

JOHN BROWNE

CRUSOE'S ISLAND: A
RAMBLE IN THE
FOOTSTEPS OF
ALEXANDER SELKIRK

John Browne
**Crusoe's Island: A Ramble in the
Footsteps of Alexander Selkirk**

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24169908

*Crusoe's Island: A Ramble in the Footsteps of Alexander Selkirk / With
Sketches of Adventure in California and Washoe:*

Содержание

CRUSOE'S ISLAND	4
CHAPTER I.	4
CHAPTER II.	19
CHAPTER III.	23
CHAPTER IV.	25
CHAPTER V.	36
CHAPTER VI.	46
CHAPTER VII.	52
CHAPTER VIII.	54
CHAPTER IX.	62
CHAPTER X.	73
CHAPTER XI.	78
CHAPTER XII.	80
CHAPTER XIII.	91
CHAPTER XIV.	97
CHAPTER XV.	103
CHAPTER XVI.	107
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	118

**John Ross Browne
Crusoe's Island: A
Ramble in the Footsteps of
Alexander Selkirk / With
Sketches of Adventure in
California and Washoe**

CRUSOE'S ISLAND

**CHAPTER I.
THE BOAT ADVENTURE**

My narrative dates as far back as the early part of the year 1849. Then the ship *Anteus* was a noted vessel. Many were the strange stories told of strife and discord between the captain and the passengers; pamphlets were published giving different versions of the facts, and some very curious questions of law were involved in the charges made by both parties. It appeared from the statement of the passengers, who were for the most part

intelligent and respectable Americans, that, on the voyage of the *Anteus* to California, their treatment by the captain was cruel and oppressive in the extreme; that, before they were three weeks from port, he had reduced them almost to a state of absolute starvation; and, in consequence of the violence of his conduct, which, as they alleged, was without cause or provocation on their part, they considered their lives endangered, and resolved upon making an appeal for his removal at the port of Rio. On the arrival of the vessel at Rio the captain was arraigned before the American consul, and pronounced to be insane by the evidence of six physicians and by the testimony of a large majority of the passengers. It was charged, on the other hand, that the passengers were disorderly, mutinous, and ungovernable; that they had entered into a conspiracy against the captain, and in testifying to his insanity were guilty of perjury. The examination of the case occupied several weeks before the American consul; voluminous testimony was taken on both sides; the question was submitted to the American minister, to the British consul, and to the principal merchants of Rio, all of whom concurred in the opinion that, under the circumstances, there was but one proper course to pursue, which was, to remove the captain from the command of the vessel. He was accordingly deposed by the American consul, and a new captain placed in the command. This was regarded by the principal merchants of New York as an arbitrary exercise of authority, unwarranted by law or precedent, and a memorial was addressed by them to the President of the United States for the

removal of the consul. A new administration had just come into power; and the consul was removed, ostensibly on the ground of the complaints made against him; but, inasmuch as some few other officers of the government were removed at the same time without such ground, it may be inferred that a difference in political opinion had some weight with the administration.

It is not my intention now to go into any argument in regard to the merits of this case; the time may come when justice will be done to the injured, and it remains for higher authority than myself to mete it out. I have simply to acknowledge, with a share of the odium resting upon me, that I was one of the rebellious passengers in the *Anteus*. My companions in trouble so far honored me with their confidence as to give me charge of the case. I was unlearned in law, yet possessed some experience in sea-life; and believing that the lives of all on board depended upon getting rid of a desperate and insane captain, aided to the best of my ability in having a new officer placed in the command. To the change thus made, unforeseen in its results, I owe my eventful visit to the island of Juan Fernandez.

It was the intention of our first captain to touch at Valparaiso for a supply of fresh provisions. In the ship's papers this was the only port designated on the Pacific side except San Francisco. Our new commander, Captain Brooks, assumed the responsibility of leaving the choice between Valparaiso and another port to the passengers. It was put to the vote, and decided that we should proceed to Callao, so that we might pass in sight

of Juan Fernandez, and have an opportunity of visiting Lima, "the City of the Kings."

Early on the morning of the 19th of May, 1849, we made the highest peak of Massa Tierra, bearing N.N.W., distant seventy miles. The weather was mild and clear. As the sun rose, it fell calm, and the ship lay nearly motionless. A light blue spot, scarce bigger than a hand-spike, was all that appeared in the horizon. It might have passed for a cloud but for the distinctness of its outline. Weary of the gales we had encountered off Cape Horn, it was a pleasant thing to see a spot of earth once more, and there was not a soul on board but felt a desire to go ashore. For some days past, myself and a few others had talked secretly among ourselves about making the attempt in case we went close enough; but now there seemed to be every prospect of a long calm, and we took it for granted the captain would clap on all sail if we took the trades. There was no other chance but to lower one of the boats and row seventy miles. A party of us agreed to do this, provided we could get a boat. The ship's boats we knew it would be impossible to get without permission of the captain, and that we were not willing to ask. Mr. Brigham, a fellow-passenger, was owner of one of the quarter-boats. We broached the matter to him, and he gladly joined in the adventure, together with his partner and some friends, so that we made in all a very pleasant party of eleven. The proper number of men for the boat was six, but in consideration of the great distance and the necessity of a change at the oars, five more were crowded in.

We had been in the habit of rowing about the vessel whenever it was calm, and this we thought would be a good excuse for lowering the boat. Being in great haste, lest the captain should object to letting us go, we only thought of a few necessary articles in case we should be cast away or driven off from the island. Two small demijohns of water, a few biscuits, a piece of dried beef, and some cheese and crackers comprised our entire stock of provisions; and for nautical instruments we had only a lantern and a small pocket compass. Not knowing but there might be outlaws or savages ashore who might undertake to murder us, we armed ourselves with a double-barreled gun, a fusee, and an old harpoon, which was all we could smuggle into the boat in the excitement of starting. Captain Brooks happening to come on deck, perceived that there was something unusual going on, and, suspecting our design, took occasion to warn us of the folly of such an expedition. At the same time, thinking there was more bravado than reality about it, he laughed good-humoredly when we acknowledged that we were going ashore. "Be sure," said he, as we went over the side, "not to forget the peaches. You will find plenty of them up in the valleys. Only don't lose sight of the vessel. You may exercise yourselves as much as you please, but keep the royals above water, whatever you do. Bear in mind that you are more than seventy miles from that peak!" We promised him that we would take care of ourselves, and come back safe in case we were not foundered.

At 9 A.M. we bade our friends good-by, and with three cheers

pushed off from the ship. The boat was only twenty-two feet long and an eighth of an inch thick: it was made of sheet-iron, and was very narrow and crank. Most of us, except myself and a whaleman named Paxton, were unused to rowing, so that the prospect of reaching land depended a good deal upon the day remaining calm, and upon keeping the boat trimmed, the gunwales being only ten inches out of the water.

There was no excuse for this risk of life, save that insatiable thirst for novelty which all experience to some extent after the monotony of a long voyage. I will only say, in regard to myself, that I was too full of joy at the idea of a ramble in the footsteps of Robinson Crusoe to think of risk at all. If there was danger, it merely served to give zest to the adventure.

By a calculation of the distance and our rate of going, we expected to reach the land by sundown or soon after; and then our plan was to make a tent of the boat-sail, and sleep under it till morning, when by rising early we thought we could take a run over the island, and perhaps get some fruit and vegetables. By that time, should a light breeze spring up during the night, we thought it likely the ship would be well up by the land, and we could pull out and get on board without difficulty. Before long we found that distances are very deceptive in these latitudes where the atmosphere is so clear; for notwithstanding the statement of the captain that by the reckoning we were seventy miles from land, we believed that he only told us so to deter us from going, and that we were not much more than half that distance. In rowing

we made a division of our number, taking turns or watches of an hour each at the oars, so as to share the labor. Once fairly under way, with a smooth sea and a pleasant day before us, we became exceedingly merry at the expense of our fellow-passengers whom we had left in the ship to drift about in the calm, and it afforded us much diversion to think how they would be disappointed upon finding that we were in earnest about going ashore. Before long we had cause to wish ourselves back again in the ship, which goes to prove that apparently the most unfortunate are often less so than those who seem to be favored by circumstances.

At noon we took a lunch, and refreshed ourselves with a drink of water all round. We had also a good supply of cigars, which we smoked with great relish after our pull; and I think there never was a happier set than we were for the time. Still there was but a single peak on the horizon. It was blue and dim in the distance, and apparently not much higher than when we saw it from the mast-head, from which we inferred that there must be a current setting against us. The Anteus was hull down, yet we seemed as far from the land as when we started.

A ripple beginning to show upon the water, we hoisted our sail to catch the breeze, and found that it helped us one or two knots an hour. With songs and anecdotes we passed the time pleasantly till 3 P.M., when we entirely lost sight of the vessel. Paxton, the whaleman, now stood up in the boat to take an observation of the land. There were a few more peaks in sight; the middle peak, which was the first we made, began to loom

up very plainly, showing a flat top. It was the mountain called Yonka, which is said to be three thousand feet high. We were apparently forty miles yet from the nearest point; and the sun setting here in May at a little after five, we began to feel uneasy concerning the weather, which showed signs of a change. All of us, having gone so far, were in favor of keeping on, though in secret we thought there was a good deal of danger. At sunset we took another observation. The land had risen quite over the water from end to end, and we hoped to reach it in about three hours. It is true none of us knew any thing about the shores, whether they abounded in bays or not, and if so where any safe place of landing could be found, which made us doubtful how to steer. Clouds were gathering all over the horizon; a few stars shone out dimly overhead, and the shades of night began to cover the island as with a shroud. Swiftly, yet with resistless power, the clouds swept over the whole sky, and the horizon, in all the grandeur of its vast circle, was lost in the shades of night. No sail was near; no light shone upon us now but the dim rays of a few solitary stars through the rugged masses of clouds; no sound broke upon the listening ear save the weary stroke of our oars: a gloom had settled upon the mighty wilderness of waters, and we were awed and silent, for we knew that the spirit of God was there, and darkness was his secret place; that "his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies."

One large black mass of clouds rose up on the weather quarter; a low moaning came over the sea, and the air became suddenly

chill, and the waters rippled around us, and were tossed about by the unseen Power, and we trembled, for we beheld the coming of the storm that was soon to burst upon us in all the majesty of its wrath. For a while there was the stillness of death; then "the Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice," and out of the darkness came the storm. In fierce and sudden gusts it came, terrible in its resistless might; lashing the sea into a white foam, tossing and whirling overhead, with its thousand arms outstretched; grasping up the waters as it raged over the deep, and scourging them madly through the air, while it moaned and shrieked like the dread spirit of desolation.

Every one of us cowered down in the boat to keep her balanced. The spray washed over us fearfully, and the sail shook so in the wind, having let go all, that we thought it would tear the mast out. At this time we were about three leagues from the S.E. end of the island, which was the nearest point then in sight. As the cloud spread by the attraction of the land, the whole island became wrapped in a dark shroud of mist, and in half an hour we could discern nothing but the gloom of the storm around us, as we bore down toward the darkest part on the lea. Our lamp was now quenched by a heavy sea, and being unable to distinguish the points of the compass, we were fearful we should miss the island and be carried off so far that we could never reach it again. Whenever there was a lull we tried to haul in our sheet, but a sudden flaw striking us once, the boat lay over till she buried her gunwales, and the sea broke heavily over her lee side, and the

crew at the same time springing in a body to the weather side, to balance her, brought her over suddenly, so that it was a miracle we were not capsized, which, had it happened so far out at sea in the darkness, would have made an end of us. Indeed, it was as much as we could do, by baling continually, to keep her afloat, and every moment we expected to be buried in a watery grave. For the reason that we feared the tide or current which set against us might carry us off beyond reach of the land, we kept up our sail as long as we could, thinking that while we made headway toward the lee of the island we increased our chance of safety. Moreover, we knew it was four hundred miles to the coast of Chili, and we had neither water nor provisions left. At best our position was perilous. Ignorant of the bearings of the harbor, we were at a loss what to do even if we should be able to reach the lee of the island, for we had seen that it was chiefly rock-bound and inaccessible to boats.

About 2 A.M., as well as we could judge, we found ourselves close in under the lee of a high cliff, upon the base of which the surf broke with a tremendous roar. Some three or four of the party, reckless of the consequences, were in favor of running straight in, and attempting to gain the shore at all hazards. The more prudent of us protested against the folly of this course, well knowing that we would be capsized in the surf and dashed to pieces on the rocks. Here we found the evils of having too many masters in an adventure of this kind, where every man who had a will of his own seemed disposed to use it. However, by mild

persuasion, we adjusted the difficulty, and agreed to continue on under the lee, where we were sheltered in some degree from the gale, till we should hit upon some safe harbor, if such there was upon the island. The boat was our only resource in case of being left ashore, and all admitted the necessity of preserving it as long as possible. If we found no harbor, we could lie off a short distance and wait till daylight. This plan was so reasonable that none could object to it. As soon as we were well in by the shore, where the gale was cut off by the mountains, we had a light eddy of air in our favor, which induced us to keep up our sail. We soon found the danger of this. A strong flaw from a gap in the land struck us suddenly, and would have capsized us had we not let go every thing, and clung to the weather gunwale till it was over, when we quickly pulled down the sail and took to the oars.

We could see nothing on our starboard but the wild seas as they rolled off into the darkness; on our larboard, a black perpendicular wall of rocks loomed up hundreds of feet high, reaching apparently into the clouds. Sometimes a part of the outline came out clear, with its rugged pinnacles against the sky, and now and then a fearful gorge opened up as we coasted along, through which the wind moaned dismally. It was a very wild and awful place in the dead of night, being so covered with darkness that we scarce knew where we steered, or how soon we might be dashed to pieces in the surf. Once in a while we stopped to listen, thinking we heard voices on the shore, but it was only the moaning of the tempest upon the cliffs, and the frightful beating

of the surf below. We seemed almost to be able to touch the black and rugged wall of rocks that stood up out of the sea, and the shock of the returning waves so jarred the boat at times that we clung to the thwarts, and believed we were surely within the jaws of death. As the voices died away which we thought came out from the cliffs there was a lull in the storm, and nothing but the wail of the surf could be heard, sounding very sad and lonesome in gloom of night. It was a dreary and perpetual dirge for the ill-fated mariners who were buried upon that inhospitable shore; a death-moan that forever rises out of the deep for the souls that are lost, and the hearts that can never be united with those that love them upon earth again. I thought how well it was writ by the poet —

"Oh, Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms.
Than reign in this horrible place."

Having pulled about twelve miles along the shore from Goat Island, where we first got under the lee, and seeing no sign of a cove or harbor, we began to despair of getting ashore before daylight. In this extremity, Abraham, a ship-neighbor of mine, succeeded in lighting the lantern again, which he held out in his hand from the bow, hoping thereby to cast a light upon the rocks, that we might grope out our way and reach some place of safety; but it only seemed to make the darkness thicker than

it was before. We therefore concluded it was best to pull on till we rounded a point some few miles ahead, where we thought there might be a cove. So we put out the light and got Paxton to go in the bow as a look-out, he being the most keen-sighted, from the habit of looking from the mast-head for whales. On turning the point we were startled by a loud cry of "Light, ho!" Every body turned to see where it appeared. It was close down by the water, about three miles distant, within a spacious cove that opened upon us as we turned the point. Paxton's quick eye had descried it the moment we hove round the rock. Greatly rejoiced by this discovery, we pulled ahead with a good will and rapidly bore down toward the light.

Chilled through with the sharp gusts from the mountains, wet with spray, and very hungry, we congratulated ourselves that there were still inhabitants on the island, and we could not but think they would give us something to eat, and furnish us with some place of shelter. Captain Brooks had told us that he had been here several times in a whaler; that sometimes people lived upon the island from the coast of Chili, and sometimes it was entirely deserted. The Chilians who frequented this lonely island we knew to be a very bad set of people, chiefly convicts and outcasts, who would not hesitate to rob and murder any stranger whom misfortune or the love of adventure might cast in their power. Pirates, also, had frequented its bays from the time of the buccaneers; and it was a question with us whether the light was made by these outlaws, or by some unfortunate shipwrecked

sailors or deserters from some English or American whale-ship. The better to provide against danger, we loaded our two guns, and placed them in the bow, as also the harpoon; upon which we steered for the light. All of a sudden it disappeared, as if quenched by water. This was a new source of trouble. What could it mean? There was no doubt we had all seen it. The early voyagers had often seen strange lights at night on the tops of the mountains, which they attributed to supernatural causes; but this was close down by the water, and was too well defined and too distinctly visible to us all either to be a supernatural visitation or the result of some volcanic eruption. While we lay upon our oars wondering what it meant, it again appeared, brighter than before. Now, if the inhabitants were not pirates or freebooters, why did they pursue this mysterious conduct? We suspected that they heard our oars, and had lit a fire on the beach to guide us ashore; but if they wanted us to land in the right place, why did they put out the light and start it up again so strangely? For half an hour it continued thus to disappear and reappear at short intervals in the same mysterious way, for which none of us could account.

It being now about four o'clock in the morning, we felt so cast down by fatigue and dread of death, that we decided to run in at all hazards, and, if necessary, make our way through the breakers. All hands fell to upon the oars, and soon the light bore up again close on by the head. Paxton, who was in the bow, quickly started up, and began peering sharply through the gloom. "What's that?" said he: "look there, my lads. I see something

black; don't you see it – there, on the larboard – it looks to me like the hull of a ship! Pull, my lads, pull!" and so all gave way with a will, and in a few minutes the tall masts of a vessel loomed up against the sky within a hundred yards! I shall never forget the joy of the whole party at that sight. The light which we had seen came from a lamp that swung in the lower rigging, and though the ship might be a Chilian convict vessel, or some other craft as little likely to give us a pleasant reception, yet we were too glad to think of that, and straightway pulled up under her stern and hailed her. For a moment there was a pause as our voices broke upon the stillness; then there was a stir on deck, and a voice answered us in clear sailor-like English, "Boat ahoy! where are you from?" "The ship Anteus," said we, "bound for California; what ship is this?" "The Brooklyn, of New York, bound for California. Come on board!"

No longer able to suppress our joy, we gave vent to three hearty cheers – cheers so loud and genuine that they swept over the waters of Juan Fernandez, and went rolling up the valleys in a thousand echoes. In less than five minutes we were all on deck, thankful for our providential deliverance from the horrors of that eventful night.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE ISLAND

The decks of the Brooklyn presented a strange and half-savage scene. Most of the passengers, aroused from their sleep by the shouts of the officers and crew, had rushed upon deck nearly naked, and quite at a loss to know what had happened. While we were answering some of their questions, Captain Richardson, the master, pushed his way through the crowd and asked what all the noise was about. We speedily explained how we had left the Anteus seventy miles out at sea, and how, through the aid of Providence, we had made our way into the harbor and descried the ship's lamp; declaring at the same time our belief that, had we missed the ship, in all probability we would have been dashed to pieces upon the rocks. We then made ourselves known personally to the captain, who was well acquainted with some of the party. He cordially welcomed us on board, and invited us into his cabin, where we gave him a more detailed account of our adventure. Meantime the cook was ordered to get us some breakfast as soon as possible, and Captain Richardson offered us dry clothes, and administered to our wants in the kindest manner. Nor was it long till we felt exceedingly comfortable considering the previous circumstances. We soon had breakfast, which, after our toils and

troubles, was truly a Godsend. Some of the finest fish I ever ate was on the table; excellent ham and potatoes also, fresh bread, and coffee boiling hot. It was devoured with a most uncommon relish, as you may suppose; and it was none the less agreeable for being seasoned with pleasant conversation.

The captain admitted that in all his seafaring career he had never known of any thing more absurd than our adventure, and that it was a miracle we were not every one lost. All the passengers crowded around us as if we had risen from the depths of the sea, and I fancied they examined us as if they had an idea that we were some kind of sea-monsters.

The Brooklyn lay at anchor about half a mile from the boat-landing. At the dawn of day I was on the deck, looking eagerly toward the island. I may as well confess at once that no child could have felt more delighted than I did in the anticipation of something illusive and enchanting. My heart throbbed with impatience to see what it was that cast so strange a fascination about that lonely spot. All was wrapped in mist; but the air was filled with fresh odors of land, and wafts of sweetness more delicious than the scent of new-mown hay. The storm had ceased, and the soft-echoed bleating of goats, and the distant baying of wild dogs were all the sounds of life that broke upon the stillness. It seemed as if the sun, loth to disturb the ocean in its rest, or reveal the scene of beauty that lay slumbering upon its bosom, would never rise again, so gently the light stole upon the eastern sky, so softly it absorbed the shadows of night. I watched the

golden glow as it spread over the heavens, and beheld at last the sun in all his majesty scatter away the thick vapors that lay around his resting-place, and each vale was opened out in the glowing light of the morning, and the mountains that towered out of the sea were bathed in the glory of his rays.

Never shall I forget the strange delight with which I gazed upon that isle of romance; the unfeigned rapture I felt in the anticipation of exploring that miniature world in the desert of waters, so fraught with the happiest associations of youth; so remote from all the ordinary realities of life; the actual embodiment of the most absorbing, most fascinating of all the dreams of fancy. Many foreign lands I had seen; many islands scattered over the broad ocean, rich and wondrous in their romantic beauty; many glens of Utopian loveliness; mountain heights weird and impressive in their sublimity; but nothing to equal this in variety of outline and undefinable richness of coloring; nothing so dreamlike, so wrapped in illusion, so strange and absorbing in its novelty. Great peaks of reddish rock seemed to pierce the sky wherever I looked; a thousand rugged ridges swept upward toward the centre in a perfect maze of enchantment. It was all wild, fascinating, and unreal. The sides of the mountains were covered with patches of rich grass, natural fields of oats, and groves of myrtle and pimento. Abrupt walls of rock rose from the water to the height of a thousand feet. The surf broke in a white line of foam along the shores of the bay, and its measured swell floated upon the air like the voice of a

distant cataract. Fields of verdure covered the ravines; ruined and moss-covered walls were scattered over each eminence; and the straw huts of the inhabitants were almost imbosomed in trees, in the midst of the valley, and jets of smoke arose out of the groves and floated off gently in the calm air of the morning. In all the shore, but one spot, a single opening among the rocks, seemed accessible to man. The rest of the coast within view consisted of fearful cliffs overhanging the water, the ridges from which sloped upward as they receded inland, forming a variety of smaller valleys above, which were strangely diversified with woods and grass, and golden fields of wild oats. Close to the water's edge was the dark moss-covered rock, forever moist with the bright spray of the ocean, and above it, cleft in countless fissures by earthquakes in times past, the red burnt earth; and there were gorges through which silvery springs coursed, and cascades fringed with banks of shrubbery; and still higher the slopes were of a bright yellow, which, lying outspread in the glow of the early sunlight, almost dazzled the eye; and round about through the valleys and on the hill-sides, the groves of myrtle, pimento, and corkwood were draped in green, glittering with rain-drops after the storm, and the whole air was tinged with ambrosial tints, and filled with sweet odors; nothing in all the island and its shores, as the sun rose and cast off the mist, but seemed to

"suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

CHAPTER III.

GOING ASHORE

No longer able to control our enthusiasm, we sprang into the boat and pushed off for the landing. Captain Richardson, who was well acquainted with the ruins of the Chilian settlement, joined us in our intended excursion, and we were accompanied also by a few sporting passengers from the Brooklyn in another boat. The waters of the bay are of crystal clearness; we saw the bottom as we dashed over the swell, at a depth of several fathoms. It was alive with fish and various kinds of marine animals, of which there are great quantities about these shores. Can you conceive, ye landmen who dwell in cities, and have never buffeted for weary months the gales of old ocean, the joy of once more touching the genial earth when it has become almost a dreamy fancy in the memories of the past! Then think, without a smile of disdain, what a thrill of delight ran through my blood as I pressed my feet for the first time upon the fresh sod of Juan Fernandez! Think of it, too, as the realization of hopes which I had never ceased to cherish from early boyhood; for this was the abiding place, which I now at last beheld, of a wondrous adventurer whose history had filled my soul years ago with indefinite longings for sea-life, shipwreck, and solitude! Yes, here was verily the land of Robinson Crusoe; here, in one of these secluded glens, stood his rustic castle; here he fed his

goats and held converse with his faithful pets; here he found consolation in the devotion of a new friend, his true and honest man Friday; beneath the shade of these trees he unfolded the mysteries of Divine Providence to the simple savage, and proved to the world that there is no position in life which may not be endured by a patient spirit and an abiding confidence in the goodness and mercy of God.

Pardon the fondness with which I linger upon these recollections, reader, for I was one who had fought for poor Robinson in my boyish days as the greatest hero that ever breathed the breath of life; who had always, even to man's estate, secretly cherished in my heart the belief that Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and all the warriors of antiquity were commonplace persons compared with him; that Napoleon Bonaparte, the Duke of Wellington, Colonel Johnson, Tecumseh, and all the noted statesmen and warriors of modern times, were not to be mentioned in the same day with so extraordinary a man; I, who had always regarded him as the most truthful and the very sublimest of adventurers, was now the entranced beholder of his abiding place – walking, breathing, thinking, and seeing on the very spot! There was no fancy about it – not the least; it was a palpable reality! Talk of gold! Why, I tell you, my dear friends, all the gold of California was not worth the ecstatic bliss of that moment!

CHAPTER IV.

CONDITION OF THE ISLAND IN 1849

We first went up to a bluff, about half a mile from the boat-landing, where we spent an hour in exploring the ruins of the fortifications built by the Chilians in 1767. There was nothing left but the foundation and a portion of the ramparts of the principal fort, partly imbedded in banks of clay, and neatly covered with moss and weeds. It was originally strongly built of large stones, which were cast down in every direction by the terrible earthquake of 1835; and now all that remained perfect was the front wall of the main rampart and the groundwork of the fort. Not far from these ruins we found the convict cells, which we explored to some extent.

These cells are dug into the brow of a hill, facing the harbor, and extend underground to the distance of several hundred feet, in the form of passages and vaults, resembling somewhat the Catacombs of Rome. During the penal settlement established here by the Chilian government, the convicts, numbering sometimes many hundreds, were confined in these gloomy dungeons, where they were subjected to the most barbarous treatment. The gates or doors by which the entrances were secured had all been torn down and destroyed, and the excavations were now occupied by wild goats, bats, toads, and different sorts of vermin. Rank fern hung upon the sides;

overhead was dripping with a cold and deathlike sweat, and slimy drops coursed down the weeds, and the air was damp and chilly; thick darkness was within in the depths beyond – darkness that no wandering gleam from the light of day ever reached, for heaven never smiled upon those dreary abodes of sin and sorrow. A few of the inner dungeons, for the worst criminals, were dug still deeper underground, and rough stairways of earth led down into them, which were shut out from the upper vaults by strong doors. The size of these lower dungeons was not more than five or six feet in length by four or five in height, from which some idea may be formed of the sufferings endured by the poor wretches confined in them, shut out from the light of heaven, loaded with heavy irons, crushed down by dank and impenetrable walls of earth, starved and beaten by their cruel guards, with no living soul to pity them in their woe, no hope of release save in death. We saw, by the aid of a torch, deep holes scratched in one of the walls, bearing the impression of human fingers. It might have been that some unhappy murderer, goaded to madness by such cruel tortures of body and terrible anguish of mind as drive men to tear even their own flesh when buried before the vital spark is extinct, had grasped out the earth in his desperation, and left the marks in his death agonies upon the clay that entombed him, to tell what no human heart but his had suffered there, no human ear had heard, no human eye had witnessed. The deep, startling echo breaking upon the heavy air, as we sounded the walls, seemed yet to mingle with his curses, and its last sepulchral throb was

like the dying moan of the maniac.

Some time before the great earthquake, which destroyed the fortifications and broke up the penal colony, a gang of convicts, amounting to three hundred, succeeded in liberating themselves from their cells. Unable to endure the cruelties inflicted upon them, they broke loose from their chains, and, rushing upon the guards, murdered the greater part of them, and finally seized the garrison. For several days they held complete possession of the island. A whale-ship, belonging to Nantucket, happening to come in at the time for wood and water, they seized the captain, and compelled him to take on board as many of them as the vessel could contain. About two hundred were put on board. They then threatened the captain and officers with instant death in case of any failure to land them on the coast of Peru, whither they determined to go in order to escape the vengeance of the Chilian government. Desirous of getting rid of them as soon as possible, the captain of the whaler ran over for the first land on the coast of Chili, where he put them ashore, leaving them ignorant of their position until they were unable to regain the vessel. They soon discovered that they were only thirty miles from Valparaiso; but, short as the distance was from the Chilian authorities, they evaded all attempts to capture them, and eventually joined the Peruvian army, which was then advancing upon Santiago. The remainder of the prisoners left upon the island escaped in different vessels, and were scattered over various parts of the world. Only a few of the entire number engaged in the massacre

were ever captured; sentence of death was passed upon them, and they were shot in the public plaza of Santiago.

Turning our steps toward the settlement of the present residents, we passed a few hours very agreeably in rambling about among their rustic abodes. The total number of inhabitants at this period (1849) is sixteen, consisting of William Pearce, an American, and four or five Chilian men, with their wives and children. No others have lived permanently upon the island for several years. There are in all some six or seven huts, pleasantly surrounded by shrubbery, and well supplied with water from a spring. These habitations are built of the straw of wild oats, interwoven through wattles or long sticks, and thatched with the same, and, whether from design or accident, are extremely picturesque. The roofs project so as to form an agreeable shade all round; the doorways are covered in by a sort of projecting porch, in the style of the French cottages along the valley of the Seine; small out-houses, erected upon posts, are scattered about each inclosure; and an air of repose and freedom from worldly care pervades the whole place, though the construction of the houses and mode of living are evidently of the most primitive kind. Seen through the green shrubberies that abound in every direction, the bright yellow of the cottages, and the smoke curling up in the still air, have a very cheerful effect; and the prattling voices of the children, mingled with the lively bleating of the kids, and the various pleasant sounds of domestic life, might well lead one to think that the seclusion of these islanders from the

busy world is not without its charms. Small patches of ground, fenced with rude stone walls and brushwood, are attached to each of these primitive abodes; and rustic gateways, overrun with wild and luxuriant vines, open in front. Very little attention, however, appears to be bestowed upon the cultivation of the soil; but it looks rich and productive, and might be made to yield abundant crops by a trifling expenditure of labor. The Chilians have never been distinguished for industry; nor is there any evidence here that they depart from their usual philosophy in taking the world easy. Even the American seemed to have caught the prevailing lethargy, and to be content with as little as possible. Vegetables of various kinds grow abundantly wherever the seeds are thrown, among which I noticed excellent radishes, turnips, beets, cabbages, and onions. Potatoes of a very good quality, though not large, are grown in small quantities; and, regarding the natural productiveness of the earth, there seemed to be no reason why they should not be cultivated in sufficient quantities to supply the demands of vessels touching for supplies, and thereby made a profitable source of revenue to the settlers. The grass and wild oats grow in wonderful luxuriance in all the open spaces, and require little attention; and such is the genial character of the climate, that the cattle, of which there seems to be no lack, find ample food to keep them in good condition both in winter and summer. Fig-trees, bearing excellent figs, and vines of various sorts, flourish luxuriantly on the hill-sides. Of fruits there is quite an abundance in the early part of autumn. The

peaches were just out of season when we arrived, but we obtained a few which had been peeled and dried in the sun, and we found them large and of excellent flavor. Many of the valleys abound in natural orchards, which have sprung from the seeds planted there by the early voyagers, especially by Lord Anson, who appeared to have taken more interest in the cultivation and settlement of the island than any previous navigator. The disasters experienced by the vessels of this distinguished adventurer in doubling Cape Horn caused him to make Juan Fernandez a rendezvous for the recruiting of his disabled seamen, and for many months he devoted his attention to the production of such vegetables and fruits as he found useful in promoting their recovery; and having likewise in view the misfortunes and necessities of those who might come after him, he caused to be scattered over the island large quantities of seeds, so that, by their increase, abundance and variety of refreshments might be had by all future voyagers. He also left ashore many different sorts of domestic animals, in order that they might propagate and become general throughout the island, for the benefit of shipwrecked mariners, vessels in distress for provisions, and colonists who might hereafter form a settlement there. The philanthropy and moral greatness of these benevolent acts, from which the author could expect to derive little or no advantage during life, can not be too highly commended. If posthumous gratitude can be regarded as a reward, Lord Anson has a just claim to it. How many lives have been saved; how many weather-worn mariners, bowed down with

disease, have been renewed in health and strength; how many unhappy castaways have found food abundantly where all they could expect was a lingering death, and have been sustained in their exile, and restored at last to their friends and kindred, through the unselfish benevolence of this brave and kind-hearted navigator, no written record exists to tell; but there are records graven upon the hearts of men that are read by an omniscient eye – a history of good deeds and their reward, more eloquent than human hand hath written.

Besides peaches, quinces, and other fruits common in temperate climates, there is a species of palm called *Chuta*, which produces a fruit of a very rich flavor. Among the different varieties of trees are corkwood, sandal, myrtle, and pimento. The soil in some of the valleys on the north side is wonderfully rich, owing to deposits of burnt earth and decayed vegetable matter washed down from the mountains. There is but little level ground on the island; and although the area of tillable soil is small, yet by the culture of vineyards on the hill-sides, the grazing of sheep and goats on the mountain steeps, and the proper cultivation of the arable valleys, a population of several thousand might subsist comfortably. Pearce, the American, who had thoroughly explored every part of the island, told me he had no doubt three or four thousand people could subsist here without any supply of provisions from other countries. A ready traffic could be established with vessels passing that way, by means of which potatoes, fruits, and other refreshments could be bartered

for groceries and clothing. Herds of wild cattle now roam over these beautiful valleys; fine horses may be seen prancing about in gangs, with all the freedom of the mustang; goats in numerous flocks abound among the cliffs; pigeons and other game are abundant; and wild dogs are continually prowling around the settlement.

The few inhabitants at present on the island subsist chiefly upon fish, vegetables, and goat-flesh, of which they have an ample supply. Boat-loads of the finest cod, rockfish, cullet, lobsters, and lamprey eels can be caught in a few hours all around the shores of Cumberland Bay, and doubtless as plentifully in the other bays. Nothing more is necessary than merely the trouble of hauling them out of the water. We fished only for a short time, and nearly filled our boat with the fattest fish I ever saw. Had I not tested myself a fact told me by some of the passengers of the Brooklyn regarding the abundance of the smaller sorts of fish, I could never have believed it – that they will nibble at one's hand if it be put in the water alongside the boat, and a slight ripple made to attract their attention. This is a remarkable truth, which can be attested by any person who has visited these shores and made the experiment. There is no place among the cliffs where goats may not be seen at all times during the day. They live and propagate in the caves, and find sufficient browsing throughout the year in the clefts of the rocks. Lord Anson mentions that some of his hunting parties killed goats which had their ears slit, and they thought it more than probable that these were the very same goats

marked by Alexander Selkirk thirty years before; so that it is not unlikely there still exist some of the direct descendants of the herds domesticated by the original Crusoe. The residents of Cumberland Bay have about their huts a considerable number of these animals, tamed, for their milk. When they wish for a supply of goat-flesh or skins (for they often kill them merely for their skins), they go in a body to Goat Island, where they surround the goats and drive them over a cliff into the sea. As soon as they have driven over a sufficient number they take to their boat again, and catch them in the water. Some of them they bring home alive, and keep them till they require fresh meat. Nor are these people destitute of the rarer luxuries of life. By furnishing whale-ships that touch for supplies of water and vegetables with such productions as they can gather up, they obtain in exchange coffee, ship-bread, flour, and clothing; and lately they have been doing a good business in rowing the passengers ashore from the California vessels, and selling them goatskins and various sorts of curiosities. They also charge a small duty for keeping the spring of water clear and the boat-landing free from obstructions, and sometimes obtain a trifle in the way of port charges, in virtue of some pretended authority from the government of Chili.

The shores of Juan Fernandez abound in many different kinds of marine animals, among which the chief are seals and walruses. Formerly sealing vessels made it an object to touch for the purpose of capturing them, but of late years they have become rather scarce, and at present few, if any, vessels visit the island

for that purpose.

Situated in the latitude of $33^{\circ} 40'$ S., and longitude 79° W., the climate is temperate and salubrious – never subject to extremes either of heat or cold. In the valleys fronting north, the temperature seldom falls below 50° Fahr. in the coldest season. Open at all times to the pleasant breezes from the ocean, without malaria or any thing to produce disease, beautifully diversified in scenery, and susceptible of being made a convenient stopping-place for vessels bound to the great northwestern continent, it would be difficult to find a more desirable place for a colony of intelligent and industrious people, who would cultivate the land, build good houses, and turn to advantage all the gifts of Providence which have been bestowed upon the island.

The only material drawback is the want of a large and commodious harbor, in which vessels could be hauled up for repairs. This island could never answer any other purpose than that of a casual stopping-place for vessels in want of refreshments, and for this it seems peculiarly adapted. The principal harbors are Port English, on the south side, visited by Lord Anson in 1741; Port Juan, on the west; and Cumberland Bay, on the north side. The latter is the best, and is most generally visited, in consequence of being on the fertile side of the island, where water also is most easily obtained. None of them afford a very secure anchorage, the bottom being deep and rocky; and vessels close to the shore are exposed to sudden and violent flaws from the mountains, and the danger of being driven on the rocks

by gales from the ocean. In Cumberland Bay, however, there are places where vessels can ride in safety, by choosing a position suitable to the prevailing winds of the season. The chart and soundings made by Lord Anson will be found useful to navigators who design stopping at Juan Fernandez.

CHAPTER V.

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S CAVE

Our next expedition was to Robinson Crusoe's Cave. How it obtained that name I am unable to say. The people ashore spoke of it confidently as the place where a seafaring man had lived for many years alone; and I believe most mariners who have visited the island have fixed upon that spot as the actual abode of Alexander Selkirk. There are two ways of getting to the cave from the regular boat-landing; one over a high chain of cliffs, intervening between Crusoe's Valley, or the valley of the cave, and the Chilian huts near the landing; the other by water. The route by land is somewhat difficult; it requires half a day to perform it, and there is danger of being dashed to pieces by the loose earth giving way. In many parts of the island the surface of the cliffs is composed entirely of masses of burnt clay, which upon the slightest touch are apt to roll down, carrying every thing with them. Numerous cases are related by the early voyagers of accidents to seamen and others, in climbing over these treacherous heights. The distance by water is only two miles, and by passing along under the brow of the cliffs a very vivid idea may be had of their strange and romantic formation. We had our guns with us, which we did not fail to use whenever there was an opportunity; but the game, consisting principally of wild goats, kept so far out of reach on the dizzy heights, that they

passed through the ordeal in perfect safety. Some of us wanted to go by land and shoot them from above, thinking the bullets would carry farther when fired downward than they seemed to carry when fired from below. The rest of the party had so little confidence in our skill that they dissuaded us from the attempt, on the pretense that the ship might heave in sight while we were absent.

A pleasant row of half an hour brought us to the little cove in Crusoe's Valley. The only landing-place is upon an abrupt bank of rocks, and the surf breaking in at this part of the shore rather heavily, we had to run the boat up in regular beach-comber style. Riding in on the back of a heavy sea, we sprang out as soon as the boat struck, and held our ground, when, by watching our chance for another good sea, we ran her clear out of the water, and made her fast to a big rock for fear she might be carried away. About two hundred yards from where we landed we found the cave.

It lies in a volcanic mass of rock, forming the bluff or termination of a rugged ridge, and looks as if it might be the doorway into the ruins of some grand old castle. The height of the entrance is about fifteen feet, and the distance back into the extremity twenty-five or thirty. It varies in width from ten or twelve to eighteen feet. Within the mouth the surface is of reddish rock, with holes or pockets dug into the sides, which it is probable were used for cupboards by the original occupant. There were likewise large spike-nails driven into the rock, upon which we thought it likely clothing, guns, and household utensils

might have been hung even at as remote a date as the time of Selkirk, for they were very rusty, and bore evidence of having been driven into the rock a long time ago. A sort of stone oven, with a sunken place for fire underneath, was partly visible in the back part of the cave, so that by digging away the earth we uncovered it, and made out the purpose for which it was built. There was a darkish line, about a foot wide, reaching up to the roof of the cave, which, by removing the surface a little, we discovered to be produced originally by smoke, cemented in some sort by a drip that still moistened the wall, and this we found came through a hole in the top, which we concluded was the original chimney, now covered over with deposits of earth and leaves from the mountain above. In rooting about the fireplace, so as to get away the loose rubbish that lay over it, one of our party brought to light an earthen vessel, broken a little on one side, but otherwise perfect. It was about eight inches in diameter at the rim, and an inch or two smaller at the bottom, and had some rough marks upon the outside, which we were unable to decipher, on account of the clay which covered it. Afterward we took it out and washed it in a spring near by, when we contrived to decipher one letter and a part of another, with a portion of the date. The rest unfortunately was on the piece which had been broken off, and which we were unable to find, although we searched a long time; for, as may be supposed, we felt curious to know if it was the handiwork of Alexander Selkirk. For my own part, I had but little doubt that this was really one of the earthen pots made by

his own hands, and the reason I thought so was that the parts of the letters and date which we deciphered corresponded with his name and the date of his residence, and likewise because it was evident that it must have been imbedded in the ground out of which we dug it long beyond the memory of any living man. I was so convinced of this, and so interested in the discovery, that I made a rough drawing of it on the spot, of which I have since been very glad, inasmuch as it was accidentally dropped out of the boat afterward and lost in the sea.

We searched in vain for other relics of the kind, but all we could find were a few rusty pieces of iron and some old nails. The sides of the cave, as also the top, had marks scattered over them of different kinds, doubtless made there in some idle moment by human hands; but we were unable to make out that any of them had a meaning beyond the unconscious expression of those vague and wandering thoughts which must have passed occasionally through the mind of the solitary mariner who dwelt in this lonely place. They may have been symbolical of the troubled and fluctuating character of his religious feelings before he became a confirmed believer in the wisdom and mercy of Divine Providence, which unhappy state of mind he often refers to in the course of his narrative.

This cave is now occupied only by wild goats and bats, and had not been visited, perhaps, by any human being, until recently, more than once or twice in half a century, and then probably only by some deserter from a whale-ship, who preferred solitude and

the risk of starvation to the cruelty of a brutish captain.

In front of the cave, sloping down to the sea-side, is a plain covered with long rank grass, wild oats, radishes, weeds of various kinds, and a few small peach-trees. The latter we supposed were of the stock planted in the island by Lord Anson. From the interior of the cave we looked out over the tangled mass of shrubs, wild flowers, and waving grass in front, and saw that the sea was covered with foam, and the surf beat against the point beyond the cove, and flew up in the air to a prodigious height in white clouds of spray. Large birds wheeled about over the rocky heights, sometimes diving suddenly into the water, from which they rose again flecked with foam, and, soaring upward in the sunlight, their wings seemed to sparkle with jewels out of the ocean. Following the curve of the horizon, the view is suddenly cut off by a huge cliff of lava that rises directly out of the water to the height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet. It forms an abrupt precipice in front, and joins a range of rugged cliffs behind, which all abound in wonderful ledges overlooking the depths below, dark and lonesome caverns, and sharp pinnacles piercing the clouds in every direction. Goat-paths wind around them in places apparently inaccessible, and we saw herds of goats running swiftly along the dizzy heights overhanging the sea, where we almost fancied the birds of the air would fear to fly; they bounded over the frightful fissures in the rocks, and clung to the walls of cliffs with wonderful agility and tenacity of foot, and sometimes they were so high up that they looked hardly bigger than rabbits,

and we thought it impossible that they could be goats.

Looking back into the valley, we beheld mountains stretching up to a hundred different peaks, the sides covered with woods and fields of golden-colored oats, and the ravines fringed with green banks of grass and wild flowers of every hue. A stream of pure spring water rippled down over the rocks, and wound through the centre of the valley, breaking out at intervals into bright cascades, which glimmered freshly in the warm rays of the sun; its margins were fringed with rich grass and fragrant flowers, and groves of myrtle overhung the little lakelets that were made in its course, and seemed to linger there like mirrored beauties spell-bound. Ridges of amber-colored earth, mingled with rugged and moss-covered lava, sloped down from the mountains on every side and converged into the valley, as if attracted by its romantic beauties. Immense masses of rock, cast off from the towering cliffs by some dread convulsion of the elements, had fallen from the heights, and now lay nestling in the very bosom of the valley, enamored with its charms. Even the birds of the air seemed spell-bound within this enchanted circle; their songs were low and soft, and I fancied they hung in the air with a kind of rapture when they rose out of their sylvan homes, and looked down at all the wondrous beauties that lay outspread beneath them.

Some of us scattered off into the woods of myrtle, or lay down by the spring in the pleasant shade of the trees, and bathed our faces and drank of the cool water; others went up the hill-sides in search of peaches, or gathered seeds and specimens of wild

flowers to carry home. Too happy in the change, after our gloomy passage round Cape Horn, I rambled up the valley alone, and dreamed glowing day-dreams of Robinson Crusoe. Of all the islands of the sea, this had ever been the paradise of my boyish fancy. Even later in life, when some hard experience before the mast had worn off a good deal of the romance of sea-life, I could never think of Juan Fernandez without a strong desire to be shipwrecked there, and spend the remainder of my days dressed in goatskins, rambling about the cliffs, and hunting wild goats. It was a very imprudent desire, to be sure, not at all sensible; but I am now making a confession of facts rather out of the common order, and for which it would be useless to offer any excuse. Pleasant scenes of my early life rose up before me now with all their original freshness. How well I remembered the first time I read the surprising adventures of Robinson Crusoe! It was in the country, where I had never learned the worldly wisdom of the rising generation in cities. Indeed, I had never seen a city, and only knew by hearsay that such wonderful places existed. My father, after an absence of some weeks, returned with an illustrated volume of Crusoe, bound in cream-colored muslin (how plainly I could see that book now!), which he gave me, with a smiling admonition not to commence reading it for two or three years, by which time he hoped I would be old enough to understand it. That very night I was in a new world – a world all strange and fascinating, yet to me as real as the world around me. How I devoured each enchanting page, and sighed to think of

ever getting through such a delightful history. It was the first book beyond mere fairy tales (which I had almost begun to doubt), the first narrative descriptive of real life that I had ever read. Such a thing as a doubt as to its entire truthfulness never entered my head. I lingered over it with the most intense and credulous interest, and long after parental authority had compelled me to give it up for the night, my whole soul was filled with a confusion of novel and delightful sensations. Before daylight I was up again; I could not read in the dark, but I could open the magic book and smell the leaves fresh from the press; and before the type was visible I could trace out the figures in the prints, and gaze in breathless wonder upon the wild man in the goatskins.

The big tears stood in my eyes when I was through; but I found consolation in reading it again and again; in picturing out a thousand things that perhaps De Foe never dreamt of; and each night when I went to bed I earnestly prayed to God that I might some day or other be cast upon a desolate island, and live to become as wonderful a man as Robinson Crusoe. Yet, not content with that, I devoted all my leisure hours to making knife-cases, caps, and shot-pouches out of rabbit-skins, in the faint hope that it would hasten the blissful disaster. Years passed away; I lived on the banks of the Ohio; I had been upon the ocean. Still a boy in years, and more so perhaps in feeling, the dream was not ended. I gathered up drift-wood, and built a hut among the rocks; whole days I lay there thinking of that island in the far-off seas. A piece of tarred plank from some steam-boat had a sweeter scent

to me than the most odorous flower; for, as I lay smelling it by the hour, it brought up such exquisite visions of shipwreck as never before, perhaps, so charmed the fancy of a dreaming youth. Well I remembered, too, the favored few that I let into the secret; how we went every afternoon to a sand-bar, and called it Crusoe's Island; how I was Robinson Crusoe, and the friend of my heart Friday, whom I caused to be painted from head to foot with black mud, as also the rest of my friends; and then the battles we had; the devouring of the dead men; the horrible dances, and chasing into the water; and, above all, the rescue of my beloved Friday – how vividly I saw those scenes again!

Years passed on; I was a sailor before the mast. Alas! what a sad reality! I saw men flogged like beasts; I saw cruelty, hardship, disease, death in their worst forms; so much I saw that I was glad to take the place of a wandering outcast upon the shores of a sickly island ten thousand miles from home, to escape the horrors of that life. Yet the dream was not ended. Bright and beautiful as ever seemed to me that little world upon the seas, where dwelt in solitude the shipwrecked mariner. In the vicissitudes of fortune, I was again a wanderer; impelled by that vision of island-life which for seventeen years had never ceased to haunt me, I cast all upon the hazard of a die – escaped in an open boat through the perils of a storm, and now – where was I? What pleasant sadness was it that weighed upon my heart? Was all this a dream of youth; was it here to end, never more to give one gleam of joy; was the happy credulity, the freshness, the enthusiasm of boyhood gone

forever? Could it be that this was not Crusoe's Valley at last – this spot, which I had often seen in fancy from the banks of the Ohio, dim in the mist of seas that lay between? Did I really wander through it, or was it still a dream?

And where was the king of the island; the hero of my boyish fancy; he who had delighted me with the narrative of his romantic career, as man had never done before, as all the pleasures of life have never done since; where was the genial, the earnest, the adventurous Robinson Crusoe? Could it be that there was no "mortal mixture of earth's mould in him;" that he was barely the simple mariner Alexander Selkirk? No! no! Robinson Crusoe himself had wandered through these very groves of myrtle; he had quenched his thirst in the spring that bubbled through the moss at my feet; had slept during the glare of noon in the shade of those overhanging grottoes; had dreamed his day-dreams in these secluded glens.

Here, too, Friday had followed his master; the simple, childlike Friday, the most devoted of servants, the gentlest of savages, the faithfulest of men! Blessing on thee, Robinson, how I have admired thy prolific genius; how I have loved thee for thine honest truthfulness! And blessings on thee, Friday, how my young heart hath warmed toward thee! how I have laughed at thy scalded fingers, and wept lest the savages should take thee away from me! * * *

CHAPTER VI.

THE VALLEY ON FIRE

There was a sudden rustling in the bushes.

"Hallo, there!" shouted a voice. I looked round and beheld a fellow-passenger, a strange, eccentric man, who was seldom known to laugh, and whose chief pleasure consisted in reducing every thing to the practical standard of common sense. He was deeper than would appear at first sight, and not a bad sort of person at heart, but a little wayward and desponding in his views of life.

"You'll catch cold," said he; "nothing gives a cold so quick as sitting on the damp ground."

"True," said I, smiling; "but recollect the romance of the thing."

"Romance," rejoined the sad man, "won't cure a cold. I never knew it to cure one in my life."

"Well, I suppose you're right. Every body is right who believes in nothing but reality. The hewer of wood and the drawer of water gets more credit in the world for good sense than the unhappy genius who affords pleasure to thousands."

"So he ought – he's a much more useful man."

"Granted; we won't dispute so well-established a truism. Now let us cut a few walking-sticks to carry home. It will please our friends to find that we thought of them in this outlandish part of

the world."

"To be sure; if you like. But you'll never carry them home. No, sir, you can't do it. You'll lose them before you get half way to America."

"No matter – they cost nothing. Lend me your knife, and we'll try the experiment, at all events."

I then cut a number of walking-sticks and tied them up in a bundle. And here, while the warning of the doubter is fresh in my mind, let me mention the fate of these much-valued relics. I cut four beautiful sticks of myrtle, every one of which I lost before I reached California, though I was very careful where I kept them – so careful, indeed, that I hid them away on board the ship and never could find them again.

On our way back to the cave, as we emerged from the grove, I was astonished to see the entire valley in a blaze of fire. It raged and crackled up the sides of the mountains, blazing wildly and filling the whole sky with smoke. The beautiful valley upon which I had gazed with such delight a few hours before, seemed destined to be laid waste by some fierce and unconquerable destroyer, that devoured trees, shrubs, and flowers in its desolating career. The roar of the mad rushing flames, the seething tongues of fire shooting out from the bowers of shrubbery, the whirling smoke sweeping upward around the pinnacles of rock, the angry sea dimly seen through the chaos, and the sharp screaming of the sea-birds and dismal howling of the wild dogs, impressed me with a terrible picture of desolation.

It seemed as if some dreadful convulsion of nature had burst forth soon to cover the island with seething lava or engulf it in the ocean.

"What can it be?" said I. "Isn't it a grand sight? Perhaps a volcano has broken out. Surely it must be some awful visitation of Providence. It wouldn't be comfortable, however, to be broiled in lava, so I think the sooner we get down to the boats the better."

"There's no hurry," said my friend; "it's nothing but the Californians down at the cave. I told them before I left that they'd set fire to the grass if they kept piling the brush up in that way. Now you see they've done it."

"Yes, I see they have; and a tolerably big fire they've made of it too."

I almost forgave them the wanton act of Vandalism, so sublime was the scene. It was worth a voyage round Cape Horn to see it.

"Plenty of it," muttered the sad man, "to cook all the food that can be raised in these diggings. I wouldn't give an acre of ground in Illinois for the whole island. I only wish they'd burn it up while they're at it – if it be an island at all, which I ain't quite sure of yet."

THE CALIFORNIANS IN JUAN FERNANDEZ

We reached the cave by rushing through the flames. When we arrived near the mouth, I was amused to find about twenty long-bearded Californians, dressed in red shirts, with leather belts

round their bodies, garnished with knives and pistols, and picks in their hands, with which they were digging into the walls of Selkirk's castle in search of curiosities. Their guns were stacked up outside, and several of the party were engaged in cooking fish and boiling coffee. They had battered away at the sides, top, and bottom of the cave in their eager search for relics, till they had left scarcely a dozen square feet of the original surface. Every man had literally his pocket full of rocks. It was a curious sight, here in this solitary island, scarcely known to mariners save as the resort of pirates, deserters, and buccaneers, and chiefly to the reading world at home as the land of Robinson Crusoe, to see these adventurous Americans in their red shirts, lounging about the veritable castle of the "wild man in the goatskins," digging out the walls, smoking cigars, whittling sticks, and talking in plain English about California and the election of General Taylor. Some of them even went so far as to propose a "prospecting" expedition through Crusoe's Valley in search of gold, while others got up a warm debate on the subject of annexation – the annexation of Juan Fernandez. One long, lank, slab-sided fellow, with a leathern sort of face, and two copious streams of tobacco-juice running down from the corners of his mouth, was leaning on his pick outside the cave, spreading forth his sentiments for the benefit of the group of gentlemen who were cooking the fish.

"I tell you, feller-citizens," said he, aroused into something like prophetic enthusiasm as the subject warmed upon his mind, "I tell you it's manifest destiny. Joo-an Fernandays is bound by

all the rights of con-san-guity to be a part of the great Ree-public of Free States. Gentlemen, I'm a destiny-man myself; I go the whole figure, sir; yes, sir, I'm none of your old Hunkers. I go for Joo-an Fernandays and California, and any other small patches of airth that may be laying around the vicinity. We want 'em all, gentlemen; we want 'em for our whale-ships and the yeomanry of our country! (cheers.) We'll buy 'em from the Spaniards, sir, with our gold; if we can't buy 'em sir, by hokey! we'll take 'em, sir! (Renewed cheers.) I ask you, gentlemen – I appeal to your feelins as feller-citizens of *thee* greatest concatenation of states on *thee* face of God's airth, are you the men that'll refuse to fight for your country? (Cheers, and cries of No, no, we ain't the men; hurra for Joo-an Fernandays!) Then, by Jupiter, sir, we'll have it! We'll have it as sure as the Star of Empire shines like the bright Loo-min-ary of Destiny in the broad Panoply of Heaven (and more especially in the western section of it). We'll have it, sir, as sure as that redolent and inspiring Loominary beckons us on, sir, like a dazzling joo-el on the pre-moni-tary finger of Hope; and the glorious Stars and Stripes, feller-citizens, shall wave proudly in the zephyrs of futurity over the exalted peaks of Joo-an Fernandays!" (Tremendous sensation, during which the orator takes a fresh chew of tobacco, and sits down.)

As soon as the party of annexationists perceived us, they called out to us to heave to, and make ourselves at home. "Come on, gentlemen, come on! No ceremony. We're all Americans! this is a free country. Here's fish! here's bread! here's coffee!

Help yourselves, gentlemen! This is a great country, gentlemen – a great country!" Of course we fell to work upon the fish, which was a splendid cod, and the bread and the coffee too, and very palatable we found them all, and exceedingly jolly and entertaining the "gentlemen from the Brooklyn." These lively individuals had made the most of their time in the way of enjoying themselves ashore. About a week before our arrival they gave a grand party in honor of the American nation in general. It was in rather a novel sort of place, to be sure, but none the worse for that – one of the large caves near the boat-landing. On this eventful occasion they "scared up," as they alleged, sundry delicacies from home, such as preserved meats, pound-cake, Champagne, and wines of various sorts, and out of their number they produced a full band of music. They also, by clearing the earth and beating it down, made a very good place for dancing, and they had waltzes, polkas, and cotillons, in perfect ballroom style. It was rather a novel entertainment, take it altogether, in the solitudes of Juan Fernandez. I have forgotten whether the four Chilian ladies of the island attended; if they did not, it was certainly not for want of an invitation. The American Crusoe was there, no longer monarch of all he surveyed. Poor fellow, his reign was over. The Californians were the sovereigns now.

After our snack with the Brooklynites, we joined our comrades down on the beach. They had shot at a great many wild goats, without hitting any, of course. The rest of the afternoon we spent in catching fish for supper.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAVE OF THE BUCCANEERS

It now began to grow late, and we thought it best to look about us for some place where we could sleep. Captain Richardson very kindly offered us the use of his cabin, but he was crowded with passengers, and we preferred staying ashore. There was something novel in sleeping ashore, but neither novelty nor comfort in a vessel with a hundred and eighty Californians on board. Brigham and a few others took our boat, and went over near the old fort to search out a camping-ground, while the rest of the party and myself started off with the captain to explore a grotto. We had a couple of sailors to row us, which helped to make the trip rather pleasant.

Turning a point of rocks, we steered directly into the mouth of the grotto, and ran in some forty or fifty feet, till nearly lost in darkness. It was a very wild and rugged place – a fit abode for the buccaneers.

The cliff into which the cave runs is composed of great rocks, covered on top with a soil of red, burned earth. The swell of the sea broke upon the base with a loud roar, and the surf, rolling inward into the depths of the grotto, made a deep reverberation, like the dashing of water under a bridge. There was some difficulty in effecting a landing among these subterranean rocks, which were round and slippery. The water

was very deep, and abounded in seaweed. On gaining a dry place, we found the interior quite lofty and spacious, and tending upward into the very bowels of the mountain. Some said there was a way out clear up in the middle of the island. Overhead it was hung with stalactites, some of which were of great size and wonderful formation. Abraham and myself climbed up in the dark about a hundred feet, where we entirely lost sight of the mouth, and could hardly see an inch before us. As we turned back and began to descend, our friends down below looked like gigantic monsters standing in the rays of light near the entrance. I broke off some pieces of rock and put them in my pocket, as tokens of my visit to this strange place.

On reaching the boat again, we found a group of our comrades seated around a natural basin in the rocks, regaling themselves on bread and water. The water, I think, was the clearest and best I ever tasted. It trickled down from the top of the cave, and fell into the basin with a most refreshing sound. I drank a pint gobletful, and found it uncommonly cool and pure. Nothing more remaining to be seen, we started off for the boat-landing, near the huts, where we parted with our friend the captain, and then, it being somewhat late, we went in search of our party.

CHAPTER VIII.

LODGINGS UNDER GROUND

When we arrived on the ground selected by Brigham and the others, we found that they had made but little progress in cutting wood for the posts, and much remained to be done before we could get up the tent.

Heavy clouds hung over the tops of the mountains; the surf moaned dismally upon the rocks; big drops of rain began to strike us through the gusts of wind that swept down over the cliffs, and there was every prospect of a wet and stormy night. It was now quite dark. After some talk, we thought it best to abandon our plan of sleeping under the sail. Finally, we agreed to go in search of a cave under the brow of a neighboring cliff. We had seen it during the day, and although a very unpromising place, we thought it would serve to protect us against the rain. We therefore took our oars and sail upon our shoulders, together with what few weapons of defense we had, and stumbled about in the dark for some time, till we had the good fortune to find the mouth of the cave. In the course of a few minutes we struck a light by a lucky chance, and then looked in. There seemed to be no bottom to it, and, so far as we could perceive, neither sides nor top. Certainly there was not a living soul about the premises to deny us admission; so we crept down, as we thought, into the bowels of the earth, and, seeing nobody there, took possession

of our lodgings, such as they were.

It was a damp and gloomy place enough, reeking with mould, and smelling very strong of strange animals. The rocks hung gaping over our heads, as if ready to fall down upon us at the mere sound of our voices; the ground was covered with dirty straw, left there probably by some deserters from a whale-ship, and all around the sides were full of holes, which we supposed from the smell must be inhabited by foxes, rats, and perhaps snakes, though we were afterward told there were no reptiles on the island. We soon found that there were plenty of spiders and fleas in the straw. The ground being damp, we spread our sail over it, in order to make a sort of bed; and, being in a measure protected by a clump of bushes placed in the entrance by the previous occupants to keep out the wind and rain, we did not altogether despair of passing a tolerably comfortable night.

For a while there was not much said by any body; we were all busy looking about us. Some were looking at the rocks overhead; some into the holes, where they thought there might be wild animals; and myself and a few others were trying to light a fire in the back part of the cave. It smoked so that we had to give it up at last, for it well-nigh stifled the whole party.

By this time, being all tired, we lay down, and had some talk about Robinson Crusoe.

"If he lived in such holes as this," said one, "I don't think he had much sleep."

"No," muttered another, "that sort of thing reads a good deal

better than it feels; but there's no telling how a man may get used to it. Eels get used to being skinned, and I've heard of a horse that lived on five straws a day."

"For my part," adds a third, "I like it: there's romance about it – and convenience too, in some respects. For the matter of clothing, a man could wear goatskins. Tailors never dunned Robinson Crusoe. It goes a great way toward making a man happy to be independent of fashion. Being dunned makes a man miserable."

"Yes, it makes him travel a long way sometimes," sighs another, thoughtfully. "I'd be willing to live here a few years to get rid of society. What a glorious thing it must be to have nothing to do but hunt wild goats! Robinson had a jolly time of it; no accounts to make out, no office-hours to keep, nobody to call him to account every morning for being ten minutes too late, in consequence of a frolic. Talking about frolics, he wasn't tempted with liquor, or bad company either; he chose his own company: he had his parrot, his goats, his man Friday – all steady sort of fellows, with no nonsense about them. I'll venture to say they never drank any thing stronger than water."

"No," adds another, gloomily, "it isn't likely they applied 'hot and rebellious liquors to their blood.' But a man who lives alone has no occasion to drink. He has no love affairs on hand to drive him to it."

"Nor a scolding wife. I've known men to go all the way to California to get rid of a woman's tongue."

There was a pause here, as most of the talkers began to drop off to sleep.

"Gentlemen," said somebody in the party, who had been listening attentively to the conversation, "I don't believe a single word of it. I don't believe there ever was such a man as Robinson Crusoe in the world. I don't believe there ever was such a man as Friday. In my opinion, the whole thing is a lie, from beginning to end. I consider Robinson Crusoe a humbug!"

"Who says it's all a lie?" cried several voices, fiercely; "who calls Robinson Crusoe a humbug?"

"That is to say," replied the culprit, modifying the remark, "I don't think the history is altogether true. Such a person might have lived here, but he added something on when he told his story. He knew very well his man Friday, or his dogs and parrots were not going to expose his falsehoods."

"Pooh! you don't believe in any thing; you never did believe in any thing since you were born. Perhaps you don't believe in that. Are you quite sure you are here yourself?"

"Well, to be candid, when I look about me and see what a queer sort of a place it is, I don't feel quite sure; there's room for doubt."

"Doubt, sir! doubt? Do you doubt Friday? Do you think there's room for doubt in him?"

"Possibly there may have been such a man. I say there *may* have been; I wouldn't swear to it."

"Fudge, sir! fudge! The fact is, you make yourself ridiculous."

You are troubled with dyspepsia."

"I am rayther dyspeptic, gentlemen, rayther so. I hope you'll excuse me, but I can't exactly say I believe in Crusoe. It ain't my fault – the belief ain't naturally in me."

Upon which, having made this acknowledgment, we let him alone, and he turned over and went to sleep. We now pricked up our lamp, and prepared to follow his example, when a question arose as to the propriety of standing watches during the night – a precaution thought necessary by some in consequence of the treacherous character of the Spaniards. There were eleven of us, which would allow one hour to each person. For my part, I thought there was not much danger, and proposed letting every man who felt uneasy stand watches for himself. We had labored without rest for thirty-six hours, and I was willing to trust to Providence for safety, and make the most of our time for sleeping. A majority being of the same opinion, the plan of standing watches was abandoned; and having loaded our two guns, we placed them in a convenient position commanding the mouth of the cave. I got the harpoon and stood it up near me, for I had made up my mind to fasten on to the first Spaniard that came within reach.

ATTACK OF THE ROBBERS

Scarcely had we closed our eyes and fallen into a restless doze, when a nervous gentleman in the party rose up on his hands and

knees, and cautiously uttered these words:

"Friends, don't you think we'd better put out the light. The Spaniards may be armed, and if they come here, the lamp will show them where we are, and they'll be sure to take aim at our heads."

"Sure enough," whispered two or three at once, "we didn't think of that; they can't see us in the dark, however, unless they have eyes like cats. Let us put out the light, by all means."

So with that we were about to put out the light, when the man who had doubts in regard to Robinson Crusoe rose up on his hands and knees likewise, and said,

"Hold on! I think you'd better not do that. It ain't policy. I don't believe in it myself."

"Confound it, sir," cried half a dozen voices, angrily, "you don't believe in any thing. What's the reason you don't believe in it, eh? What's the reason, sir?"

"Well, I'll tell you why. Because, if you put out the light, we can't see where to shoot. Likely as not we'd shoot one another. If I feel certain of any thing, it is, that I'd be the first man shot; it's my luck. I know I'd be a dead man before morning."

There was something in this suggestion not to be laughed at. The most indignant of us felt the full force of it. To shoot our enemies in self-defense seemed reasonable enough, but to shoot any of our own party, even the man who doubted Robinson Crusoe, would be a very serious calamity. At last, after a good deal of talk, we compromised the matter by putting the lamp

under an old hat with a hole in the top. This done, we tried to go to sleep.

Brigham went to the mouth of the cave about midnight to take an observation. He was armed with one of the guns.

"What's that?" said he, sharply; "I hear something! Gentlemen, I hear something! Hallo! who goes there?"

There was no answer. Nothing could be heard but the moaning of the surf down on the beach.

"A Spaniard! by heavens, a Spaniard! I'll shoot him – I'll shoot him through the head!"

"Don't fire, Brigham," said I, for I wanted a chance to fasten on with the harpoon; "wait till he comes up, and ask him what he wants."

"Ahoy there! What do you want? Answer quick, or I'll shoot you! Speak, or you're a dead man!"

All hands were now in commotion. We rushed to the mouth of the cave in a body, determined to defend ourselves to the last extremity.

"Gentlemen," cried Brigham, a little confused, "it's a goat! I see him now, in the rays of the moon; a live goat, coming down the cliff. Shall I kill him for breakfast?"

"Wait," said I, "till he comes a little closer; I'll bend on to him with the harpoon."

"You'd better let him alone," said the Doubter, in a sepulchral voice. "Likely as not it's a tame goat or a chicken belonging to the American down there."

"A tame devil, sir! How do you suppose they could keep tame goats in such a place as this. Your remark concerning the chicken is beneath contempt!"

"Well, I don't know why. Tain't my nature to take an entire goat without proof. I thought it might be a chicken."

"Then you'd better go and satisfy yourself, if you're not afraid."

The Doubter did so. He walked a few steps toward the object, so as to get sight of its outline, and then returned, saying,

"That thing there isn't a goat at all – neyther is it a chicken."

"What is it, then?"

"Nothing but a bush."

"What makes it move?"

"The wind, I suppose. I don't know what else could make it move, for it ain't got the first principle of animal life in it. Bushes don't walk about of nights any more than they do in the daytime. I never did believe in it from the beginning, and I told you so, but you wouldn't listen to me."

We said nothing in reply to this, but returned into the cave and lay down again upon the sail.

CHAPTER IX.

COOKING FISH

Most of the party were snoring in about ten minutes. For myself, I found it impossible to sleep soundly. The gloomy walls of rock, the strange and romantic situation into which chance had thrown me, the remembrance of what I had read of this island in early youth, the dismal moaning of the surf down on the beach, all contributed to confuse my mind. An hour or two before daylight, I was completely chilled through by the dampness of the ground, and entirely beyond sleep.

I heard some voices outside, and got up to see who was talking. Lest it might be the Spaniards, I took the harpoon with me. At the mouth of one of the convict-cells near by I found four of my comrades, who, unable to pass the time any other way, had lit a fire and were baking some fish. They had dug a hole in the ground, which they lined with flat stones, so as to form a kind of oven; this they heated with coals. Then they wrapped up a large fish in some leaves, and put it in; and by covering the top over with fire, the fish was very nicely baked. I think I never tasted any thing more delicate or better flavored. We had an abundant meal, which we relished exceedingly. The smoke troubled us a good deal; but, by telling stories of shipwreck, and wondering what our friends at home would think if they could see us here cooking fish, we contrived to pass an hour or so very pleasantly.

I then went back into the cave, and turned in once more upon the sail.

Of course, after eating fish at so unusual an hour, I had a confusion of bad dreams. Perhaps they were visions. In this age of spiritual visitations, it is not altogether unlikely the spirits of the island got possession of me. At all events, I saw Robinson Crusoe dressed in goatskins, and felt him breathe, as plainly as I see this paper and feel this pen. How could I help it? for I actually thought it was myself that had been shipwrecked; that I was the very original Crusoe, and no other but the original; and I fancied that Abraham had turned black, and was running about with a rag tied round his waist, and I called him my man Friday, and fully believed him to be Friday. Sometimes I opened my eyes and looked round the dismal cavern, and clenched my fists, and hummed an old air of former times to try if Robinson had become totally savage in his nature; but it was all the same, there was no getting rid of the illusion.

The dawn of day came. No ship was in sight. The sea was white with foam, and gulls were soaring about over the rock-bound shores. I walked down to a spring and bathed my head, which was hot and feverish for want of rest.

Bright and early we started off on a goat-hunt among the mountains. Several passengers from the Brooklyn, well provided with guns, joined the party, and the enthusiasm was general. It had been my greatest desire, from the first sight of the island, to ascend a high peak between the harbor and Crusoe's Valley,

and by following the ridge from that point, to explore as far as practicable the interior. For this purpose, I selected as a companion my friend Abraham, in whose enthusiastic spirit and powers of endurance I had great confidence. He was heartily pleased to join me; so, buckling up our belts, we branched off from the party, who by this time were peppering away at the wild goats. We were soon well up on the mountain. Another adventurer joined us before we reached the first elevation; but he was so exhausted by the effort, and so unfavorably impressed by the frightful appearance of the precipices all round, that he was forced to abandon the expedition and return into the valley. We speedily lost sight of him, as he crept down among the declivities.

The side of the mountain which we were ascending was steep and smooth, and was covered with a growth of long grass and wild oats, which made it very hard to keep the goat-paths; and all about us, except where these snake-like traces lay, was as smooth and sloping as the roof of a house. There was one part of the mountain that sloped down in an almost perpendicular line to the verge of the cliff overhanging the sea, where the abrupt fall was more than a thousand feet, lined with sharp crags. This fearful precipice rose like a wall of solid rock out of the sea, and there was a continual roar of surf at its base. There was no way of getting up any higher without scaling the slope above, which, as I said before, was covered with long grass and oats, that lay upon it like the thatch of a house; and the rain which had fallen during the previous night now made it very smooth. I looked at

it, I must confess, with something like dismay, thinking how we were to climb over such a steep place without slipping down over the cliff; when I beheld Abraham, of whom I had lost sight for a time, toiling upward upon it like a huge bear. His outline against the sky reminded me especially of a bear of the grizzly species. I saw that he clung to the roots of the grass with his hands, and dug his toes into the soft earth to keep from sliding back, in case his hold should give way. Committing myself to Providence, I started after him by a shorter cut, grasping hold of the grass by the roots as I went. Every few perches, I stopped to search for a strong bunch of grass, for there was nothing else to hold on by. Some of it was so loose that it gave way as soon as I laid hold of it, and I came near going for want of something to balance me. Six inches of a slide would have sent me twirling over the cliff into the raging surf a thousand feet below. Once, impressed with the terrible idea that I was slipping, I stopped short, and my heart beat till it shook me all over. It was only by lying flat down and seizing the roots of the grass with both hands, while I dug my toes into the sod, that I retained my presence of mind. Indeed, at this place, having turned to look back, I was so struck with horror at the frail tenure upon which my life depended, that I turned partly blind, and a rushing noise whirled through my brain at the thought that I should be no longer able to retain my grasp. If for one moment I lost my consciousness and let go my hold of the grass, I would surely be lost; there was no hope; I must be dashed over the precipice, and go spinning through a thousand

feet of space till I struck the rocks below, or was buried in the surf. I lay panting for breath, while every muscle quivered as if it would shake loose my grasp. In the space of five minutes I thought more of death than I had ever thought before. Was this to be my end after all? What would they say on board the ship when I was dead? What would be the distress of my friends and kindred at home when they heard how my mangled body was picked up in the surf, and buried upon this lonely rock-bound island? A thousand thoughts flashed through my brain in succession. Even the happy days of my youth rose up before me now, but the vision was sadly mingled with errors and follies that could never be retrieved. Believing my time had come, I looked upward in my agony, and beheld Abraham, scarcely twenty yards in advance, lying down in the same position, with hands stretched out and dug into the roots of the grass.

"Abraham," said I, "this is terrible!"

"Yes," said he, "a foretaste of death, if nothing worse."

"But how in the world are we to get out of it?"

"I don't know – there seems to be no hope; we can't go back again, that's an absolute certainty. In my opinion, we'll have to stay here till somebody comes for us, which doesn't seem a likely chance just now."

A good rest, however, having inspired us with fresh courage, we resolved upon pushing on. There was a narrow ledge about a hundred yards above us; if we could reach that, we would be safe for the present. By great exertion we got a little above the

place where we had lain down; and, the sod beginning to give way as before, we threw ourselves on our faces again, and rested a while. In this way, hanging, as it were, between life and death, we at last reached the ledge. Here we flung ourselves on the solid rock, quite exhausted. Abraham was a brave man, but he now lay gasping for breath, as pale as a ghost. I suppose I looked about the same, for, to tell the honest truth, I was well-nigh scared out of my senses. Certainly all the gold of Ophir could not have induced me to go through the same ordeal again.

There was still above us, about five hundred feet higher, a point or pyramid of volcanic rock, that stood out over the sea in a slanting direction. It was the highest peak in the neighborhood of the coast, and was called the Nipple. We had done nothing yet compared with the ascent of that peak. Both of us looked toward it, and smiled.

"Shall we try it?" said Abraham.

"No," said I, "we never could get up there; it would be perfect folly to try."

"I think not, Luff; it isn't so smooth as the place we have just climbed over. Don't you see there are rocks to hold on to?"

"Yes, but they look as if they'd give way. However, if you say so, we'll make the attempt."

With this, we each drew a long breath, and commenced climbing up the rocks. Sometimes we dug our fingers into the crevices and lifted ourselves up, and sometimes we wound around ledges less than a foot wide, overhanging deep chasms,

and were forced to cling to the rough points that jutted out in order to keep our balance. Flocks of pigeons flew startled from their nests, and whirled past us, as if affrighted at the intrusion of man. Herds of wild goats dashed by us also, and ran bleating down into the rugged defiles, where they looked like so many insects. The wind whistled mournfully against the sharp crags, and swept against us in such fierce and sudden gusts that we were sometimes obliged to stop and cling to the rocks with all our might to keep from being blown off. At last we reached the base of the Nipple. This was the wildest place of all. Above us stood the dizzy peak, like the turret of a ruined castle, overlooking the surf at a height of nearly two thousand feet. We now lay down again, breathing hard, and a good deal exhausted. When partly recovered, I looked over the edge toward Crusoe's Valley. It was the grandest sight I ever beheld; rugged cliffs and winding ridges hundreds of feet below; a green valley embowered in shrubbery nestling beneath the heights, all calm and smiling in the warm sunshine; slopes of woodland stretching up in the ravines; a line of white spray from the surf all along the shores, and the boundless ocean outspread in one vast sweep beyond.

"I'll tell you what it is, Luff," said Abraham, "this may be all very fine, but I don't want to try it again."

"Nor I either, Abraham. Isn't it awful climbing?"

"Yes, awful enough; but we must get on the top of that old castle there."

"To be sure," said I, rather doubtfully. "Of course, Abraham;

we ought to climb that as a sort of climax. It will make an excellent climax either to ourselves or the adventure."

Saying this, I walked a few steps from the place where we were lying down, to see if there was any way of scaling the Nipple. It appeared to be a huge pile of loose rocks ready to fall to pieces upon being touched. It was about a hundred feet high, and nearly perpendicular all round. There was no part that seemed to me at all accessible. Even the first part or foundation could not be reached without passing over a sharp ridge, steep at both sides, and entirely destitute of vegetation. I was not quite mad enough to undertake such a thing as this without the least hope of success.

"No, Abraham," said I, "we can't do it. I see no way of getting up there."

"Let me take a look," said Abraham, who was always fertile in discoveries. "I think I see a place that we can climb over, so as to get on that horseback sort of a ridge, and the rest of the way may be easier than we suppose."

He then walked a few steps round a ledge of crumbling rock, and I soon saw him climbing up where it seemed as if there was no possible way of holding on. I actually began to think there was something supernatural in his hands and feet; yet I felt an indescribable dread that he would fall at last. For a while I was in perfect agony; each moment I expected to see him roll headlong over the cliff. Presently I lost sight of him altogether. I thought he had lost his balance, and was dashed to atoms below! Seized with horror, I sat down and groaned aloud. Again I rose and ran

to the edge of the cliff, shouting wildly in the faint hope that he was not yet lost. There was no answer but the wail of the winds and the moaning of the surf. While I looked from the depths to the fearful height above, I saw his head rise slowly and cautiously over the top of the Nipple; then his body, and then, with a wild shout of triumph, he stood waving his hat on the summit!

There he stood, a man of stalwart frame, now no bigger than a dwarf against the sky!

I saw him point toward the horizon, and, looking in the direction of his finger, perceived the Anteus about twenty miles off under short sail.

He remained but a few minutes in this perilous position, as I supposed on account of the wind, which was now very strong.

On his return, being unable to get down on the same side, he was forced to creep backward over the ridge, and lower himself by fixing his hands in the crevices to the ledge over the sea, from which he made his way round to the starting-point. When he reached the spot where I stood, he sat down, breathing hard, and looking very pale.

"Luff," said he, "don't go up there. It shook under me like a tree. Every flaw of wind made it sway as if it would topple over."

"Why," said I, "after scaring me out of my wits, it isn't exactly fair to deprive me of some satisfaction."

"Don't do it, Luff; I warn you as a friend! It ought to be satisfaction enough to find me here safe and sound, after such a climb as that."

"No, Abraham, I must do it; because when we return to the ship, don't you see what an advantage you'll have over me?"

"Only in being the greater fool."

"Then there must be two fools, to make us even. It would hardly be friendly to let you be the only one; so here goes, Abraham. In case I tumble over, give my love to all at home, and tell them I died like a Trojan."

All this was folly, to be sure; but how could I help it? how could I bear the thought of hearing Abraham talk about having scaled the Nipple, while I was ingloriously groaning for him down below? It would mortify me to the very soul.

Following now the same path that Abraham had taken, I was soon on top of the first elevation; for, being lighter and more active, though not so strong, I had rather the advantage in climbing. Here I wound round by a different way, so as to reach the ridge that led over the chasm. It was about the width of a horse's back, sloping down abruptly on each side. The distance was not over twenty feet, which I gained by straddling the ridge and working along by my hands. The descent on each side was, as before stated, nearly two thousand feet. I need not say it was the most terrible ride I ever had. Indeed, when I think of it now, it brings up strange and thrilling sensations. How I got over the final peak, I can hardly tell; it seems as if I must have been drunk with excitement, and reached the summit by one of those mysterious chances of fortune which not unfrequently favor men whose minds are in a morbid state.

When I looked down on the waters of the bay, I saw the Brooklyn still at anchor. She looked like some big insect floating on its back, with its legs in the air and little insects running about all over it. I staid up on the top of the Nipple only a few minutes. The view on every side was sublime beyond all the powers of language; but a gust of wind coming, the frail pinnacle of lava upon which I stood swayed, as Abraham had told me; and, fearing it would tumble over, I hurried down the best way I could.

CHAPTER X.

RAMBLE INTO THE INTERIOR

Finding by the sun that it was yet early in the day, we resolved, after resting awhile, to push on as far as we could go into the interior. The prospect was perfectly enchanting. Winding ridges and deep gorges lay before us as we looked back from the ocean; and cool glens, shaded with myrtle, and open fields of grass in the soft haze below, and springs bubbling over the rocks with a pleasant music; all varied, all rich and tempting. Away we darted over the rocks, shouting with glee, so irresistible was the feeling of freedom after our dreary ship-life, and so inspiring the freshness of the air and the wondrous beauty of the scenery. The ridge upon which our path lay was barely wide enough for a foothold. It was composed of loose stones and crumbling pieces of clay. The precipice on the right was nearly perpendicular; on the left craggy peaks reared their grizzled heads from masses of dark green shrubbery, like the turrets of ancient castles shaken to ruin by the tempests of ages. Sometimes we had to get down on our hands and knees, and creep over the narrow goat-paths for twenty or thirty feet, holding on by the roots and shrubs that grew in the crevices of the rocks, and at intervals force ourselves through jungles of bushes so closely interwoven that for half an hour we could scarcely gain a hundred yards. About three miles back from the sea-coast, having labored hard to reach a high

point overlooking one of the interior valleys, we were stopped by an abrupt rampart of rocks. Here we had to look about us, and consider a long time how we were to get over it.

We now began to suffer all the tortures of thirst after our perilous adventure on the Nipple, and our subsequent struggle through the bushes and along the ridge. There was no sign of a spring any where near; the cliffs were bleached with the wind, and not so much as a drop of water could be found in any of the hollows that had been washed in the rocks by the rain. In this extremity we sat down on a bank of moss, ready to die of thirst, and began to think we would have to return without getting a sight of the valley on the other side of the cliff, when I observed a curious plant close by, nearly covered with great bowl-shaped leaves.

"Abraham," said I, "may be there's water there!"

"May be there is," said Abraham; "let us look."

We jumped up and ran over to where the strange plant was, and there we beheld the leaves half full of fine clear water!

"There! what do you think of that, Abraham? Isn't it refreshing? You see it requires a person like me to find fresh water on the top of a mountain where there are no springs."

"Yes, yes," quoth Abraham, slowly, "but may be it's poison."

"Sure enough – may be it is! I didn't think of that," said I, very much startled at the idea of drinking poison. "Suppose you drink some and try. If it doesn't do you any harm, I'll drink some myself in about half an hour."

"Well, I would like a good drink," said Abraham, thoughtfully; "there's no denying that. But it always goes better when I have a friend to join me. I'll tell you what I'll do, Luff. You take one bowl and I'll take another, and we'll sit down here and call it whisky punch, and both drink at the same time."

"Very good," said I, "that's a fair bargain. Come on, Abraham."

So we cut the stems of two large leaves, containing each about a pint of water, and sat down on a rock.

"Your health," said I, raising my bowl; "long life and happiness to you, Abraham!"

"Thank you," said Abraham; "the same to you!"

"Why don't you drink?" I asked, seeing that my friend kept looking at me without touching the contents of the bowl.

"I'm going to drink presently."

"Drink away, then!"

"Here goes!"

But it was not "here goes," for he still kept looking at me without drinking.

"Well," said I, impatiently, "what are you afraid of?"

"I'm not afraid," cried Abraham, "but I don't see you drinking."

"Nonsense, man! I'm waiting for you!"

"Go ahead, then."

"Go ahead."

Here there was a long pause, and we watched each other with

great attention. At last, entirely out of patience, I lowered my bowl and said,

"Abraham, do you want me to poison myself?"

"No, I don't," said Abraham; "I'd be very sorry for it."

"Then why did you propose that we should drink this poison together? for I verily believe it must be poison, or it wouldn't look so tempting."

"Because you wanted me to drink it first."

"Did I? Give me your hand, Abraham; I forgot that." Whereupon we shook hands, and agreed to consider it not whisky punch, but poison, and drink none at all.

Our thirst increasing to a painful degree, we were about to retrace our steps, when I observed a little bird perch himself upon the edge of a leaf not far off, and commence drinking from the hollow. I told Abraham to look.

"Sure enough," said he, "birds don't drink whisky punch."

"No," said I, "God Almighty never made a bird or a four-legged beast yet that would naturally drink punch or any other kind of poison. It must be water, and good water too, for birds have more sense than men about what they drink. So here goes, whether you join or not."

"And here goes too!" cried Abraham; and we both, without hesitating any longer, emptied our bowls to the bottom; and so pure and delicious was the water that we emptied half a dozen leavesful more, and never felt a bit afraid that it would hurt us; for we knew then that God had made these cups of living green,

and filled them with water fresh from the heavens for the good of His creatures.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VALLEY OF ENCHANTMENT

Thus refreshed, we set to work boldly, and, by dint of hard climbing, reached the top of the cliff. It was the highest point on the island next to the Peak of Yonka. We looked over the edge and down into a lovely valley covered with grass. Wooded ravines sloped into it on every side, and streams wound through it hedged with bushes, and all around us the air was filled with a sweet scent of wild flowers. In that secluded valley, so seldom trodden by the foot of man, we saw how much of beauty lay yet unrevealed upon earth; and our souls were filled with an abiding happiness: for time might dim the mortal eye; the freshness of youth might pass away; all the bright promises of life might leave us in the future; but there was a resting-place there for the memory; an impression, made by the Divine hand within, that could never fade; a glimpse in our earthly pilgrimage of that promised land where there is harmony without end – beauty without blemish – joy beyond all that man hath conceived.

Nothing was here of that stern and inhospitable character that marked the rock-bound shores of the island. A soft haze hung over the valley; a happy quiet reigned in the perfumed air; the breath of heaven touched gently the flowers that bloomed upon the sod; all was fresh and fair, and full of romantic beauty. Yet there was life in the repose; abundance within the maze of heights

that encircled the dreamy solitude. Fields of wild oats waved with changing colors on the hill-sides; green meadows swept around the bases of the mountains; rich and fragrant shrubs bloomed wherever we looked; fair flowers and running vines hung over the brows of the rocks, crowning them as with a garland; and springs burst out from the cool earth and fell in white mist down into the groves of myrtle below, and were lost in the shade. Nowhere was there a trace of man's intrusion. Wild horses, snuffing the air, dashed out into the valley in all the joyousness of their freedom, flinging back their manes and tossing their heads proudly; and when they beheld us, they started suddenly, and fled up the mountains beyond. Herds of goats ran along the rugged declivities below us, looking scarcely bigger than rabbits; and birds of bright and beautiful plumage flew close around our heads, and lit upon the trees. It was a fair scene, untouched by profaning hands; fair and solitary, and lovely in its solitude as the happy valley of Rasselas.

CHAPTER XII.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY

While I was trying to make a sketch of this Valley of Enchantment, as we called it, Abraham was peering over the cliff, and looking about in every direction in search of some ruin or relic of habitation. He was not naturally of a romantic turn, but he had a keen eye for every thing strange and out of the way, and an insatiable thirst for the discovery of natural curiosities. Already his pockets were full of roots and pieces of rock; and it was only by the utmost persuasion that I could prevent him from carrying a lump of lava that must have weighed twenty pounds. Without any cause, so far as I could see, he began stamping upon the ground, and then, picking up a big stone, he rolled it over the edge of the cliff, and eagerly peeped after it, holding both hands to his ears as if to listen.

"What's that, Abraham?" said I; "you are certainly losing your wits."

"I knew it! I knew it!" he cried, greatly excited; "it's perfectly hollow. There's a natural castle in it!"

"Where? in your head?"

"No, in the cliff here; it's all hollow – a regular old castle! Come on! come on, Luff! We're bound to explore it. May be we'll rake up something worth seeing yet!" Saying which, he bounded down a narrow ledge on the left, and I, as a matter of

course, followed. Our path was not the most secure, winding as it did over an abyss some hundreds of feet in a direct fall; but our previous experience enabled us to spring over the rocks with wonderful agility, and work our way down the more difficult passes in a manner that would have done credit to animals with four legs. Portions of the earth formed a kind of narrow stairway, so distinct and regular that we almost thought it must be of artificial construction. In about ten minutes we reached a broad ledge underneath the brow of the cliff. Turning our backs to the precipice, we saw a spacious cavity in the rocks, shaped a good deal like an immense Gothic doorway, all overhung with vines and wild fern.

"I knew it!" cried Abraham, enthusiastically. "A regular old castle, by all that's wonderful! Crusoe's cave is nothing to it! Just see what a splendid entrance; what ancient turrets; what glorious old walls of solid rock!"

"Verily, it does look like a castle," said I. "We must call it the Castle of Abraham, in honor of the discoverer."

"Yes, but it strikes me there may be another discoverer already. Look at these marks on the rock!"

"True enough; goats never make marks like these!" Near the mouth or entrance of the grotto, traced in black lines, evidently with a burnt stick, we saw a number of curious designs, so defaced by the dripping of water from above that we were unable for some time to make out that they had any meaning. At length, by carefully following the darkest parts, we got some clew to the

principal objects intended to be represented, which were very clumsily drawn, as if by an unskillful hand. There was a figure of a man, lying upon a horizontal line, with his face turned upward; the limbs were twisted and broken, and the expression of the features was that of extreme agony; the eyes were closed, the back of the head crushed in, the mouth partly open, and the tongue hanging out. One hand grasped a jagged rock, the other a knife with a part of the blade broken off. Close by, with its head upon his feet, was the skeleton of a strange animal, so rudely sketched that we could hardly tell whether it was intended for a goat or not. It had the horns of a goat, but the eyes, turning upward in their sockets, looked like those of a child that had died some horrible death. Waving lines were drawn some distance off, as representing the sea in a storm; a large ship under sail was standing off in the foam from a pile of rocks that rose out of the sea like a desolate island. The body of a man could be seen under the waves, struggling toward the ship; a shark was tearing the flesh from his legs, and the hands were thrown up wildly over the water. Underneath the whole were several rude sketches of human hearts, pierced through with knives. A hand pointed upward at the figure first described. It had a ring on the forefinger; the tendons of the wrist hung down, as if wrenched from the arm by some instrument of torture. Around these strange designs were numerous others, representing the heads of eagles; a famished wolf, gnawing its own flesh; and the corpses of two children, strangled with a rope; besides other rude

sketches of which we could make nothing; and, indeed, some of these already mentioned were so indistinct, that we were forced to depend a good deal on conjecture in order to come to any conclusion in regard to what they were intended to represent; so that I have given but a vague idea, at best, of the whole thing.

"There's something strange about this," said Abraham, trembling all over; "something more than we may like to see. Let us go into the cave, and try if we can solve the mystery."

"I don't think there's much mystery about it," said I; "evidently some sailor who ran away from a ship has occupied this as a hiding-place; these strange designs he has doubtless made in some idle hour, to represent scenes in his own life. The fellow had a bad conscience – he has left the mark of it here."

"He may have left more than that," said Abraham, seriously; "he may have fallen from one of these rocks, and lain here for days, helpless and dying: in the agonies of thirst, driven delirious by fever, he tried, perhaps, to tell by these signs how he died. If I'm not mistaken, we'll find some farther clew to this affair within there. Let us see, at all events."

We then went into the cave, and looked around us as far as the light reached. It was very lofty and spacious, and made a short turn at the back part, so that all beyond was quite wrapt in darkness. Weeds hung in crevices of the dank walls of rock; a few footprints of animals were marked in the ground, some slimy tracks were made over the rocks by snails, and these, together with a dull sound of the flapping of wings made by a number

of bats that hung overhead, had a very gloomy effect. However, seeing nothing else in the front part of the cave, we groped our way back into the dark passage at the end, and followed it up till we reached a sort of natural stairway leading into an upper chamber. For some time we hesitated about going up here, thinking there might be a hole or break in the rocks through which by mischance we might fall, and be cast down into some vault or fissure underneath. After a while our eyes got a little used to the darkness, and we thought we could discern the chamber a few steps above into which this stairway led; so we crept up cautiously, feeling our way as we went, and as soon as we found that the ground was level we stood upon our feet, and perceived, from the height above us, and the vacancy all around, that we were in a spacious apartment of the cavern. There still being some danger of falling through, as we discerned by the hollow sound made by our feet, we only went a short distance beyond the entrance, when we stopped still on account of the darkness, which was now quite impenetrable.

"A queer place!" said Abraham; "very like one of the piratical retreats you read about in novels."

"Very, indeed, and quite as unlike reality," said I; "it doesn't seem to be inhabited by pirates now, though, or any thing else except bats. I wish we had a torch, Abraham, for I vow I can't see an inch before me."

"That's not a bad idea," said Abraham; "I think I have a match in my pocket, but it won't do to run the risk of missing fire here."

Wait a bit, Luff; I'll go back to the mouth of the cave, and rake up some brush-wood. We'll have some light on the subject presently – if the match don't miss fire."

Abraham then crept back the way we came, as I supposed, for I could see nothing in any direction, and only heard a dull echo around the walls of rock, growing fainter and fainter, till all I was sensible of was the flitting of some bats by my head, and the breath passing through my nostrils. To tell the honest truth, I felt some very queer sensations steal over me upon finding myself all alone in this dark hole, unable to see so much as my hand within an inch of my eyes, and not knowing but the first thing I felt might be a snake or tarentula creeping up my legs, or the bite of some monstrous bat. I waited with great impatience, without daring to move, lest I should miss the way back and fall through the earth; for in the confusion of my thoughts I had lost all knowledge of the direction of the entrance, and this very thing, perhaps, caused me to magnify the time as it elapsed. It seemed to me that Abraham would never return, he staid away so long, and this brought up some strange and startling thoughts. Suppose, in his search for the brush-wood, he had slipped off the ledge in front of the cave? Suppose he had lost his footing in the dark passage on the way out, and fallen into some unfathomable depth below? Suppose a gang of wild dogs, driven to desperation by hunger, had seized him, and were now, with all their wolfish instincts, tearing him to pieces? The more I thought, the more vague and terrible became my conjectures; till, no longer able to endure

the torture of suspense, I shouted his name with all my might. There was no answer but the startling echoes of my own voice, which seemed to mock me in a thousand different directions. I shouted again, and again there was the same fearful reverberation of voices, growing fainter and fainter till they seemed to die upon the air, like the passing away of hope. I now began to peer through the darkness in all directions, with the intention of retracing my steps should I discover any indication of the entrance by which to direct my course. At first it appeared as if the darkness was of the same density all round, but gradually, as I strained my eyes, I thought I perceived a faint glimmer of light, and thither I cautiously made my way, groping about with my hands as I advanced.

In a few moments I felt, by a rush of air, that I was near an opening, and the light growing stronger at the same time, I soon perceived that it led downward in a slanting direction, in the same way as the passage through which we had come up. I was now satisfied that there would be no farther difficulty in getting out, and having no cause to imagine that the place had changed, began to descend as rapidly as possible. All of a sudden my feet slipped from under me, and I went flying down a sort of *chute*, without any power to stop myself, and so terrible was the sensation that I was perfectly speechless, though conscious all the time. It was not long, however, this suspense, for I struck bottom almost at the next moment, and went rolling over headlong into an open space. As soon as I looked around me, I perceived a cleft in the

rocks, some fifteen feet above, through which there was a dim ray of light, and this, as I took it, was what had misled me. My sight being rather confused, I now began to grope around me, in order to ascertain if there were any more holes near by, when I discovered that there was straw scattered about over the ground. Instinctively I thought about the strange marks on the rocks near the mouth of the cave. Now if there should be a dead body here, or a skeleton! What a companion in this lonely dungeon! A cold tremor ran through me, and I actually thought that, should I accidentally touch the clammy flesh of a corpse in such a place, it would drive me mad. For a while I scarcely dared to look around, but the absolute necessity of finding some place of exit at last overcame my apprehensions. The light from above was quite faint, as before stated, but yet sufficient, upon getting used to it, to enable me to perceive that I was in a sort of chamber about fifteen feet in diameter, closed on every side except where I had so unexpectedly entered; and I was greatly relieved to find that there was nothing on the ground but a thin layer of straw scattered about here and there, and a few pieces of wood partly burned. I lost no time in making my way into the chute again, which I found but little difficulty in ascending, for it was not so steep as I had supposed. Upon regaining the large apartment from which I had wandered, I heard the muffled echoes of a voice coming, as I thought, from the depths below. They soon grew louder, and I noticed a reddish light faintly shining upon the dark masses of rock. Could it be Abraham? Surely it must be, for I now heard

my name distinctly called.

"Halloo there, Luff! Where are you. Luff? Why don't you come on?"

"I'm coming," said I, making a rapid rush toward the light, "as fast as I can."

"All right!" said Abraham; "come on quick!"

It was not long, as may be supposed, before I was scrambling down the rough stairway of rocks by which we had originally entered the mysterious chamber; and the next moment I was standing before Abraham in the passage, which was now no longer dark, for it was lit up with a tremendous torch of brush-wood, which he held in both hands.

"Why, where in the name of sense have you been?" cried he, rather excited, as I thought; "what have you been doing all this time?"

"Doing?" said I; "only exploring the cave, Abraham – hunting up curiosities for pastime."

"Nonsense! I've been calling at you for ten minutes. I didn't want to leave the torch, or I'd have gone up after you; for I couldn't hold it and use my hands at the same time, and I thought if it went out we couldn't light it up again. Besides, I've found a treasure – a treasure, Luff, beyond all price."

"What is it, Abraham – a lump of gold?"

"Pooh! gold couldn't buy it! A skull, sir – a human skull! That's what I've found!"

"Only a skull? I came near finding the whole body," said I,

involuntarily shuddering as I thought of the gloomy chamber with the straw in it; "I'm quite certain I'd have found the entire corpse if it had been there."

"But this is a real skull, Luff. It's no subject for trifling. Some poor fellow has left his bones here, as I suspected."

We then went out to the front of the cave. Not far from the entrance was a hole somewhat larger than a man's body, which I had not noticed before, and into which Abraham now crept with the torch, telling me to follow. It was not long before we entered a cell or chamber large enough to stand up in, the floor of which was littered with straw.

"I found it here, Luff; here in this straw – the upper part of a man's skull. Look at it."

Here Abraham removed some of the straw, and there, indeed, lay the frontal part of a skull.

"I found it just as it lies. I put it back exactly in the same position. I wanted you to see how the man died – poor fellow! a sad death he had of it all alone here."

Upon this I took up the skull and examined it. The forehead was small and low, and the whole formation of the upper part of the face somewhat singular. There was not sufficient of the lower part left to tell precisely whether it was the skull of a white man or of a negro. I thought it must be that of a negro, from the size of the animal organs. Abraham, however, considered it the skull of a white man, on account of the whiteness of the bone.

The torch being now burned out, we bethought ourselves of

starting toward the valley of the huts, for we had no time to indulge in melancholy reflection on what remained of the poor sailor, or follow up the train of thought suggested by his unhappy fate. Abraham carefully wrapped the skull in his handkerchief, and put it in a large pocket that he had in his coat, declaring, as we set out on our return to the top of the cliff, that a thousand dollars would not induce him to part with so rare and valuable a curiosity.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORM AND ESCAPE

When we reached the summit of the cliff, and looked over once more into the enchanted valley, we could hardly believe that such a change as we beheld could have taken place during our absence. That scene of beauty upon which we had lingered with so much pleasure now seemed to be a moving ocean of clouds, engulfing every visible point in its billows of mist, raging and foaming as it swelled up over the heights; the wild roar of the tempest vibrating fiercely through the air – the very rocks upon which we stood trembling in the dread coming of its wrath. While we gazed in silence upon the wilderness of surging billows, the whole island became hidden in mist; and that happy valley, so lovely in its solitude but a brief hour before, so calm in its slumbering beauty, so softly steeped in sunshine, was now buried in the fierce conflict of the elements. Nothing was to be seen but an ocean of misty surf below, and a wilderness of dark clouds flying madly overhead. It seemed as if we had been suddenly cut off from the world, and left floating on a huge mass of burned rock, in a chaos of convulsed elements. On every side the impenetrable mists covered the depths, and it needed but a single step to open to us the mysteries of eternity.

The storm set in upon us in fierce and sudden gusts, driving us down for safety upon the lee of the rock. No longer able to

stand upright, we cowered beneath the shelter which we found there, and so bided our time. From all we could judge, there was no appearance of a change for the better. As soon as there was a lull, we hurried on along the ridge, in the hope of reaching the valley of the huts before dark, for we had eaten nothing since morning, and were not prepared to spend the night in these wild mountains. After infinite climbing and toil, we came to a part of the path where there were neither trees nor bushes. It was about half a mile in length, and was exposed to the full fury of the gale. About midway we were attacked by a terrific gust of wind and deluge of rain, and it was with great difficulty we could retain our foothold. The rain swashed against us with resistless power, driving us down upon our hands and knees in its fury, while it surged and foamed over us like a white sea in a typhoon. Blinded and dizzy, we rose again and rushed on, staggering in the fierce bursts of the tempest, and gasping for breath in the deluge of spray. How we lived through it I know not; how it was that we were not cast over into the abyss that threatened to devour us, there is but One who knows, for no eye but His was upon us. Breathless, and blinded with the scourging waters, we staggered against a large rock. Here we fell upon our knees, no longer able to contend against the tempest, and clung to the bushes that grew in its clefts, while we silently appealed to Him who holds the winds in the hollow of His hands to take pity upon us, and cast us not away in His wrath.

The worst part of the path being yet before us, where we

had previously found it difficult to get over in good weather, we determined upon trying the steep descent on the right, leading directly into the valley of the huts. It was almost a perfect precipice, and was bare and smooth for three hundred yards, where it ran out into a kind of ledge, covered with a stunted growth of trees. If we could reach the grove we would be safe; but between us lay a steep and precipitous field of loose earth, smoothed into a bank of mud by the rains. As we had no alternative, we began the descent as cautiously as possible, thrusting our toes and fingers into the clay, and letting ourselves down by degrees for fifty or a hundred feet at a time, when we stopped a while to look below us. Such was the roar of the storm that I hardly knew whether Abraham was by me or not, when, hearing a loud shout, I looked round and beheld him flying down the precipice with the velocity of lightning. "Oh! he'll be killed!" I exclaimed; "he'll be killed! Oh! what a dreadful death!" At the same moment I felt my hold give way, and I dashed after him in spite of myself, grasping madly at the loose earth, and shouting wildly for somebody to stop me. It was a fearful chase – a chase of life or death! On we sped, upheaving the loose masses of sod, and whizzing through the tempest as we flew; grasping desperately at every rock, tearing up the shrubs that grew in the clefts, and dashing blindly over gaping fissures that lay hidden with the grass. Great masses of burned rock went smoking down into the chaos of mist below, crashing and thundering as they fell. On, and still on, in our wild career we sped, with the vision

of death flitting grimly before us! Atoms we were in the strife of elements, whirled powerless into the dark abyss. There was a confused crash of bushes; a stunning sensation – a sudden check – a jarring of the brain – and all was still! I looked, and saw that I was safe. The grove was around me. Consciousness returned as I clung panting to the trees; life was given yet; the vision of death fled in the mists of the tempest.¹

For a moment, dizzy and confused, I clung to a tree, and offered up my inward thanks to that Providence which had spared me through the fearful ordeal. Then, hearing the voice of Abraham near by to where I stood, I looked, and saw him seated upon the ground, wailing aloud as if in extreme bodily pain. Selfish wretch that I was, had I, in my thankfulness for my own safety, forgotten the friend of my heart! Letting go my grasp of the tree, I ran to his side, and asked in choking accents,

"Abraham! oh, Abraham, are you hurt? Tell me quick – tell me, are you hurt?"

¹ "It has already been mentioned that in many parts of the island the soil was loose, and undermined by holes, and the rock weathered almost to rottenness. Pursuing a goat once in one of these dangerous places, the bushy brink of a precipice to which he had followed it crumbled beneath him, and he and the goat fell together from a great height. He lay stunned and senseless at the foot of the rock for a great while – not less than twenty hours, he thought, from the change of position in the sun, but the precise length of time he had no means of ascertaining. When he recovered his senses he found the goat lying dead beside him. With great pain and difficulty he made his way to his hut, which was nearly a mile distant from the spot; and for three days he lay on his bed enduring much suffering. No permanent injury, however, had been done him, and he was soon able to go abroad again. – [Life of Alexander Selkirk.]

"My skull! my skull!" groaned Abraham, in rending tones; "oh! Luff, my skull is broken!"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, "what are we to do? This is terrible! Wretch that I am, I thought only of myself!"

Abraham groaned again. His face was livid, and a small streak of blood that coursed down his right cheek told how truly he had spoken.

"Abraham, my friend Abraham!" I exclaimed, in a perfect agony of distress, "perhaps it's not so bad. It may not be broken."

"Yes it is," said Abraham; "I heard it crack when I fell. My feet flew up, and I fell on my back. It must have struck a rock."

"Oh, Abraham, what are we to do? I wouldn't have had this to happen for the whole island. Here, I'll tear my shirt off and tie it up."

"No, no, Luff, it can't be mended; it's broken all to smash. I wouldn't have had it happen for a thousand dollars. It can never, never be mended!"

"Let me see," said I, carefully laying back his hair; "something must be done, Abraham."

"No, no – nothing can be done; the trouble's not there, Luff; it's *here*– here, in my pocket!" At the same time, while I started back in a perfect maze of confusion, Abraham thrust his hand into his coat pocket, and brought forth a whole handful of thin flat bones, broken into small pieces, which he held out with a rueful face, groaning again as he looked at them.

"No, no, it can't be mended, Luff."

"The devil!" said I, angrily, "you may thank your stars it isn't any worse than that!"

"Worse! worse!" cried Abraham, highly excited; "what do you mean? In the name of common sense, isn't that bad enough? How could it be any worse?"

"Pshaw! Abraham; I thought, when I heard your lamentations, and saw that scratch of a bush on your face, that your own natural cranium was fractured."

"Well, what if you did?" cried Abraham, still irritated. "Would you call that worse? A live skull will grow together, but a dead one won't. And this — *this*, with such a history to it — to lose this, after all my trouble in finding it — oh, Luff, Luff, it's too bad!"

However, having no farther time to spare over his ruined skull, he put back the bones in his pocket, and, with a heavy sigh, joined me as I sprang down through the grove.

The rest of our descent was comparatively easy. When we got down to the head of the valley, a muddy stream broke wildly over the rocks, carrying down with it the branches and leaves of trees, and roaring fearfully as it rushed on toward the ocean. We followed this in its rapid descent, and were soon with our friends at the boat-landing.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE AMERICAN CRUSOE

The third night closed, leaving us still upon the island. Who could tell if the vessel would be in sight by morning? Should the gale continue, it was not improbable that she would be driven far to the leeward, and perhaps compelled to give up the search for us entirely. Ships had not unfrequently been in sight of the island for weeks, as we afterward learned, and yet unable to make an anchorage, in consequence of baffling winds and heavy gales. It might turn out to be no joke, after all, this wild exhibition. To be Crusoes by inclination was one thing, by compulsion another.

We were determined not to spend another night in the cave; that was out of the question. There was not one of us who wanted to enjoy the romance of that place again. No better alternative remained for us than to make a bargain with Pearce, the American, for quarters in his straw cabin. This we were the more content to do upon seeing him emerge from the bushes with a dead kid hanging over his shoulders, which we naturally supposed he intended for supper.

At first he spoke rather gruffly for a fellow-countryman; but this we attributed to his wild manner of life, separated from all society; nor were we at all disposed to quarrel with him on account of his uncouth address, when we came to consider that a man might understand but little of politeness, and yet be a

very good sort of fellow, and understand very well how to cook a kid. We had no money, which we honestly told him in the beginning; but we promised him, in lieu thereof, a large supply of ham and bread from the ship. This did not seem to improve the matter at all; indeed, we began to think he was loth to credit us, which, however, was not the case. He said the Californians who had been there had eaten up nearly all his stores, and had paid him little or nothing. They had promised him a good deal, but promises were the principal amount of what he got. If this was all, he wouldn't mind it; they were welcome to what he had; but he didn't like folks to come and take possession of his house as a matter of right, and get drunk in it, and raise Old Scratch with his furniture, and then swear at him next morning for not keepin' a better tavern. He didn't pretend to keep a tavern; it was his own private house, and he wanted it to be private – that's what he came here for. He had society enough at home, and a darn'd sight too much of it. He liked to choose his own company. He was an independent character himself, and meant to be independent in spite of all the Californians on this side of creation. All he wished was that old Nick had a hold of California and all the gold in it – if there was any in it, which he didn't much believe himself. He hoped it would be sunk tolerably deep under the sea before some of 'em got there. It was a tolerable hard case, that a man couldn't live alone without a parcel of fellers, that hadn't any thing to do at home, comin' all the way to Juan Fernandez to play Scratch with his house and furniture, and turn every thing upside down, as if it

belonged to 'em, and cuss the hair off'n his head for not makin' a bigger house, and keepin' a bar full of good liquor, and a billiard saloon, and bowlin'-alley for the accommodation of travelers – a tolerable hard case. He'd be squarmed ef he was a goin' to stand it any longer.

We agreed with Crusoe that this was indeed rather a hard case, but promised him that he would find us altogether different sort of persons. We were first-class passengers – none of your rowdy third-class; he understood all that; they were all first-class passengers ashore; he wouldn't believe one of 'em on oath. Again we endeavored to compromise the matter, so far as regarded the ham at least, of which he was entirely incredulous, by telling him that he might come on board with us, and then when we'd be sure not to run away without paying him.

"But what if you should carry me away?" said he, evidently startled by this proposition.

"Nothing – only we'd take you to California. That would be a lucky chance for you."

"No, it wouldn't. I don't want to go there. I'm very well here."

"But there's plenty of gold in California," said we; "no doubt about it at all. You may live here all your life, and be no better off."

"I'm well enough off," retorted Crusoe; "I only want people to let me alone. Ever since this California business they've been troublin' me."

"You surely can't be happy here without a soul near you! Why,

it's enough to drive a man mad. It must be dreadfully dull. You can't be happy!"

"Yes I am!" said Crusoe, peevishly; "I'm always happy when I ain't troubled. When I'm troubled I'm mis'erable. Nothin' makes me so mis'erable as bein' troubled."

"It makes a good many people miserable," was our reply. "We must trouble you for a night's lodging, at all events, for we have no place else to stay."

"I don't want you to stay nowhere else!" cried Crusoe; "that wasn't what I meant: you mustn't get drunk – that's what I meant."

"No, we won't get drunk; we haven't any thing to get drunk on, unless you insist upon giving us something."

"Very well, then; you can sleep in my cabin, ef you don't tear it down. Some fellers have tried to tear it down."

We promised him that we would use every exertion to overcome any propensity we might have in regard to tearing his house down; and, although he still shook his head mournfully, as if he had no farther confidence in man, he led the way toward his hut, hinting in a sort of undergrowl that it would be greatly to our advantage not to get drunk, or attempt to destroy his house and furniture, inasmuch as he had a number of goatskins, which he wouldn't mind letting sober people have to sleep on, but he'd be squarmed ef he'd lend 'em to people that cuss'd him for not keepin' feather beds. We declared upon our words, as gentlemen, that we had no idea whatever of sleeping on feather beds in such a remote part of the world as this, and would be most happy to

prove to him that we were worthy of sleeping on goatskins; that we would regard goatskins in the light of a favor, whereas if he put us upon feather beds, we should feel disposed to look upon it rather as a reflection upon our character as disciples of the immortal Crusoe.

Abraham and myself were wet to the skin after our adventure in the mountains, and, having been five or six hours in that condition, we were hungry enough to eat any thing. We therefore left the party down on the beach, where they were trying to set fire to an old pitch-barrel as a signal for the ship, and, under the guidance of Pearce, hurried up to the cabin. Upon entering the low doorway, we found that there was some promise of good cheer. There was a basket of fish in one corner, and sundry pieces of dried meat hanging upon the walls. Our friend set to work to skin the kid; and we, finding a sort of stone fireplace in the middle of the floor, with a few live embers in it, sat down, and began putting on some wood out of a neighboring pile, by which means we soon had a comfortable fire. As soon as the steam was pretty well out of our clothes, and the warmth struck through to our skins, we felt an uncommonly pleasant glow all over us; and the blaze was exceedingly cheerful. In fact, we were quite happy, in spite of the gloomy forebodings of Pearce, who kept saying to himself all the time he was skinning the kid, "I expect nothin' else but what they'll burn my house down. Ef they'd only let a feller alone, and not come troublin' him, I'd like it a good deal better than bread or ham either – 'specially when it's aboard a

ship that ain't here, and never will be, I reckon. Fun's fun; but I'll be squarmed ef I want to see my house burned down over my head. Tain't nothin' to larf at. When I want somethin' to larf at, I kin raise it myself without troublin' other folks. Ef a man can't live to himself here, I'd like to know where in creation he *kin* live. I expect they'll be explorin' the bottom of the sea by'm-by in search of gold; I'd go there to be to myself, ef I thought I could be to myself; but I know they'd be arter me in less than a month. Ef I was a bettin' character, I'd be willin' to bet five dollars they'll set fire to the house, and burn it down afore they stop!"

Meantime Brigham and the rest of the party succeeded at length in making a large fire on the beach as a signal for the ship, and they remained down there some time in hopes she would send a boat ashore. But the gale increasing, accompanied by heavy rain, they had to leave the fire, and make a hasty retreat to the hut.

CHAPTER XV. CASTLE OF THE AMERICAN CRUSOE

Pearce's gloomy views of society began to brighten a good deal when he found that we were not disposed to tear down his house or burn it, or wantonly ruin his furniture. He was not a bad-hearted man by any means, though rather crusty from having lived too long alone, and somewhat prejudiced against the Californians on account of the rough treatment he had received from them. A little flattery regarding his skill in architecture, and a word of praise on the subject of his furniture, seemed to mollify him a good deal; and he smiled grimly once or twice at our folly in coming ashore, when we could have done so much better, as he alleged, by staying aboard the ship, and going ahead about our business.

Regarding the house, which afforded him so much anxiety, there did not appear to us to be any thing quite so original and Crusoe-like in any other part of the world. It was a little straw hut, just big enough to creep into and turn round in; with a steep peaked roof, projecting all round, very rustic and rugged-looking, and, withal, very well adapted to the climate. The straw was woven through upright stakes, and made a tolerably secure wall; outside, growing up around the house in every direction,

were running vines and wild flowers; and at a little distance were various smaller sheds and out-houses, in which our worthy host kept his domestic animals, and what wood he required during the bad weather. The furniture of his main abode, which was such a source of honest pride to him, consisted chiefly of a few three-legged stools, made of the rough wood with the bark still on; a kind of bench for a lounge; a rough bedstead in one corner, partly shut off by a straw partition; a broken looking-glass, and an iron kettle and frying-pan, besides sundry strange articles of domestic economy of which we could form no correct idea, inasmuch as they were made upon novel principles of his own, and were entirely beyond our comprehension. Over head, the rafters were covered with goatskins; a sailor's pea-jacket, a sou'wester, and some colored shirts hung at the head of the bed. In one corner there was a rude wooden cupboard, containing a few broken cups and plates, and a Chinese tea-box; in another a sea-chest, which, when pulled out, served for a table. The floor was of mud, and not very dry after the rain; for the roof had sprung a leak, and, moreover, what water was cast off from above eventually found its way in under the walls below. Doubtless, like the man with the fiddle, our host thought it useless to mend it when the weather was fine, and too wet to work at it when the weather was rainy. It was a very queer and original place altogether; and with a good fire, and a little precaution in keeping from under the leaks in the roof, not at all uncomfortable. Our Crusoe friend, overhearing us say that it was a glorious place to live in, a regular castle, where

a man might spend his days like a king, smiled again a crusty smile, and growled,

"There's tea in that 'ere box. Ef you want some you kin have it. I got it out'n a ship that came from China. There ain't better tea nowhere."

We thanked him heartily for his kindness, and declared at the same time that we regarded good tea as the very rarest luxury of life. Again his face cracked into something like a smile, and he said,

"Better tea never was drunk in China. Ef you like, I'll put sugar in it."

We declared that sugar was the very thing of all the luxuries in the world that we were most attached to, but we could not drink it with any sort of relish if we thought it would be robbing him of his stores. If he had these things to spare we would cheerfully use them, and pay him three or four times their value in provisions from the ship.

"Darn the ship!" cried Crusoe; "I don't care a cuss about the ship, so long as you don't get drunk and tear my house down!"

Upon this we protested that we would sooner tear the hair out of our heads by the roots than tear down so unique and extraordinary a structure as his house; and as to his furniture, it was worth its weight in gold; every stick of it would bring five hundred dollars in the city of New York.

Whereupon Pearce stirred about in the obscure corners with wonderful alacrity, rooting up all sorts of queer things out of dark

places, and muttering to himself meantime,

"I'm as fond of company as any body, ef they're the right sort; and I'll be squarmed ef I ain't an independent character too. I don't owe nobody for a buildin' of my house, or a makin' of my furniture. I did it all myself, long before California was skeer'd up."

He then put down the old kettle on the fire, and, as soon as the water was boiled, emptied a large cupful of tea into it, and set it near the fire to draw. While the tea was drawing, he fried a panful of kid, and broiled some fish on the coals; and when it was all done, he gave us each a tin plate, and told us to eat as much as we wanted, and be darn'd to the ship, so long as we behaved like Christians. Then he furnished us with cups for the tea, and some sea-biscuit, which he dug out of the cupboard; and I must declare, in all sincerity, that we made a most excellent supper.

CHAPTER XVI.

DIFFICULTY BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE DOUBTER

Every one of us, except the man that had no faith in Robinson Crusoe, admitted that the tea was the best ever produced in China or any where else; that the fried kid was perfectly delicious; that the fish were the fattest and tenderest ever fished out of the sea; that the biscuit tasted a thousand times better than the biscuit we had on board ship; that the whole house and all about it were wonderfully well arranged for comfort; and that Pearce, after all, was the jolliest old brick of a Crusoe ever found upon a desolate island.

In fine, we came to the conclusion that it was a glorious life, calculated to enlarge a man's soul; an independent life; a perfect Utopia in its way. "Let us," said we, "spend the remainder of our days here! Who cares about the gold of Ophir, when he can live like a king on this island, and be richer and happier than Solomon in his temple!"

"You'd soon be tired of it," muttered a voice from a dark corner: it was the voice of the Doubter. "You wouldn't be here a month till you'd give the eyes out of your heads to get away."

"Where's that man?" cried several of us, fiercely.

"I'm here – here in the corner, gentlemen, rayther troubled

with fleas."

"You'd better turn in and go to sleep."

"I can't sleep. Nobody can sleep here. I've tried it long enough. I reckon the fleas will eat us all up by morning, and leave nothing but the hair of our heads. I doubt if they'll leave that."

"Was there ever such a man? Why, you do nothing but throw cold water on every body."

"No I don't; it comes through the roof. It's as much as I can do to keep clear of it myself, without throwin' it on other people." With this we let him alone.

The fire now blazed cheerfully, sending its ruddy glow through the cabin. A rude earthen lamp, that hung from one of the rafters, also shed its cheerful light upon us as we sat in a circle round the crackling fagots; and altogether our rustic quarters looked very lively and pleasant. Every face beamed with good-humor. Even the face of the Doubter belied his croaking remarks, and glowed with unwonted enthusiasm. Little Jim Paxton, the whaler, under the inspiration of the tea, which was uncommonly strong, volunteered a song; and the cries of bravo being general, he gave us, in true sailor style,

"I'm monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea,
I'm lord of the fowl and the brute!
Oh Solitude where are the charms," &c.

This was so enthusiastically applauded, that my friend Abraham, whose passion for all sorts of curiosities had led him to explore musty old books as well as musty old caves for odds and ends, now rose on his goatskin, and said that, with permission of the company, he would attempt something which he considered peculiarly appropriate to the occasion. He was not much of a singer, but he hoped the interest attached to the words would be a sufficient compensation for all the deficiencies of voice and style.

"Go ahead, Abraham!" cried every body, greatly interested by these remarks. "Let us have the song! Out with it!"

"First," said Abraham, clearing his voice, "I beg leave to state, for the benefit of all who may not be familiar with the fact, that this is no vulgar or commonplace song, as many people suppose who sing it. On the contrary, it may be regarded as a classical production. Among the many effusions to which the popularity of Robinson Crusoe gave rise, none was a greater favorite in its day than the song which I am about to attempt. It has been customary to introduce it in the character of Jerry Sneak, in Foote's celebrated farce, the Mayor of Garratt. As the words are now nearly forgotten, I hope you'll not consider it tiresome if I go through to the end. Join in the chorus, gentlemen!"

POOR ROBINSON CRUSOE

"When I was a lad, my fortune was bad,

My grandfather I did lose O;
I'll bet you a can, you've heard of the man,
His name it was Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe,
Tinky ting tang, tinky ting tang,
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe.

"You've read in a book of a voyage he took,
While the raging whirlwinds blew, so
That the ship with a shock fell plump on a rock,
Near drowning poor Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor, &c.

"Poor soul! none but he escaped on the sea.
Ah, Fate! Fate! how could you do so?
'Till at length he was thrown on an island unknown,
Which received poor Robinson Crusoe."

"Here, gentlemen, I beg you to take notice that we are now, in all probability, on the very spot. I have the strongest reasons for supposing that the castle of our excellent host, in which we are at this moment enjoying the flow of soul and the feast of reason, is built upon the identical site occupied in former times by the castle of the remarkable adventurer in whose honor this song was composed. But to proceed —

"Tinky ting tang, tinky ting tang,
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe.

"But he saved from on board a gun and a sword,
And another old matter or two, so
That by dint of his thrift, he managed to shift
Pretty well, for poor Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor, &c.

"He wanted something to eat, and couldn't get meat,
The cattle away from him flew, so
That but for his gun he'd been sorely undone,
And starved would poor Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor, &c.

"And he happened to save from the merciless wave
A poor parrot, I assure you 'tis true, so
That when he came home, from a wearisome roam,
Used to cry out, Poor Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor, &c.

"Then he got all the wood that ever he could,
And stuck it together with glue, so
That he made him a hut, in which he might put
The carcass of Robinson Crusoe."

"Hold on there! hold on!" cried a voice, in a high state of excitement. Every body turned to see who it was that dared to interrupt so inspiring a song. Immediately the indignant gaze was fixed upon the face of the Doubter, who, with outstretched

neck, was peering at Abraham from his dark corner. "Excuse me, gentlemen," said he, "but I want some information on that point. Did you mean to say, sir, that he, Robinson Crusoe, stuck the wood together with *glue* when he built his house? with glue, did you say?"

"So the song goes," said Abraham, a little confused, not to say irritated. "Doubtless the words are used in a metaphorical sense. There is every reason to believe that this is a mere poetical license; but it doesn't alter the general accuracy of the history. For my own part, I am disposed to think that the house was built very much upon the same principles as that of our friend Pearce; in fact, that it was precisely such an establishment as we at present occupy."

"Go on, sir – go on; I'm perfectly satisfied," muttered the Doubter; "the whole thing hangs together by means of glue; every part of it is connected with the same material!"

Abraham reddened to the eyebrows at this uncalled-for remark; his fine features, usually so placid and full of good nature, were distorted with indignation; he turned fiercely toward the Doubter; he instinctively doubled up both fists; he breathed hard between his clenched teeth; then, hearing a low murmur of dissuasion from the whole party, he turned away with a smile of contempt, breaking abruptly into the burden of his song,

"Tinky ting tang, tinky ting tang,
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe!

"While his man Friday kept the house snug and tidy,
For be sure 'twas his business to do so,
They lived friendly together, less like servant than neighbor,
Lived Friday and Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor, &c.

"Then he wore a large cap, and a coat without nap,
And a beard as long as a Jew, so
That, by all that's civil, he looked like a devil
More than poor Robinson Crusoe."

"Which shows," continued Abraham, with his accustomed smile of good humor, "the extraordinary shifts to which a man may be reduced by necessity, and the uncouth appearance he must present in a perfectly unshaved state, when even the poet admits that he looked like a devil. These articles of clothing, which contributed to give him such a wild aspect, were made of goatskins, as he himself informs us in his wonderful narrative; and I beg you to remember, gentlemen, that the very skins upon which we are this moment sitting are related, by direct descent, to those which were worn by Robinson Crusoe."

Here the Doubter groaned.

"Well, sir, is there any thing improbable in that?" said Abraham, fiercely. "Have you any objection to that remark, sir?"

"No; I have nothing to say against it in particular, except that I'd believe it sooner if there were goats in the skins. I never heard

of modern goatskins descending from ancient goatskins before."

"Of course, sir," said Abraham, coloring, "the goats were in the skins before they were taken out."

"Likely they were," growled the Doubter; "I won't dispute that. But I'd like to know, as a matter of information, if he, Robinson Crusoe, made his clothes in the same way as he made his house?"

"To be sure, sir; to be sure: he made both with his own hands."

"I thought so," said the Doubter, sinking back into his dark corner; "he sew'd 'em with glue. All glue – glue from beginning to end."

"I'll see you to-morrow, sir!" said Abraham, swelling with indignation; "we'll settle this matter to-morrow, sir. At present I shall pay no further attention to your remarks!" Here he drew several rapid breaths, as if swallowing down his passion; and, looking round with a darkened brow upon the mute and astonished company, resumed, in a loud and steady voice,

"Tinky ting tang, tinky ting tang,
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe!

"At length, within hail, he saw a stout sail,
And he took to his little canoe; so,
When he reach'd the ship, they gave him a trip,
Back to England brought Robinson Crusoe.
Oh! poor Robinson Crusoe!"

We all joined in the chorus – all, except the incredulous

man; and, notwithstanding the unfortunate difference between Abraham and that individual, which tended so much to mar the harmony of the occasion, we thought, from the way our voices sounded, that it must have been the very first time this inspiring song was sung in the solitudes of Juan Fernandez. I even fancied I detected the crusty voice of Pearce in the chorus: but I wouldn't like to make a positive assertion to that effect, on account of the danger of giving him offense, should he ever cast his eyes upon this narrative. As there was still evidently a cloud upon Abraham's brow, which might burst to-morrow upon the Doubter, and thereby bring the whole adventure to a tragic termination, several of us now, by a concerted movement, endeavored to effect a reconciliation. We seized upon the Doubter, who by this time was dozing away in the corner, and brought him forth to the light, where he looked about him in mute astonishment, muttering, as if awakened out of a dream, "No, sir, it can't be done, sir; a house never was built with glue yet; goatskins never were sewed together with glue – never, sir, never!"

"You shall swallow those words, sir!" cried Abraham, quivering with passion; "I'll make you swallow them, sir, to-morrow morning!"

"I'll swallow 'em now if you like," drawled the Doubter, with provoking coolness, "but I can't swallow a house built of glue. Possibly I might swallow the goatskins, but the house won't go down – it ain't the kind of thing to go down!"

Here it required our full force to restrain Abraham; he fairly chafed with indignation; his face was flushed; his nostrils distended; his stalwart limbs writhing convulsively; in truth, our well-meant plan of reconciliation only seemed to hasten the tragedy which we were striving to prevent. Pearce himself now interposed.

"I know'd it," said he; "I know'd they'd tear my house down yet, and ruin my furniture! Next thing, all hands'll be breakin' my chairs to pieces on one another's heads; I know'd it; I wouldn't believe 'em on oath!"

This rebuke touched Abraham in a tender point. Quick to take offense, he was also ready in forgiving an injury, especially when a due regard for the feelings of others required it.

"Gentlemen," said he, "it shall never be said that I have violated the rites of hospitality. There shall be no further difficulty about this matter; I forgive all. Your hand, sir!"

The Doubter awkwardly held out his hand and suffered it to be shaken, upon which he crept back into his dark corner, still, however, muttering incoherently from time to time; but as nothing could be distinguished but the word "glue," it was not deemed of sufficient importance for the renewal of hostilities, or the interruption of the general harmony. Good humor being restored, it was all the more hearty after these unpleasant little episodes; and so genial an effect had it upon Pearce, that he quite forgot his resentment, and unbended himself again. Gradually he began to tell us wild stories of his Crusoe life; how he had lived all

alone for nearly a year on the island of Massafuero without seeing the face of man; how, during that time, he sustained himself upon roots and herbs, and likewise by catching wild goats in traps; how he never was so happy in his life, and never had any trouble till he left that island in a whaler, and came here to Juan Fernandez, how for two years he had lived on this island, sometimes alone, and sometimes surrounded by outlawed Chilians; how on one occasion, while up in the mountains hunting goats, he fell down a precipice, and broke his arm and two of his ribs, and was near dying all alone, without a soul to care for him. A great many strange stories and legends he told us, too, in his rude way, about Juan Fernandez; and so strong was his homely language, and so fresh and novel his reminiscences, that we often looked round in the waning light of the lamp for fear some ghost or murderer would steal in upon us.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.