitable abode they were coming to they

might have made some demur; but they said nothing, and agreed to do exactly as I commanded.

The Rock Prison

Next morning we began this work, Billy and I, taking the men one at a time into the canoe, after we had searched them, and conveying them to the rock as quickly as might be, Billy paddling, while I stood over our passenger with a loaded musket. Having landed him I bade him make his way to the top, and then we went back for another. When we had carried eight of them in this way, I saw that we should not come to an end of it before night unless we took more than one at a time, for the going to and fro was near an hour's work, and very fatiguing; so I determined to take two men, having proceeded so far without any sign of resistance. By the time we came to the rock with the ninth and tenth men, there was a little assemblage on the plateau, and when we were paddling back I saw that Pumfrey and Chick had found their way to the ledge, and they shouted after us, and though we could not hear their words, Billy said he was sure they were crying to be taken off again. Indeed, when we arrived with the next two men, we found that Chick and Pumfrey, in defiance of my order that none of those we had landed should return to the landing-place, had come down and were awaiting us, and as we came near, Chick asked with a great deal of indignation whether I supposed that true-born Englishmen, and able seamen besides, were going to bide up in that God-forsaken place. I reminded him of the bargain, and, holding off from the rock, asked him whether he wished all his mates to starve, as they certainly would do unless he mounted to the plateau and stayed there, for I would not land another man, nor give them any more food, until he had gone. At this, one of the men in the canoe told Chick not to be a fool, but to do as I bid him, and Chick cried that it was all very well, but *he* had not seen the place. However, he went away, very unwillingly, with Pumfrey, and we had no more trouble of that sort.

We brought Hoggett away last of all, and alone. He looked very ill, and said

never a word to us, but I could see that he was inwardly a very furnace of wrath. Billy had said to me, as we went to fetch him, "Mind you shoot him, master, if he tries any tricks," and I was very carefully on my guard and did not feel at all easy in my mind until I saw him safely landed. I lately saw a lion-tamer performing tricks with lions in a cage, and as I watched, my thoughts went back many years to this day of our life on Palm Tree Island, and I fancied that the tamer must feel pretty much as I felt when we had Hoggett in the canoe—as if the wild beast might at any moment break loose.

Sheep and Goats

Having thus conveyed all the men to the rock, we returned to the island, and laid up the canoe just as it was falling dark, being pretty tired, especially Billy, for though I had taken a turn at paddling he would not let me do much, saying that he knew he would be a bad hand with a musket, and might shoot me instead of the men if one of them proved mutinous. We went up very eagerly to our hut, feeling like wanderers returning home, Little John frisking and barking about us in as great a delight as we ourselves. But our mirth was turned to melancholy when we came to the hut, for it was in such a dreadful state that we could not endure the thought of passing the night in it, and so we dragged our weary limbs back to the canoe, and slept there, supperless, for the men had not kept the fire in, and we had nothing with us which we could eat raw. Our sleep lasted until pretty late the next morning, and then, having kindled the fire and cooked our breakfast, we sat talking of the remaining part of my scheme. Billy's face beamed when I showed him how I meant to make the men work for their living, and for once he did not ask, "What's the good?" but declared he couldn't have thought of anything better himself.

I had a pretty good notion of the characters of the men individually, having been for upwards of a year on board ship with them; and Billy knew them even better than I did, because of his nearness to them in the fore-castle. A ship is a little world, and there, as in the great world, there are good and bad, and some

that are neither good nor bad, for there are a good many colours, as you may say, betwixt white and black. The crew of the *Lovey Susan*, to be sure, was made up rather of evil-disposed than of well-disposed, for it was recruited by Wabberley and Chick, as I said at the beginning of my story, and you know what I thought of them. The better sort among them being few, could not prevail against the many, and especially against a man like Hoggett, who was so exceeding strong and masterful. Now it was a part of my scheme to sunder the sheep from the goats, if I may say so; and they being all on the rock I could do this, I hoped, without seeming to make any distinction among them, at any rate at first. For when I spoke of their working for their living, I did not have the rock in mind as the scene of their labours, but the island. To feed so many, we should need to enlarge our plantation, and this would mean work; and I had already thought, with leaping heart, of another task we might put in hand when I had brought the men to a proper humbleness and docility. But since there would not be at first enough work for all of them, nor indeed would it be safe to employ them all, I had resolved to begin with the least wicked of them. As we sat at breakfast, therefore, Billy and I conned over their names, passing judgment on them, as it were.

"What about Clums?" I said.

"He's a fat fool," says Billy, "but there ain't no harm in him, away from Hoggett. But he can't do anything but cook, and I can cook as well as him now."

"Well, he must learn to do other things," I said. "And Jordan?"

"Not by no means," says Billy. "He speaks you pretty fair, but he's a sly wretch, the sort of man to pick your grub when you warn't looking."

"What do you say to Hoskin, then?" I asked.

"Why, I don't think much of Hoskin," says he; "but I'll say this for him, that he's about the only man of 'em that didn't kick and cuff me, though he looked on when the others did. But what about Mr. Bodger?"

I said that I thought Mr. Bodger a weak and cowardly fellow, who would probably deem himself very much ill-used if set to work, and I was determined to have none idle on the island, while if he were put over the others, they would flout him and might grow mutinous again. Well, after considering the men one by one, we resolved to bring Clums and Hoskin first to the island, and Billy said, anticipating me, that their first job must be the cleansing of our hut, which in its present state was not fit for a pig to live in. This put me in mind of our two pigs in the cave, and as soon as we had finished our breakfast we paddled to the cave and brought them away, though when we took them to the sty we found that it was not a secure place at present, those lazy wretches having actually broken up a great part of the fence, I suppose for firewood. "That's the second job," says Billy, "to mend the fence." We then made our way to the cliff opposite Red Rock, so that we could speak to the men, for we could scarce make our voices heard at so great a height if we sailed to the foot of the rock in our canoe; and having hailed them, I said that Clums and Hoskin were to come to the landing-place and we would fetch them to make a beginning in working for their living. Pumfrey asked whether he couldn't come too, which I took to be a very good sign; but I replied that his turn would come another day.

The two men came with us very readily, and on the way Clums said he would cook us the best dinner we had had for years, upon which Billy winked at me, making such a comical grimace that I could not help laughing. Clums was taken aback when he learnt what task had been assigned to him, but he was a cheerful soul, and said that as Billy had cleaned his pans for him a good many times on the *Lovey Susan* he supposed it was only fair that he should clean up the floor for Billy and me, though he thought it ought by rights to be done by Hoggett and Wabberley. It took them pretty nearly all day to make the hut thoroughly tidy and shipshape, and when they were looking rather rueful

at the thought of being taken back to the rock for the night, I pleased them mightily by giving them the small hut to sleep in. As for Billy and me, we took up our quarters in our old place, having as a precaution brought in the drawbridge and barricadoed the door; and we had Little John with us to give warning of any attempt to break in, which indeed I thought unlikely, for I did not see what they could gain by it.

I thought we would wait one more day before we brought over any more men, so we gave the two next morning the job of cleaning the outbuildings and beginning the repair of the fences. They wrought willingly enough, though clumsily, not being used to this kind of work: accordingly on the third day we fetched Pumfrey and another man, whose name I forget, and while the first two were still working on the repairs, we set the others to dig the yam plantation, to make ready for the new crop. We deemed it well thus to keep the four men in two parties until we were sure of them.

On the fourth day, when we sailed to the rock to bring two more men, we found the whole company assembled on the ledge, and they raised a great clamour, from which we made out by and by that all their food was gone. I had left what I thought would be enough for a full week, and so it would have been if they had portioned it out with any prudence. When we brought them another supply I said they would have to manage better, and one of them said that so they would if we took them to the island and gave them some work to do, for on the rock there was nothing else to do but feed. There was so much reason in this that I forbore to upbraid them any more; but I appointed the man who had spoken a kind of commissary to dole out the provisions, and told the other men that if there were any disputes the quarrelsome would be the last to be taken to the island. It being now late, we took no more men that day, but two the next, and these were all whom we had any reason to believe were the sheep.

It would make too long a story to tell of all the little happenings of the next

weeks. From the first we gave the men to understand that they would go back to the rock and take turn with others, at our pleasure, whether they went or not depending on themselves. They proved to be reasonable, performing the tasks set them without grumbling, and indeed they confessed that they were very glad to have something to do and good food to eat after their miserable life under Hoggett's rule. We soon put Clums to his proper work of cooking, he having no skill in anything else, and he was always amazed at the never-failing supply of provisions which Billy and I brought in our canoe, not having revealed to any one the secret of our storehouse. Our fowls, as I have said, were all dispersed, except those that the men had eaten, but we got some of them back in our old way of liming the trees, and so had the beginning of a poultry-run again; and when the men had repaired the pig-sty and made a new fowl-house, and dug up the ground for the yams, there was very little left to employ them, so I set them to fell trees for building another and more commodious house, which would hold them all when my scheme had perfectly ripened. And when, after a week or two, I found everything going on as well as I could wish, I determined to bring over the goats, who had learnt by conversations across the gap what we were doing, and were, many of them, exceeding desirous of enjoying the same liberty as their comrades, even though they had to work. Accordingly I got the men to make a bridge like that which we had destroyed, and when this was flung across the gap, we brought two of the men across, with Mr. Bodger, who, as I supposed, was mightily indignant at being left among the worst of the crew. I told him very frankly what my reasons were, and he immediately said that if I thought so ill of him he would waive all privileges as an officer, and work as a common seaman until I was satisfied with him. I was so much surprised at this, never supposing him to have any spirit at all, that I thought fit to put him to his trial as an officer, and giving him a musket, made him overseer of the men who were felling and preparing trees. I soon saw that the position of authority, and the means to enforce it, wrought a change in him, and though he was never a strong man, and would never have been able to exercise command if left quite to himself, yet he became a satisfactory lieutenant, and I

never had cause to repent trusting him.

The Uses of Adversity

Hoggett and Wabberley and Chick were the last of the men to be brought to the island. I overheard some of the men grumbling at this one day, saying that these three were living a lazy life, doing nothing for their keep, while the rest were working hard. But Clums silenced the grumblers; calling them fools with a seaman's bluntness, asking them whether they didn't owe all their miseries to those three, and bursting into tears when he spoke of a little girl he had at home, and said that but for the mutiny they might all be living happy at Wapping or Deptford by now. I felt a lump come into my throat when the man talked of home, and Billy, who was with me, said he wouldn't mind having a look at his old dad, especially as he thought he would no longer be afraid of his mother-in-law, as he always called his step-mother. Clums, I say, said that the longer Hoggett and the other two were kept on the rock the better, but I thought they should have their chance with the rest; accordingly one day I went up myself, with Billy, to the ledge and called for them. Hoggett and Wabberley refused point-blank to come, but Chick said he was ready to oblige, and we took him over, telling the other two that they would be put on half rations until they came to a better mind. This very soon had its effect on Wabberley, to whom his creature comforts were everything; and even Hoggett yielded in a day or two, and came over with the rest in the morning. I had forgot to say that we did not allow the men we called the goats to remain on the island overnight, but marched them back to the rock when their day's work was done, this partly because we did not trust them, and partly because there was no room for them to live decently until the new house was built. I may say here that we never did permit Hoggett and the other two to reside on the island. Wabberley was incorrigibly lazy, and did as little work as he could; Hoggett always sullen, and once or twice he flung down his tools and refused to work any more, and kept his word until he was brought to his senses by having his food cut off. As for Chick, he was extremely obliging, and did all he could to persuade me to let

him remain on the island, and admit him to the select company of the sheep; but I did not trust him, and with reason, for Clums told Billy that when they were working Chick would often revile us in the bitterest way, and say that he and Hoggett would get even with us some time or other.

The new house was finished in about two months, and then we brought all the men to live on the island except the three I have mentioned. The bread-fruit season was now come, so that we had plenty of food, and the men made great vats in the ground for the storage of the pulp, being still ignorant of the storehouse beneath our hut. When other work failed, I set them to make more pots and pans, and bows and arrows, and we had many shooting contests at our running man, though there were half-a-dozen of the men whom I would never permit to handle a weapon of any kind until close observation assured me that they were to be trusted. We also went on fishing expeditions, and smoked a great quantity of the fish we caught, and purposed to do the same with our pigs as soon as they should increase. In order that we might enlarge still more our reserve of food, I caused some new plantations of cocoa-nut palms to be made at different parts of the island. There was no need for planting when Billy and I were alone, because the trees bore enough fruit for our use; nor was there any need for planting the bread-fruit tree, because this had a remarkable way of propagating itself on all sides by shoots that sprang from the roots; but I had seen that several of the cocoa-nut palms had lately died, from what cause I never knew, for they seemed to be uninjured,^[1] and I did not know but that a similar blight might fall on the bread-fruit trees also; and so I planted cocoa-nuts to provide against a possible failure of the bread-fruit.

A Little History

Thus I found myself at the head of a very thriving community. Our active and open-air life kept us in good health, and the little diversions which we mingled with our work—shooting and fishing, quoits and skittles and Aunt Sally, performed with rough things of our own making—these helped to keep

us cheerful, and we had no troubles beyond the storms and cyclones, no savages appearing to molest us, and Old Smoker never showing more than a light crown of vapour, and sometimes not even that. Billy and I lived alone in our hut, with Little John, and we were, I am sure, happier than we were before the men came, for we had more to think about and a great deal more to do. Billy said once that I was now a king indeed, and asked whether I wouldn't like a crown, though it would be made of leaves, there being no metal to be had. I told him that I was quite content as I was, and besides, if I was to be a king I must have a title, and I thought Harry must be an ill-starred name, for Harry the First was the king that never smiled again, and Harry the last (that is, the Eighth) was not a very estimable character; and then Billy must needs hear all I remembered about those monarchs, and when I spoke of the six wives he looked very serious, and remained very quiet and thoughtful for a long time. I asked him what he was thinking about, and he said, "Why, a king ain't much good without a queen, and it's no good being Harry the First (which you would be, this being a new kingdom) if there ain't no chance of Harry the Second, or perhaps Billy the First, to come after. But there, you wouldn't like a wife same as my mother-in-law, so it's all one."

[1] Probably from the depredations of the *phasma*, or spectre insect, a deadly foe to cocoa-nuts.—H.S.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

OF OUR DEPARTURE FROM PALM TREE ISLAND; OF THOSE WHO

For several days after this conversation I observed that Billy was not near so cheerful as he was wont to be, and when I spoke to him about it, and asked what ailed him, he returned me only evasive answers. One night when we were abed, but not asleep, he sighed so often and so heavily that I said I would and must know what was the matter, and then he surprised me beyond measure by saying, in a sort of mumble, "I'm only thinking of my little girl." I thought his wits were wandering, but I asked him, "What little girl?" and he said, "Her name's Elizabeth Jane." I asked him what on earth he meant, and then, unbosoming himself, he told me that Clums' mention of *his* little girl, and our talk about Henry the Eighth's wives, had set him thinking of a little girl he used to play with at home, when his own mother was alive—a neighbour's child, who used to come into the smithy at all hours, and whom his father used to call "Billy's little sweetheart."

"Of course she wasn't," says Billy, "not real, 'cause I was only eight or nine and she less; but them things we was talking about made me think of her, and I thought she was growed up now, same as me, and I wondered if she was hanging on a fellow's arm like I used to see 'em in Limehouse Walk, and it made me want to punch his head; and then I thought I want to go home, and can't, and I'm that wretched I can't abear myself."



OUR LAMP

Here was a pretty posture to be in! I was vastly amused, never having been so taken myself, at the thought of Billy in love with a child he had not seen for perhaps a dozen years, for he told me that she never came to the house after his mother died, and had gone to live elsewhere; but I did not laugh, and Billy could not see me smiling, and I said quietly, "Well, and why shouldn't we go home?" He gave a shout that set Little John barking, and bounced out of bed, and struck a light, kindling a little lamp we had made of half a cocoa-nut filled with its own oil, and some twisted threads for a wick, which gave a good light and had no offensive smell like our torches of candle-nuts. And then he sat down on his stool by my bed, and looked me in the eyes, and I saw his eyes shining like coals when he asked me what I meant. I said to him that there was now a goodly company of us, and what two boys could hardly do alone might be done by such a number, and that was, to make a vessel big enough to hold us all, and sound enough to venture ourselves upon the deep. Billy was enraptured with the notion, and instead of raising difficulties, as he usually did when I broached a new project, he refused to see those that I myself mentioned, such as our want of instruments and charts, and the danger of storms, and the danger of falling in with cannibals, and so forth. These considerations did not trouble him in the least; but one thing did, and that was the question whether the men would be willing to undertake the long and arduous preparation that would be necessary. But I bade him leave that to me, and he went back to bed much happier, and slept very sound.

Planning a Voyage

Next day I put the matter to the men, and they were one and all exceeding favourable to it. Their life was pretty easy now, for there was not much work to do; but I saw that lack of work did not make for happiness, and indeed Pumfrey said plainly that he would willingly exchange his present life for what he had formerly called his dog's life on board ship, for there was more variety in that, and spells ashore, not to speak of rum and tobacco. So I found them all ready to start work at once, the only thing that daunted them being their ignorance, for there was not a shipwright among them, and Pumfrey, the ship's carpenter, said he might mend a ship, but couldn't make one. However, I told them that we would not try to build a vessel with planks, but would make a larger canoe after the model of the *Fair Hope*, which we had found to be perfectly seaworthy and suitable for the navigation of those seas. Mr. Bodger shook his head and declared that no vessel of that shape would ever reach the old country, but I pointed out that there were many lands nearer than England, some of them in the possession of our own people, and if we could strike any of the trade routes we should certainly fall in with a vessel, and then our troubles would be over. "S'pose she's a Frenchman?" says Clums. I asked "What then?" for France and England were at peace when we sailed from the Thames, and I had no patience with the folk who looked on every foreigner as a dragon or a monster, and I said so. "That's all true enough, sir, I dare say," says Clums, "but there's the frogs, d'y'e see?" and I found that he looked at it from the cook's point of view, and did not relish the idea of preparing, much less eating, the articles of French fare. But though these little objections were raised, there was a common readiness to set to work, and we went out immediately into the woods to find a tree suited to our needs.

The New Vessel

We soon found a giant, perfectly straight and sound, and we made

preparations to fell it forthwith. Billy explained to the men our manner of using fire, which pleased them very much, and some of them having good steel axes, it took not so long to fell this great tree as it had taken to fell the one for our canoe. The tree being situated at some distance from the edge of the cliff, I was for a time puzzled how to transport it, as I had been before, for I thought it hazardous to roll a tree of such great weight over the cliff to the beach below. But when we had moved it to the edge over rollers, one of the men proposed that we should lower it by means of ropes, which we did, suspending the trunk to half-a-dozen trees that grew close together there, and paying out the ropes until the great burden was let down to a spot whence it might roll the rest of the way without hurt. Having thus got the trunk safely to the foot of the cliffs, we hollowed it out with fire and axes, as Billy and I had done before, and while some were at this work the rest prepared a mast and spars, and also a large outrigger; and all toiled with such a good will, having the prospect of deliverance before them, that the vessel was fully equipped and ready for sea in about four months, as I guessed, from the day we began work on her. I did not think of painting her, remembering the prodigious labour the *Fair Hope* had cost us in that particular; but when some of the men said that a good coat of paint would make her more seaworthy, we resolved to do it, and for many days we did nothing but express oil out of nuts and mix with it the sap of the redwood tree; and I laughed to see what strange objects some of the men made of themselves, for they would raise their hands to their brows to wipe off the sweat, the weather being warm, and left great streaks of red behind; and it came into my head that the savages' custom of painting themselves might have begun in just such a way.

When the vessel was painted there was still the naming of her, and this matter came up one evening when we were having our supper on the open ground near our hut, for we usually had our supper with the men in a pleasant family manner—Hoggett and Wabberley and Chick having been taken back to the rock. When I asked what we were to call her, before any one else could

speaking Billy blurted out "Elizabeth Jane," and you never heard such a shout of laughter as then rang through the air, for Billy was so ready, and his face turned such a fiery hue the moment he had spoken, that the men "smoked" him, as the saying is, and they twitted him (being on very friendly terms with him now) on the lass he had left behind him, and when he explained, very sheepishly, that she was no more than eight years old when he saw her last they shouted again, and told him that she certainly wouldn't know him now, with his whiskers coming thick, and did he think she would wait for him when there were properer men about? Billy took it all with surprising good temper, and I found out afterwards that he and Clums had become very close friends, and Clums told him that if he could not find Elizabeth Jane, or if she was already wed, he would present him to his own daughter Georgiana, called after the king, and a winsome lass, said Clums, and just husband high.

We named the vessel *Elizabeth Jane*, and launched her, not by that device of the windlass we had used for the *Fair Hope*, but making a slipway of rollers, over which the men tugged her with ropes. Then we sailed her on a first trip round the island, by which we learnt what little changes were necessary in the outrigger to keep her steady. She behaved exceeding well, and the seamen were mighty pleased with her, and began in wondrous good spirits the preparation for the great voyage we purposed making. They were greatly disappointed when I told them that we should have to wait a good time yet, until the season of storms and unsettled weather passed; but we had plenty to occupy us in the meantime, for there was pork and fish to salt and cure, and breadfruit to be prepared, for we did not know how long our voyage might last, and I was in some dread lest our vessel would not have stowage room for all the food I thought it necessary to take. We had to make also water-pots of a special shape, so that they would lie snugly in the bottom of the vessel, and we made hurdles to cover them, so that they should not be broken. This matter of water gave me much concern, and I resolved to fit up the *Fair Hope* as a victualler, to follow our larger vessel, as such vessels do the warships: we

found that she had room enough for a good many water-pots and a great quantity of cocoa-nuts beside, the juice of which was both agreeable and wholesome, if we did not drink it at night. We fitted up on each vessel a light hoarding made of thin poles let into the gunwale, and carrying a canopy of bread-bark cloth, which would not only defend us from the sun's rays, but help to save the fresh water from evaporating. During the period of waiting, moreover, the men made a good number of new arrows and spears, and diligently practised themselves in their use. We kept the muskets in good order, but there being scarcely any powder and shot left we could not place much reliance on them if we should have to fight, which I hoped very sincerely would not be the case.

Retribution

One thing I had resolutely determined on, and that was that Hoggett and Wabberley and Chick should not accompany us. The two last I owed a special grudge against, because it was they who had led my poor uncle on to undertake his expedition, when they were all the time meditating the treachery which they put in act when the opportunity came. And as for Hoggett, he had built, so to speak, very well on their foundations, and had been the controlling force in the mutiny and all that happened after. Moreover, these three were the only men who did their work on the island sullenly and unwillingly, for Chick's obligingness was merely put on as a cloak. Though I had said nothing to make them suppose they would be left on the island, so that they had as great an incentive to further our preparations as any man, they did not in the least change their usual behaviour, but performed all the tasks set them ungraciously and with a grudge.

They were marched to the Red Rock every night at sunset, and this had become so much a part of the order of things that they did not show any surprise when it was done on the very night before we were to set sail. I had said no word of my resolution to anybody as yet, but that night I told it to Billy,

and he was greatly delighted, saying that the only thing he feared in the voyage was the presence of Hoggett. I told him that if we could have kept the men prisoners I might have relented towards them, but since that was impossible, I feared that if they were let loose among the crew their bad influence would ruin any chance of success we might have.

Accordingly, when they were brought over next morning, expecting to be given places in the *Elizabeth Jane*, I had a parade of all the men before me, and told these three plainly that they were to be left behind. Hoggett went white to the lips, but said never a word, whereas Wabberley and Chick whined and whimpered and behaved like the sorry curs they were. They pled with me with the most abject entreaties and promises, uttering the most piteous complaints of the horrors of solitude, and so forth; whereupon I pointed out to them that they were in infinitely better case than they had left us on the first day we came to the island, having a house to live in, and arms and tools, as well as animals and well-grown plantations. I told them that after their many wickednesses they might be thankful that their lives were spared. Finally I showed them, to the great amazement of all, the shaft below the hut, and explained our device for getting water from the lake, and the uses to which we put the cavern beneath, and told them also of the passage to the shore; and then I thought Hoggett would die of rage and mortification, especially when he saw Clums and the rest looking at him with a kind of mocking pity. He broke through his silence now, and poured out upon me such a torrent of invective and curses as I have never heard before or since, foaming at the mouth in a manner that was horrible to see. Then all of a sudden he ceased, as though his words were choking him, and throwing upon me one last look full of hate and malevolence he went away by himself, and I never saw him again.

We then embarked on the *Elizabeth Jane*, taking Little John with us. Wabberley and Chick stood on the beach, very dejected, when we launched the vessel, no doubt hoping to the last that I would relent. They remained there until they looked but tiny specks, and we were far away on the ocean. My

heart was very full as I watched the island diminishing in the distance, and thought of the years we had spent there, and of all our trials and blessings, the latter outnumbering the former, by the grace of God. Billy was very silent, telling me afterwards that it gave him a queer feeling inside, to leave the island which had been a proper home. We set our course due west, as near as we could judge, and avoiding the island at which we had been so inhospitably received, we made for a small group somewhat to the north, where Mr. Bodger told me the men had settled for a time as mercenaries of the native people. We put in at one of the islands, the people running away at our approach, and filled up our water-vessels, and also laid in a small stock of fresh cocoa-nuts, as well as fowls and other things, in the room of those we had consumed. During their stay on the island some of the men had picked up a smattering of the language of the people, and they now confirmed, when the natives took courage and came back, what they had before understood, that there was another group of islands two days' paddling to the west. With the aid of a favouring breeze on our quarter we came to these islands in a day and a half, and ran for the outermost of the group, so as to be nearest to the open sea if any attack were made upon us. But here we were received in friendly wise, and we were fortunate again in getting news of another group still farther to the west. However, when we got to this, after two or three days' sail, we found that the people spoke a tongue which none of our men understood, so that though we tried in every possible manner to learn from them how we should sail to come to other islands, we failed utterly, and saw ourselves forced to put to sea again, having taken in fresh food and water, without any guidance whatever. There we were, then, afloat on the wide ocean, without chart or compass, the sport of chance, as some might think; but when I looked up to the sky in the stillness of night, and thought that the birds have no chart or compass, and not one so much as falls to the ground but God knows, I felt perfectly contented and easy in mind, believing that we should some day arrive at the haven where we would be.

It being very necessary that we should make land before our food and water were all spent, the men took turns at the paddles, even while the wind held, so that we should proceed with all possible speed. We were five days without sighting land, and our water was all consumed when at last we came to an island; but we could not land, because a great multitude of savages in war-paint came to the shore brandishing clubs and spears, and we had to wait till night, and then some of the men went with me in the *Fair Hope* to another part of the coast, and landing there unseen, we were able to fill our vessels. I will not tell all the incidents of that voyage, even if I could remember them; but I may tell of one time, when we were chased by a fleet of war-canoes, and should most certainly have been caught, only when the first of the pursuing craft was but a biscuit's throw away, I fired a musket shot, which terrified them so much that they turned their prows and fled away shrieking.

After several weeks, the weather having been fair all the time, we were caught by a storm in mid-ocean, out of sight of any land, and then for the first time my heart sank, and I feared we should go to the bottom. We had little rigging to make us top-heavy, and we managed to get that down before the blast took us; but the waves swept over us with such force that we had much ado to prevent ourselves from being washed out, and had no thought of anything except to cling to the thwarts, and, when each wave had passed, to bale for our lives. The rope by which we towed the *Fair Hope* was snapped, and she was carried away, and no doubt before long submerged. In the merciful providence of God the storm was quickly over, but then our case was dreadful in the extreme, for all our provisions were ruined or else swept overboard, and the most of our paddles were gone. To make matters worse, the wind dropped, and we had nothing but light airs that scarcely moved the vessel a yard a minute. For two days and nights we lay thus, the wide waste of water all about us, the hot sun above, and neither land nor ship in sight. On the

first day not a man of us ate, and at night we sought to moisten our parched lips by sucking the dew from our shirts; but on the second day some of the men gnawed the sodden fish and flesh that remained, which did but increase their thirst, so that in the night they began to rave, and in the morning Pumfrey and Hoskin were dead. We committed their bodies to the deep with great awe and trembling, none knowing but he might be the next. But not long after a strong breeze sprang up in the east, and carried our vessel along at so round a pace that hope revived in our sad hearts, and Billy mounted the gunwale and, clinging to the supports of the canopy I have mentioned, he looked out eagerly for land. When he saw none after a while he came down again, feeling very weak and dizzy, and had not the heart or the strength to try again, and so we sped on almost blindly, having just care enough to keep the vessel's head to the west. And then, when we were again on the point of despairing, some one cried that he saw land ahead, and when I looked, I saw a long dark shape upon the water, above which a huge bank of clouds seemed to rest. We fixed our longing eyes thereon, and as we drew nearer the clouds broke slowly apart, and we saw the sides of stupendous mountains, ten times as lofty as the mountain on Palm Tree Island, even in the part we saw, for their tops were wrapped in mist. It was many hours, I am sure, before we drew near to the coast, which we saw was very precipitous, so that we despaired of finding a safe landing; but we steered north, skirting it, and came by and by to a part where the cliffs fell away, and there, being perfectly reckless now, for we could but die, we drove our vessel ashore, and it struck on a ridge of rock very like the lava beach of Palm Tree Island. By great good fortune there was no depth of water on it, and we were able to wade ashore, which we reached more dead than alive.

When we had rested somewhat we looked about for food, the inland parts being very well wooded, and we were inexpressibly thankful when we found both bread-fruit and bananas, and cocoa-nuts too, of which we made a meal, some eating so ravenously that they were very ill, and I feared Billy would die.

But he and the others recovered, to my great joy, and we camped there, and slept so heavily that if any savages had come upon us we should have been killed without being able to lift a hand to defend ourselves. However, we saw no savages during the week we stayed there, and at the end of that time, being marvellously refreshed and invigorated, we towed our vessel off the ridge (she had suffered no hurt, the sea being calm) with ropes, some we had with us, and others we made with creepers, swimming out into the sea with them. Then we plaited baskets, and carried in them as much food as we could load into the vessel, and once more set sail.

We found that our passage westward was barred by this island, which extended in a north-westerly direction for many miles, at least a hundred, I should think.^[1] When we arrived at the northern extremity of it, we drew in, so as to get more food, but perceiving a strange black smoke arising from the earth, we were afraid to approach nearer, nor indeed did the land appear very fertile; so we sailed past, hoping to discover another island before our provisions, of which we had a great store, were exhausted. But day after day went by without our seeing any, and though we were very sparing with our food, it was at last all gone, and we again suffered the torturing pangs of hunger and thirst. And when we woke one morning after a terrible night, we did not think we should live through the day, and the wild look in the eyes of some of the men made me fear they would go mad, or even propose to eat one another. I had already observed them gazing ravenously at Little John, but I held him constantly at my side, being determined to keep him as a memento of our sojourn on Palm Tree Island. I do not know but I might have been prevailed on at last to consent to his death, but towards evening Billy, using his little remnant of strength to climb on to the gunwale, cried out that he saw a sail, and called to me in a very hoarse voice to make a signal. I took up my musket at once, and fired a shot, and then another, and then saw with great agony that I could fire no more, for there was no more powder in my horn, and the little that was in the others had been spoiled by the sea water. But by and

by we heard a shot, and Billy cried that the vessel was clapping on more sail, and was coming towards us. We were in terrible dread lest she should not come up with us before night, for she might pass us in the dark, and then we must have died. But she came up apace, and heaving to, hailed us in a tongue I did not understand, though the vessel was of European make. Clums, however, told me she was Dutch, and he answered the hail in that tongue, though his mouth was so parched that his voice was nothing but a croak. He said we were famishing, whereupon the skipper lowered a boat, sending food and water to us. When we were somewhat revived, I told the officer in the boat, by the interpretation of Clums, something of my story, at which he marvelled greatly, especially at our strange vessel, and would have heard more, only the skipper shouted for him to come back. I asked whether the skipper would not take us aboard, assuring him that my uncle would pay our charges very willingly, and when he returned to his vessel the skipper consented to this, saying, as I heard afterwards, that none but Englishmen, who were all mad, would have ventured to sea in such a crazy craft.

Accordingly we went on board the Dutch vessel, some of us having to be hauled up the side in slings, we were so weak. We left the poor *Elizabeth Jane* derelict, and Billy shed bitter tears, being still very much of a child at heart, and taking this as a sad omen, portending the death of the *Elizabeth Jane* he had known. As for me, having nothing of this kind to be superstitious about, I was so joyful at falling in with a friendly vessel, and at the hope this engendered in me, that I did not spare a sigh upon the *Elizabeth Jane*, being indeed much more sorrowful at the loss of the *Fair Hope*, much as a father might feel the loss of his firstborn.

I said a "friendly vessel," but it was not so friendly neither. She was a Dutch Indiaman bound for Java, and the skipper, though humane enough to pick us up (after a promise of pay), never looked on us very kindly, because we were English, and the Dutch were exceeding jealous at the presence of English mariners in those waters, seeming to think that the ocean was their highway by

right. (I have observed that the French and the Spanish, as well as ourselves, hold the same opinion, or did hold it until that late gallant gentleman Lord Nelson taught them better.) However, the Dutch skipper brought us to the island of Java, whither he was bound, and handed us over to the Governor, who put me through a very strict interrogation, with the aid of one of his officers that knew English, a clerk sitting by and writing all I said. He did the same afterwards with Billy and Mr. Bodger, each by himself, and Billy was mightily indignant when the Governor, having had read out some parts of my story, asked him if they were true.

I do not know what would have happened to me but that the Governor's wife, who had lived in England and spoke English, was greatly interested when she heard of our strange adventures: and it chancing that I fell ill of a low fever, she had me brought to her house, and tended me with great kindness, as much as Billy would let her, for he was very jealous, and would not leave me. When I was recovered, and this kind benefactress asked me what I would do, I said I must go home, and though I had no money, my uncle would right willingly pay my charges. Accordingly, by her kind interest I was provided with money, and clothes of a Dutch cut, and took passage in a Dutch Indiaman that was returning to Holland with a freight of sugar, in which Java is very prolific, and Billy was to go with me as my servant, and Little John too. I learnt that Mr. Bodger and Colam were dead, being carried off by a fever like mine; but the rest of the men, all but two, had found berths on the same Indiaman, she being short-handed owing to an epidemic fever that had broken out aboard on her way out. The two last of our party remained at Batavia for some time, being ill and unfit to work; but afterwards they worked their way to Calcutta, and thence on a British vessel to London, as they did not fail to inform me when they arrived. As for me and Billy and the dog, we went on the Dutchman, which touched at the Cape of Good Hope, and thence sailed direct for Amsterdam, and from there we got a passage to London, where we arrived on April 2, 1783, eight years and seven months after we departed on the ill-fated

Billy's Stepmother

I wrote a letter to my uncle that same day, telling him of my return, for I thought if I went home too suddenly the shock might do him an injury, especially if he had the gout. Billy went to see his old dad, promising to come back next day, since I had resolved to take him home with me, and show my uncle the good companion of my solitude. He was true to his word, and when I asked him how his people fared, he said his father was the same as ever, only not quite so spry, and his mother-in-law (as he called her) was fatter, but no less ill-tempered. Her first words when she saw him were, "Back again like a bad penny!" and after he had told her and his father somewhat of his strange life since he left them, all she said was, "Well, you've growed a lot, and big enough to work the smithy, and me and your father can take that little public we've had our eyes on." "Not if I knows it," says Billy to me; "I know what it 'ud be. She'd always be in the bar, a-taking a little drop here and a little drop there, and she's a tartar when she's had two glasses. Dad's a deal better off as he is, and he knows it." I asked him whether he had made any inquiry for Elizabeth Jane, and he looked at me very seriously, and said, "I knowed it meant something when that there boat of ours went down. They don't know what's become of her, but her dad was hanged for house-breaking a year or two ago, so I reckon I've had a lucky escape. I'll go and see Clums when I get back."

Home Again

We went down to Stafford next day. The news of my return had already got abroad, and folk were expecting me, for there was a great crowd at the door of the *Bell*, and when I clambered off the coach, there was such a shouting and cheering as you never heard. I didn't know I had so many friends. Two great youths pushed their way through the throng and, gripping me by the

arms, began lugging me into the inn, and one of them cried, "Well done, old Harry!" and then I knew it was my cousin Tom, and the other, who was James home from Cambridge, says, "Come on, Harry, Mother's in there," and when I asked where was Father, they told me he was crippled with the gout and couldn't come. My aunt, good woman, round and rosy as ever, was all of a tremble when she saw me, and burst into tears as she flung her arms around my neck; and then up comes honest John King, the landlord, with a tumbler of rum shrub, which he made her drink, saying it was the finest thing in the world for the staggers; and the pot-boy was close behind him with four foaming tankards of ale, and John lifts his and cries, "Welcome home!" his honest face shining like the sun. And then I remembered Billy, and called him in, and he came, rather red and uneasy, and the landlord sent for another pot when I explained who he was, and there was such a laughing and chattering that my head fairly buzzed.

When we had emptied our tankards (Billy whispered to me, "Master, did you ever taste such beer?") my aunt said Father would be dying of impatience, so we went out again among the crowd and found them looking with curiosity and amazement at Little John, who sat on the door-step, keeping guard. "Never seed a beast like that," says one; "what is he?" Billy laughed, and said it was a dog, at which they scoffed: and I may say here that it was a long time before the other dogs in our part would own Little John as one of their kind. We got into a carriage waiting for us, and nothing would satisfy some of the young 'prentices but they must unyoke the horses, and drag us the two miles to my uncle's house, and there were the maidservants at the gate (more of them than when I went away), and they waved handkerchiefs or dish-clouts, I don't know which, and Billy's face was redder than ever.

I found my uncle sitting in his great chair, with his leg stretched out, and I was not a bit surprised nor hurt when his first words were, "Mind my toe!" and then he cries, "God bless you, Harry, my boy," and flings his arms round me, and kisses me as if I were a child again instead of a tall fellow of near twenty-

six. And then he wiped his eyes and said he was an old fool, and catching sight of Billy he wanted to know who that was, and I tried to explain, but somehow the words stuck in my throat, and I couldn't say more than "Billy." "Billy what?" shouts my uncle. "Bobbin, sir," says Billy, and everybody laughed, and laughed again when Billy, looking very much puzzled, said, "Rightly, William, sir." And then James, the graver of my two cousins, said we had better have something to eat, and so we did, my aunt having prepared a feast of fat things fit for kings, as Billy said, and finer by a great deal than I ever had when I was king of Palm Tree Island. On which everybody demanded to know what he meant, and I had to begin my story there and then, and it lasted all through supper and many hours beyond, and even then I had not told the half of it. You may guess how rapt an audience I had, and how they cried out against Wabberley and Chick, and the indignation of my uncle and aunt at their villanous doings; and my admiration of Aunt Susan was vastly increased because she did not turn round upon her husband, as many good women would have done, and beg him to note that she had told him so. When they heard what a close comrade Billy had been to me during those years of solitude and trouble they perfectly overwhelmed him with kind words and praises, and he said to me afterwards that he knew now why my uncle had called his ship the *Lovey Susan*, and he wished he had an Aunt Susan himself, instead of a mother-in-law.

Pleasant Places

When I, in my turn, came to hear of what had happened during my long absence, I found that after two years had passed my uncle began to be very restless, and when the third was gone without bringing any news of us, he was much perturbed, and made many visits to London to ask if we had been spoken by any vessel, and to see the captains of outgoing ships and beg them to make what search they could. At the end of the fourth year he gave us up for lost, and was in such terrible distress of mind that he fell ill, and was a long time of recovering. When he did get about again he collected all his books about the sea, and the voyages of navigators and discoverers, of which he had

a great many, and burnt them every one, and never in all his life looked into any book of the sort again, but took to poetry instead. His business had thriven amazingly, and he led me into his private room one day and showed me a book in which he had entered, quarter by quarter, the sums of money he had put away for me in case I should ever come back. I had not been home a week when he drew out a deed of partnership, on such generous terms that by the time I was thirty I was what the country folk call a very warm man. He presented Billy immediately with fifty pounds, and learning from him that he wished to remain with me, he said the best thing he could do was to learn the pottery trade, which Billy accordingly did, and he is now the manager of our factory.

We had not been at home above six months when Billy came to me one evening, and said that he was a good deal bothered in his mind. I asked him what was the matter, and he asked me back whether I thought there was anything unlucky in names. When I told him that I did not think so, and he still seemed troubled, I said he had better make a clean breast of it, whereupon he said: "It's that little girl again, sir." "Clums's girl?" I said. "No, sir, it's Elizabeth Jane." "You have found her, then?" I said. "It's not *her*," says he; "it's them," looking very gloomy.

I told him to light his pipe (he had become a very great smoker) and to tell me all about it. Accordingly, between puffs of his pipe, he explained that he thought one of my aunt's maids, whose name was Elizabeth, a very fine young woman; and he also thought the parson's cook, whose name was Jane, a very fine young woman; but that after the sad fate of our vessel, and the distressing discovery that the first Elizabeth Jane's father had been hanged, he was afraid there was something "unchancy," as he put it, about both names. Moreover, he liked both Elizabeth and Jane so much that, even if there had been no shadow on their names, he could not make up his mind between them: "And I can't have 'em both," says he; "not even Harry the Eighth, by what you said, had more'n one wife at once." I said it was a very hard case, and after considering

of it very deeply (as he thought) for a good while, I told him that, being quite inexperienced in these matters, I was afraid my advice would be of little worth, but he might ask them whether they would go back with him to Palm Tree Island, and choose the one that said yes. "I've done that, sir," says he heavily, "and they both say they'd like it ever so, if it was me." This was a facer, and I knew not what to say, until by a happy thought I suggested that he should consult my aunt Susan, with whom he was a prime favourite.

He came to me a day or two after and said it was all settled. "I spoke to Mrs. Brent, sir," says he, "and she said 'Bless the man! What next, I wonder!' and then she says that she had nothing to say against Elizabeth, who does her work well, but has rather a fancy for ribbons and laces, she says; and as for Jane, she is a very decent respectable woman, and a good cook, and makes dough cakes the very way Mrs. Brent told her, she says. 'She'd make any man a good wife,' she says."

"Well, you must bring Jane to see me," I said.

"Oh, but it ain't Jane; it's Elizabeth," says he, and when I had done laughing, and asked him why he had ignored my aunt's recommendation, he launched forth into a very rambling and confused statement of which I could make nothing. He married Elizabeth soon after, and I do not think my aunt ever thoroughly forgave him.

One Mariner Returns

One day, about ten years ago, I was sitting with my uncle in his garden, chatting with him as I frequently did in the evening, because he could not get about much, when we saw an old man, very crooked and infirm, hobble up to the gate on two sticks, and lift the latch. Thinking he was a beggar, my uncle bade him very sharply to be off. For a moment he hesitated; then he opened the gate and came slowly towards us, my uncle shaking his fist at him, and

daring him to move another step. There was something strangely familiar, and yet unfamiliar, in his appearance; but as he still hobbled along, it came upon me all of a sudden who he was, and I told my uncle I believed it was Nick Wabberley. "The scoundrel! The villain!" cried my uncle. "How dare he show his face here!" and then he added under his breath, "I'm getting old, Harry," remembering, I suppose, that he and Wabberley were much of an age.

Wabberley came towards us very slowly, and I saw that his hands were shaking and his features twisted. He looked at my uncle, and then at me, but it was plain that he did not recognize me; and then he began to speak, and it was very pitiful to hear him, because with palsy upon him he could not pronounce some of his words aright, and the story he told was pitiful too. He related how he had been left with Hoggett and Chick on the island by me and the stowaway, "who didn't ought to have left us, men what they ought to respect," said he. Chick died; then Hoggett fell into a melancholy and took to going off for days alone. One day there was a dreadful eruption of the volcano, which terrified them so much that they went down into the cavern below the hut to hide, and when the danger was past, Hoggett refused to go up; he had lost his wits and thought he was in his grave. Wabberley let down food to him in a basket, but he did not touch it, and so remained until he starved himself to death.

"I was all alone; d'ye know what that is, Stephen Brent?" says Wabberley. How long he lived thus solitary he knew not, but he was nearly out of his mind when one day a ship's boat came ashore for water, and brought him home, the wreck we saw him. "You won't forget your old schoolmate, Stephen Brent?" says he; and my uncle, who had muttered "Dear, dear!" and "Poor fellow!" and suchlike things, while Wabberley was speaking, now thrust his hand into his pocket, and saying "God have mercy on us all!" gave him a handful of silver. Wabberley touched his forelock in the old mechanical fashion, and without a second look at me he hobbled away, and as he came to the gate, whom should he meet but Billy, walking up to the house with his eldest son, a boy of twelve.

Billy stopped, and in his face I saw a great amazement; but Wabberley passed him by, not knowing him again. And then I was surprised, and touched too, to see Billy follow after the poor old man, and take him by one arm, and make his boy take the other, to help his tottering footsteps, and so they passed out of my sight.

I have been long of telling my story, yet I might have told much more but for the fear of wearying you. Billy sometimes says he wouldn't have minded taking a trip to the South Seas and having a look at Old Smoker; but if it had come to the point I think he could hardly have torn himself away from Elizabeth and the little Bobbins. As for me, though I have neither wife nor child, I am too busy a man, and maybe too old, to think of entering upon what would, I fear, be a long and troublesome search. There have been many voyages of discovery in those parts since my time, and if Palm Tree Island is now marked on maps and charts for the guidance of captains and navigators, I think I should feel a trifle sorry did I see it under another name.

[1] This must have been Bougainville Island, one of the Solomon Group.—H.S.

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