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GASCOYNE, THE SANDAL-WOOD TRADER

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Содержание

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Chapter One
The Schooner

The Great Pacific is the scene of our story. On a beautiful morning, many years ago, a little schooner might have been seen floating, light and graceful as a sea-mew, on the breast of the slumbering ocean. She was one of those low black-hulled vessels, with raking, taper masts, trimly cut sails, and elegant form, which we are accustomed to associate with the idea of a yacht or a pirate.

She might have been the former, as far as appearance went, for the sails and decks were white as snow, and every portion of brass and copper above her water-line shone in the hot sun with dazzling brilliancy. But pleasure-seekers were not wont, in those days, to take such distant flights, or to venture into such dangerous seas—dangerous alike from the savage character of the islanders, and the numerous coral-reefs that lie hidden a few feet below the surface of the waves.

Still less probable did it seem that the vessel in question could belong to the lawless class of craft to which we have referred; for, although she had what may be styled a wicked aspect, and was evidently adapted for swift sailing, neither large guns nor small arms of any kind were visible.

Whatever her nature or her object, she was reduced, at the time we introduce her to the reader, to a state of inaction by the dead calm which prevailed. The sea resembled a sheet of clear glass. Not a cloud broke the softness of the sky, in which the sun glowed hotter and hotter as it rose towards the zenith. The sails of the schooner hung idly from the yards; her reflected image was distorted, but scarcely broken, by the long gentle swell; her crew, with the exception of the watch, were asleep either on deck or down below, and so deep was the universal silence, that, as the vessel rose and fell with a slow, quiet motion, the pattering of the reef points on her sails forcibly attracted the listener's attention, as does the ticking of a clock in the deep silence of night. A few sea-birds rested on the water, as if in the enjoyment of the profound peace that reigned around; and, far away on the horizon might be seen the tops of the palm-trees that grew on one of those coral islands which lie scattered in thousands, like beautiful gems, on the surface of that bright blue sea.

Among the men who lay sleeping in various easy off-hand attitudes on the schooner's deck was one who merits special attention—not only because of the grotesque appearance of his person, but also because he is one of the principal actors in our tale.

He was a large powerful man, of that rugged build and hairy aspect that might have suggested the idea that he would be difficult to kill. He was a fair man, with red hair and a deeply sun-burned face, on which jovial good-humour sat almost perpetually enthroned. At the moment when we introduce him to the reader, however, that expression happened to be modified in consequence of his having laid him down to sleep in a sprawling manner on his back—the place as well as the position being, apparently, one of studied discomfort. His legs lay over the heel of the bowsprit; his big body reposed on a confused heap of blocks and cordage, and his neck rested on the stock of an anchor, so that his head hung down over it, presenting the face to view, with the large mouth wide open, in an upside down position. The man was evidently on the verge of choking, but, being a strong man, and a rugged man, and a healthy man, he did not care. He seemed to prefer choking to the trouble of rousing himself and improving his position.

How long he would have lain in this state of felicity it is impossible to say, for his slumbers were rudely interrupted by a slight lurch of the schooner, which caused the blocks and cordage attached to the sheet of the jib to sweep slowly, but with rasping asperity, across his face. Any ordinary man would

have been seriously damaged—at least in appearance—by such an accident; but this particular sea-dog was tough in the skin—he was only awakened by it—nothing more. He yawned, raised himself lazily, and gazed round with that vacant stare of unreasonable surprise which is common to man on passing from a state of somnolence to that of wakefulness.

Gradually the expression of habitual good-humour settled on his visage, as he looked from one to another of his sleeping comrades, and at last, with a bland smile, he broke forth into the following soliloquy:—

"Wot a goose, wot a grampus you've bin, John Bumpus: firstly, for goin' to sea; secondly, for remainin' at sea; thirdly, for not forsakin' the sea; fourthly, for bein' worried about it at all, now that you've made up your mind to retire from the sea, and, fifthly—"

Here John Bumpus paused as if to meditate on the full depth and meaning of these polite remarks, or to invent some new and powerful expression wherewith to deliver his fifth head. His mental efforts seemed to fail, however, for instead of concluding the sentence, he hummed the following lines, which, we may suppose, were expressive of his feelings as well as his intentions:—

"So goodbye to the mighty ocean,
  And adoo to the rollin' sea,
For it's nobody has no notion
  Wot a grief it has bin' to me."

"Ease off the sheets and square the topsail yards," was at that moment said, or rather murmured, by a bass voice so deep and rich, that, although scarcely raised above a whisper, it was distinctly heard over the whole deck.

John Bumpus raised his bulky form with a degree of lithe activity that proved him to be not less agile than athletic, and, with several others, sprang to obey the order. A few seconds later, the sails were swelled out by a light breeze, and the schooner moved through the water at a rate which seemed scarcely possible under the influence of so gentle a puff of air. Presently the breeze increased, the vessel cut through the blue water like a knife, leaving a long track of foam in her wake as she headed for the coral-island before referred to. The outer reef, or barrier of coral which guarded the island, was soon reached. The narrow opening in this natural bulwark was passed. The schooner stood across the belt of perfectly still water that lay between the reef and the shore, and entered a small bay, where the calm water reflected the strip of white sand, green palms, and tropical plants that skirted its margin, as well as the purple hills of the interior.

Here she swept round in a sudden, but graceful curve, until all her canvas fluttered in the breeze, and then dropt anchor in about six fathoms water.

Chapter Two
Bumpus is Fiery and Philosophical —Murderous Designs Frustrated

The captain of the schooner, whose deep voice had so suddenly terminated the meditations of John Bumpus, was one of those men who seem to have been formed for the special purpose of leading and commanding their fellows.

He was not only unusually tall and powerful—physical qualities which, in themselves, are by no means sufficient to command respect—but, as we have said, he possessed a deep full-toned bass voice in which there seemed to lie a species of fascination, for its softest tones riveted attention, and when it thundered forth commands in the fiercest storms it inspired confidence and a feeling of security in all who heard it. The countenance of the captain, however, was that which induced men to accord to him a position of superiority in whatever sphere of action he chanced to move. It was not so much a handsome as a manly and singularly grave face, in every line of which was written inflexible determination. His hair was short, black, and curly. A small moustache darkened his upper lip, but the rest of his face was closely shaven, so that his large chin and iron jaw were fully displayed. His eyes were of that indescribable blue colour which can exhibit the intensest passion, or the most melting tenderness.

He wore a sombre but somewhat picturesque costume—a dark-coloured flannel shirt and trousers, which latter were gathered in close round his lower limbs by a species of drab gaiter that appeared somewhat incongruous with the profession of the man. The only bit of bright colour about him was a scarlet belt round his waist, from the side of which depended a long knife in a brown leather sheath. A pair of light shoes and a small round cap, resembling what is styled in these days a pork-pie, completed his costume. He was about forty years of age.

Such was the commander, or captain, or skipper, of this suspicious-looking schooner—a man pre-eminently fitted for the accomplishment of much good or the perpetration of great evil.

As soon as the anchor touched the ground, the captain ordered a small boat to be lowered, and, leaping into it with two men, one of whom was our friend John Bumpus, rowed towards the shore.

"Have you brought your kit with you, John?" inquired the captain, as the little boat shot over the smooth waters of the bay.

"Wot's of it, sir," replied our rugged seaman, holding up a small bundle tied in a red cotton handkerchief. "I s'pose our cruise ashore won't be a long one."

"It will be long for you, my man, at least as far as the schooner is concerned, for I do not mean to take you aboard again."

"Not take me aboard agin!" exclaimed the sailor, with a look of surprise which quickly degenerated into an angry frown, and thereafter gradually relaxed into a broad grin as he continued —"why, capting, wot *do* you mean to do with me then, for I'm a heavy piece of goods, d'ye see, and can't be easily moved about without a small touch o' my own consent, you know."

Jo Bumpus, as he was fond of styling himself, said this with a serio-comic air of sarcasm, for he was an exception to the general rule of his fellows. He had little respect for, and no fear of, his commander. Indeed, to say truth, (for truth must be told, even though the character of our rugged friend should suffer,) Jo entertained a most profound belief in the immense advantage of muscular strength and vigour in general, and of his own prowess in particular. Although not quite so gigantic a man as his captain, he was nearly so, and, being a bold self-reliant fellow, he felt persuaded in his own mind that he could thrash him, if need were. In fact, Jo was convinced that there was no living creature under the sun, human or otherwise, that walked upon two legs, that he could not pommel to death with more or less ease by means of his fists alone. And in this conviction he was not far wrong.

Yet it must not be supposed that Jo Bumpus was a boastful man or a bully. Far from it. He was so thoroughly persuaded of his invincibility, that he felt there was no occasion to prove it. He therefore followed the natural bent of his inclinations, which led him at all times to exhibit a mild, amiable, and gentle aspect—except, of course, when he was roused. As occasion for being roused was not wanting in the South Seas in those days, Jo's amiability was frequently put to the test. He sojourned, while there, in a condition of alternate calm and storm; but riotous joviality ran, like a rich vein, through all his chequered life, and lit up its most sombre phases like gleams of light on an April day.

"You entered my service with your own consent," replied the captain to Jo's last remark, "and you may leave it, with the same consent, whenever you choose; but you will please to remember that I did not engage you to serve on board the schooner. Back there you do not go either with or without your consent, my fine fellow, and if you are bent on going to sea on your own account—you've got a pair of good arms and legs—you can swim! Besides," continued the captain, dropping the tone of sarcasm in which this was said, and assuming a more careless and good-natured air, "you were singing something not long since, if I mistake not, about 'farewell to the rolling sea,' which leads me to think you will not object to a short cruise on shore for a change, especially on such a beautiful island as this is."

"I'm your man, capting," cried the impulsive seaman, at the same time giving his oar a pull that well-nigh spun the boat round. "And, to say wots the plain truth, d'ye see, I'm not sorry to ha done with your schooner, for, although she is as tight a little craft as any man could wish for to go to sea in, I can't say much for the crew,—saving your presence, Dick"—(he added, glancing over his shoulder at the surly-looking man who pulled the bow oar.) "Of all the rascally set I ever clapped eyes on, they seems to me the worst. If I didn't know you for a sandal-wood trader, I do believe I'd take ye for a pirate."

"Don't speak ill of your messmates behind their backs, Jo," said the captain with a slight frown. "No good and true man ever does that."

"No more I do," replied John Bumpus; while a deep red colour suffused his bronzed countenance. "No more I do; leastwise if they wos here I'd say it to their faces, for they're a set of as ill-tongued villains as I ever had the misfortune to—"

"Silence!" exclaimed the captain, suddenly, in a voice of thunder.

Few men would have ventured to disobey the command given by such a man, but John Bumpus was one of those few. He did indeed remain silent for two seconds, but it was the silence of astonishment.

"Capting," said he, seriously, "I don't mean no offence, but I'd have you to know that I engaged to work for you, not to hold my tongue at your bidding, d'ye see. There aint the man living as'll make Jo Bumpus shut up w'en he's got a mind to—"

The captain put an abrupt end to the remarks of his refractory seaman by starting up suddenly in fierce anger and seizing the tiller, apparently with the intent to fell him. He checked himself, however, as suddenly, and, breaking into a loud laugh, cried—"Come, Jo, you must admit that there is at least one living man who has made you 'shut up' before you had finished what you'd got to say."

John Bumpus, who had thrown up his left arm to ward off the anticipated blow, and dropped his oar in order to clench his right fist, quietly resumed his oar, and shook his head gravely for nearly a minute, after which he made the following observation:—

"Capting, I've seed, in my experience o' life, that there are some constitootions as don't agree with jokin'; an' yours is one on 'em. Now, if you'd take the advice of a plain man, you'd never try it on. You're a grave man by natur', and you're so bad at a joke that a feller can't quite tell w'en you're a-doin' of it. See, now, I do declare I wos as near drivin' you right over the stern o' your own boat as could be, only by good luck I seed the twinkle in your eye in time."

"Pull away, my lad," said the captain, in the softest tones of his deep voice, at the same time looking his reprover straight in the face.

There was something in the tone in which that simple command was given, and in the look by which it was accompanied; that effectually quelled John Bumpus in spite of himself. Violence had no effect on John, because in most cases he was able to meet it with superior violence, and in all cases he was willing to try. But to be put down in this mild way was perplexing. The words were familiar, the look straightforward and common enough. He could not understand it at all, and, being naturally of a philosophical turn of mind, he spent the next three minutes in a futile endeavour to analyse his own feelings. Before he had come to any satisfactory conclusion on the subject, the boat's keel grated on the white sand of the shore.

Now, while all that we have been describing in the last and present chapters was going on, a very different series of events was taking place on the coral-island, for there, under the pleasant shade of the cocoa-nut palms, a tall, fair, and handsome youth was walking lightly down the green slopes towards the shore in anticipation of the arrival of the schooner, and a naked dark-skinned savage was dogging his steps, winding like a hideous snake among the bushes, and apparently seeking an opportunity to launch the short spear he carried in his hand at his unsuspecting victim.

As the youth and the savage descended the mountain-side together, the former frequently paused when an opening in the rich foliage peculiar to these beautiful isles enabled him to obtain a clear view of the magnificent bay and its fringing coral reef, on which the swell of the great Pacific —so calm and undulating out beyond—fell in tremendous breakers, with a long, low, solemn roar like distant thunder. As yet no object broke the surface of the mirror-like bay within the reef.

Each time the youth paused the savage stopped also, and more than once he poised his deadly spear, while his glaring eyeballs shone amid the green foliage like those of a tiger. Yet upon each occasion he exhibited signs of hesitation, and finally lowered the weapon, and crouched into the underwood.

To any one ignorant of the actors in this scene, the indecision, of the savage would have appeared unaccountable; for there could be no doubt of his desire to slay the fair youth—still less doubt of his ability to dart his formidable spear with precision. Nevertheless, there was good reason for his hesitating, for young Henry Stuart was well known, alike by settlers and savages, as possessing the swiftest foot, the strongest arm, and the boldest heart in the island, and Keona was not celebrated for the possession of these qualities in any degree above the average of his fellows, although he did undoubtedly exceed them in revenge, hatred, and the like. On one occasion young Stuart had, while defending his mother's house against an attack of the savages, felled Keona with a well-directed blow of his fist. It was, doubtless, out of revenge for this that the latter now dogged the former through the lonely recesses of the mountain-pass by which he had crossed the island from the little settlement in which was his home, and gained the sequestered bay in which he expected to find the schooner. Up to this point, however, the savage had not summoned courage to make the attack, although, with the exception of a hunting-knife, his enemy was altogether unarmed, for he knew that in the event of missing his mark the young man's speed of foot would enable him to outstrip him, while his strength of frame would quickly terminate a single combat.

As the youth gained the more open land near the beach, the possibility of making a successful cast of the spear became more and more doubtful. Finally the savage shrunk into the bushes and abandoned the pursuit.

"Not here yet, Master Gascoyne," muttered Henry as he sat down on a rock to rest; for although the six miles of country he had crossed was a trifle, as regarded distance, to a lad of nineteen, the rugged mountain-path by which he had come would have tried the muscles of a Red Indian, and the nerve of a goat. "You were wont to keep to time better in days gone by. Truly it seems to me a strange thing that I should thus be made a sort of walking post between my mother's house and this bay, all for the benefit of a man who seems to me no better than he should be, and whom I don't like, and yet whom I *do* like in some unaccountable fashion that I don't understand."

Whatever the youth's thoughts were after giving vent to the foregoing soliloquy, he kept them to himself. They did not at first appear to be of an agreeable nature, for he frowned once or twice, and struck his thigh with his clenched hand, but gradually a pleasant expression lit up his manly face as he gazed out upon the sleeping sea, and watched the gorgeous clouds that soon began to rise and cluster round the sun.

After an hour or so spent in wandering on the beach picking up shells, and gazing wistfully out to sea, Henry Stuart appeared to grow tired of waiting, for he laid himself down on the shore, turned his back on the ocean, pillowed his head on a tuft of grass, and deliberately went to sleep.

Now was the time for the savage to wreak his vengeance on his enemy, but, fortunately, that villain, despite his subtlety and cunning, had not conceived the possibility of the youth indulging in such an unnatural recreation as a nap in the forenoon. He had, therefore, retired to his native jungle, and during the hour in which Henry was buried in repose, and in which he might have accomplished his end without danger or uncertainty, he was seated in a dark cave moodily resolving in his mind future plans of villany, and indulging the hope that on the youth's returning homewards he would be more successful in finding a favourable opportunity to take his life.

During this same hour it was that our low-hulled little schooner hove in sight on the horizon, ran swiftly down before the breeze, cast anchor in the bay, and sent her boat ashore, as we have seen, with the captain, the surly man called Dick, and our friend John Bumpus.

It happened that, just as the boat ran under the shelter of a rocky point and touched the strand, Keona left his cave for the purpose of observing what young Stuart was about. He knew that he could not have retraced his homeward way without passing within sight of his place of concealment.

A glance of surprise crossed his dark visage as he crept to the edge of the underwood and saw the schooner at anchor in the bay. This was succeeded by a fiendish grin of exultation as his eye fell on the slumbering form of the youth. He instantly took advantage of the opportunity; and so deeply was he engrossed with his murderous intention, that he did not observe the captain of the schooner as he turned a projecting rock, and suddenly appeared upon the scene. The captain, however, saw the savage, and instantly drew back, signing, at the same time, to his two men to keep under cover.

A second glance shewed him the sleeping form of Henry, and, almost before he had time to suspect that foul play was going on, he saw the savage glide from the bushes to the side of the sleeper, raise his spear, and poise it for one moment, as if to make sure of sending it straight to the youth's heart.

There was not a moment to lose. The captain carried a short carbine in his hand, with which he took aim at the savage—going down on one knee to make a surer shot, for the carbine of those days was not to be depended on at a distance much beyond a hundred yards; and as the actors in this scene were separated by even more than that distance, there was a considerable chance of missing the savage and hitting the young man.

This, however, was not a moment to calculate chances. The captain pulled the trigger, and the crash of the shot was followed by a howl from the savage, as his uplifted arm dropt to his side, and the spear fell across the face of the sleeper. Henry instantly awoke, and sprang up with the agility of a panther. Before he could observe what had occurred, Keona leapt into the bushes and disappeared. Henry at once bounded after him; and the captain, giving vent to a lusty cheer, rushed across the beach, and sprang into the forest, closely followed by surly Dick and John Bumpus, whose united cheers of excitement and shouts of defiance awoke the echoes of the place with clamorous discords.

Chapter Three
A Rough Walk Enlivened by Rambling Talk—Bumpus is "Agreeable."

It is said, in the proverbial philosophy of nautical men, that "a stern chase is a long one." The present instance was an exception to the general rule. Keona was wounded. Young Stuart was fleet as the antelope, and strong as a young lion. In these circumstances it is not surprising that, after a run of less than a quarter of a mile, he succeeded in laying his hands on the neck of the savage and hurling him to the ground, where he lay panting and helpless, looking up in the face of his conqueror with an expression of hopeless despair—for savages and wicked men generally are wont to judge of others by themselves, and to expect to receive such treatment from their enemies as they themselves would in similar circumstances accord.

The fear of instant death was before his eyes, and the teeth of Keona chattered in his head, while his face grew more hideous than ever, by reason of its becoming livid.

His fears were groundless. Henry Stuart was not a savage. He was humane by nature; and, in addition to this, he had been trained under the influence of that Book which teaches us that the most philosophical, because the most effective, method of procedure in this world, is to "overcome evil with good."

"So, you scoundrel," said Henry, placing his knee on Keona's chest, and compressing his throat with his left hand, while, with his right, he drew forth a long glittering knife, and raised it in the air —"So you are not satisfied with what I gave you the last time we met, but you must needs take the trouble to cross my path a second time, and get a taste of cold steel, must you?"

Although Keona could speak no English, he understood it sufficiently to appreciate the drift of the youth's words, even though he had failed to comprehend the meaning of the angry frown and the glittering knife. But, however much he might have wished to reply to the question, Henry took care to render the attempt impossible, by compressing his windpipe until he became blue in the face, and then black. At the same time, he let the sharp point of his knife touch the skin just over the region of the heart. Having thus convinced his vanquished foe that death was at the door, he suddenly relaxed his iron gripe; arose, sheathed his knife, and bade the savage get up.

The miserable creature did so, with some difficulty, just as the captain and his men arrived on the scene.

"Well met, Henry," cried the former, extending his hand to the youth, "had I been a moment later, my lads I fear that your life's blood would have been on the sea shore."

"Then it was you who fired the shot, Captain Gascoyne? This is the second time I have to thank you for saving my life," said the young man, returning the grasp of the captain's hand.

"Truly, it is but a small matter to have to thank me for. Doubtless, if my stout man, John Bumpus, had carried the carbine, he would have done you as good service. And methinks, Henry, that you would have preferred to owe your life to either of my men, rather than to me, if I may judge by your looks."

"You should not judge by looks, captain," replied the youth quickly—"especially the looks of a man who has just had a hand to hand tussle with a savage. But, to tell the plain truth, Captain Gascoyne, I would indeed rather have had to thank your worthy man, John Bumpus, than yourself for coming to my aid, for although I owe you no grudge, and do not count you an enemy, I had rather see your back than your face—and you know the reason why."

"You give me credit, boy, for more knowledge than I possess," replied Gascoyne, while an angry frown gathered for a moment on his brow; but passed away almost as quickly as it came; "I know not the cause of your unreasonable dislike to one who has never done you an injury."

"Never done me an injury!" cried Henry, starting and turning with a look of passion on his companion; then, checking himself by a strong effort, he added in a milder tone—"But a truce to such talk, and I ask your forgiveness for my sharp words just after your rendering me such good service in the hour of need. You and I differ in our notions on one or two points—that is all; there is no need for quarrelling. See, here is a note from my mother, who sent me to the bay to meet you."

During this colloquy, Dick and Bumpus had mounted guard over the wounded savage, just out of ear-shot of their captain. Neither of the sailors ventured to hold their prisoner, because they deemed it an unmanly advantage to take of one who was so completely (as they imagined) in their power. They kept a watchful eye on him, however; and while they affected an easy indifference of attitude, held themselves in readiness to pounce upon him if he should attempt to escape. But nothing seemed farther from the mind of Keona than such an attempt. He appeared to be thoroughly exhausted by his recent struggle and loss of blood, and his body was bent as if he were about to sink down to the ground. There was, however, a peculiar glance in his dark eyes that induced John Bumpus to be more on his guard than appearances seemed to warrant.

While Gascoyne was reading the letter to which we have referred, Keona suddenly placed his left leg behind surly Dick, and, with his unwounded fist, hit that morose individual such a tremendous back-handed blow on the nose, that he instantly measured his length on the ground. John Bumpus made a sudden plunge at the savage on seeing this, but the latter ducked his head, passed like an eel under the very arms of the sailor, and went off into the forest like a deer.

"Hold!" shouted Captain Gascoyne, as John turned in a state of mingled amazement and anger to pursue. "Hold on, Bumpus, let the miserable rascal go."

John stopped, looked over his shoulder, hesitated, and finally came back with a rolling air of nautical indifference, and his hands thrust into his breeches pockets.

"You know best, capting," said he, "but I think it a pity to let sich a dirty varmint go clear off, to dodge about in the bushes, and mayhap treat us to a pisoned arrow, or a spear-thrust on the sly. Howsomedever, it aint no consarn wotever to Jo Bumpus. How's your beak, Dick, my boy?"

"None the better for your askin'," replied the surly mariner, who was tenderly stroking the injured member of his face with the fingers of both hands.

"Come, Dick, it is none the worse of being inquired after," said Henry, laughing. "But 'tis as well to let the fellow go. He knows best how to cure his wound, by the application of a few simples, and by thus making off, has relieved us of the trouble and responsibility of trying our hands at civilised doctoring. Besides, John Bumpus, (if that's your name,—though I do think your father might have found you a better,) your long legs would never have brought you within a mile of the savage."

"Young man," retorted Jo, gravely, "I'd have you to know that the family of the Bumpuses is an old and a honourable one. They comed over with the Conkerer to Ireland, where they picked up a deal o' their good manners, after which they settled at last on their own estates in Yorkshire. Though they *have* comed down in the world, and the last of the Bumpuses—that's me—is takin' a pleasure trip round the world before the mast, I won't stand by and hear my name made game of, d'ye see; and I'd have ye to know, farther, my buck, that the Bumpuses has a pecooliar gift for fightin', and although you *are* a strappin' young feller, you'd better not cause me for to prove that you're conkerable."

Having delivered himself of this oration, the last of the Bumpuses frowned portentously on the youth who had dared to risk his anger, and turning with a bland smile to surly Dick, asked him "if his beak was any better *now*."

"There seems to be bad news in the letter, I think," observed Henry, as Captain Gascoyne perused the epistle with evident signs of displeasure.

"Bad enough in these times of war, boy," replied the other, folding the note and placing it in a pouch inside the breast of his flannel shirt. "It seems that that pestiferous British frigate the *Talisman*, lies at anchor in the bay, on the other side of the island."

"Nothing in that to cause uneasiness to an honest trader," said Henry, leading the way up the steep path by which he had descended from the mountain region of the interior.

"That speech only shews your ignorance of the usages of ships of war. Know you not that the nature of the trade in which I am engaged requires me to be strong-handed, and that the opinion of a commander in the British navy as to how many hands are sufficient for the navigation of a trading schooner does not accord with mine?—a difference of opinion which may possibly result in his relieving me of a few of my best men when I can ill afford to spare them. And, by the way," said Gascoyne, pausing as they gained the brow of an eminence that commanded a view of the rich woodland on one side and the sea on the other, "I had better take precautions against such a mischance. Here, Dick," (taking the man aside and whispering to him,) "go back to the schooner, my lad, and tell the mate to send ten of the best hands ashore with provisions and arms. Let them squat where they choose on land, only let them see to it that they keep well out of sight and hearing until I want them. And now, Master Henry, lead the way; John Bumpus and I will follow at your heel like a couple of faithful dogs."

The scene through which young Henry Stuart now led his seafaring companions was of that rich, varied, and beautiful character which is strikingly characteristic of those islands of the Pacific which owe their origin to volcanic agency. Unlike the low coral islets, this island presented every variety of the boldest mountain scenery, and yet, like them, it displayed all the gorgeous beauty of a rich tropical vegetation. In some places the ground had been cracked and riven into great fissures and uncouth caverns of the wildest description, by volcanoes apparently long since extinct. In others the landscape presented the soft beauty of undulating grove-like scenery, in which, amid a profusion of bright green herbage, there rose conspicuous the tall stems and waving plumes of the cocoa-nut palm; the superb and umbrageous ko-a, with its laurel-green leaves and sweet blossoms; the *kukui* or candle-nut tree, the fragrant sandal-wood, and a variety of other trees and shrubs for which there are no English names.

Hundreds of green paroquets with blue heads and red breasts, turtle-doves, wood-pigeons, and other birds, enlivened the groves with sound, if not with melody, and the various lakelets and pools were alive with wild ducks and water-hens.

The route by which the party travelled, led them first across a country of varied and beautiful aspect; then it conducted them into wild mountain fastnesses, among which they clambered, at times with considerable difficulty. Ere long they passed into a dreary region where the ancient fires that upheaved the island from the deep seemed to have scorched the land into a condition of perpetual desolation. Blackened and bare lava rocks, steep volcanic ridges and gorges, irregular truncated coves, deep-mouthed caves and fissures, overhanging arches, natural bridges, great tunnels and ravines, surrounded them on every side, and so concealed the softer features of the country that it was scarcely possible to believe in the reality of the verdant region out of which they had just passed. In another hour this chaotic scenery was left behind; the highest ridge of the mountains was crossed, and the travellers began to descend the green slopes on the other side of the island. These slopes terminated in a beach of white sand, while beyond lay the calm waters of the enclosed lagoon, the coral reef with its breakers, and the mighty sea.

"'Tis a pretty spot?" said Henry, interrogatively, as the party halted on the edge of a precipice, whence they obtained an uninterrupted view of the whole of that side of the island.

"Ay, pretty enough," replied Gascoyne in a somewhat sad tone of voice; "I had hoped to have led a quiet life here once,—but that was not to be. How say you, Bumpus; could you make up your mind to cast anchor here for a year or so?"

"Wot's that you say, capting?" inquired honest John, who was evidently lost in admiration of the magnificent scene that lay spread out before him.

"I ask if you have no objection to come to an anchor here for a time," repeated the captain.

"Objection! I'll tell ye wot it is, capting, I never seed sich a place afore in all my born days. Why it's a slice out o' paradise. I do believe if Adam and Eve wos here they'd think they'd got back again into Eden. It's more beautifuller than the blue ocean, by a long chalk, an' if you wants a feller that's handy at a'most anything after a fashion—a jack of all trades and master of none (except seamanship, which aint o' no use here)—Jo Bumpus is your man!"

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Jo," said Henry, laughing, "for we are greatly in need of white men of your stamp in these times, when the savages are so fierce against each other that they are like to eat us up altogether, merely by way of keeping their hands in practice."

"*White* men of my stamp!" remarked Bumpus, surveying complacently his deeply-bronzed hands, which were only a shade darker than his visage; "well, I would like to know what ye call black if I'm a white man."

"Blood, and not skin, is what stamps the colour of the man, Jo. If it were agreeable to Captain Gascoyne to let you off your engagement to him, I think I could make it worth your while to engage with me, and would find you plenty of work of all kinds, including a little of that same fighting for which the Bumpuses are said to be so famous."

"Gentlemen," said Jo, gravely, "I'm agreeable to become a good and chattel for this occasion only, as the playbills say, and hold myself up to the highest bidder."

"Nay, you are sold to me, Bumpus," said Gascoyne, "and must do as I bid you."

"Wery good, then bid away as fast as you like."

"Come, captain, don't be hard," said Henry, "what will you take for him?"

"I cannot afford to sell him at any price?" replied the other, "for I have brought him here expressly as a gift to a certain Mary Stuart, queen of women, if not of Scotland—a widow who dwells in Sandy Cove."

"What, my mother?" interrupted Henry, while a shade of displeasure crossed his countenance at what he deemed the insolent familiarity with which Gascoyne mentioned her name.

"The same. On my last visit I promised to get her a man-servant who could do her some service in keeping off the savages when they take a fancy to trouble the settlement; and if Bumpus is willing to try his luck on shore, I promise him he'll find her a good mistress, and her house pleasant quarters."

"So," exclaimed the stout seaman, stopping short in his rolling walk, and gazing earnestly into his captain's face, "I'm to be sold to a woman?"

"With your own consent entirely, Master Bumpus," said Gascoyne with a smile.

"Come, Jo," cried Henry, gaily, "I see you like the prospect, and feel assured that you and I shall be good friends. Give us your flipper, my boy!"

John Bumpus allowed the youth to seize and shake a "flipper," which would have done credit to a walrus, both in regard to shape and size. After a short pause he said, "Whether you and me shall be good friends, young man, depends entirely on the respect which you shew to the family of the Bumpuses—said family havin' comed over to Ireland with the Conkerer in the year, ah! I misremember the year, but that don't matter; bein' a subject of no consarn wotiver, 'xcept to schoolboys who'll get their licks if they can't tell, and sarve 'em right too. But if you're willin' I'm agreeable, and there's an end o' the whole affair."

So saying, John Bumpus suffered a bland smile to light up his ruddy countenance, and resumed his march in the "wake," as he expressed it, of his companions.

Half an hour later they arrived at Sandy Cove, a small native settlement and mission station, and were soon seated at the hospitable board of Widow Stuart.

Chapter Four
The Missionary—Suspicions, Surprises, and Surmises

Sandy Cove was a small settlement inhabited partly by native converts to Christianity, and partly by a few European traders, who, having found that the place was in the usual track of South Sea whalers, and frequently visited by that class of vessels as well as by other ships, had established several stores or trading houses, and had taken up their permanent abode there.

The island was one of those the natives of which were early induced to agree to the introduction of the gospel. At the time of which we write, it was in that transition state which renders the work of the missionary one of anxiety, toil, and extreme danger, as well as one of love.

But the Reverend Frederick Mason was a man eminently fitted to fill the post which he had selected as his sphere of labour. Bold and manly in the extreme, he was more like a soldier in outward aspect than a missionary. Yet the gentleness of the lamb dwelt in his breast and beamed in his eye; and to a naturally indomitable and enthusiastic disposition was added burning zeal in the cause of his beloved Master.

Six years previous to the opening of our tale, he had come to Sandy Cove with his wife and child, the latter a girl of six years of age at that time. In one year death bereaved the missionary of his wife, and, about the same time, war broke out in the island between the chiefs who clung to the idolatrous rites and bloody practices peculiar to the inhabitants of the South Sea islands, and those chiefs who were inclined to favour Christianity. This war continued to rage more or less violently for several years, frequently slumbering, sometimes breaking out with sudden violence, like the fitful eruptions of the still unextinct volcanoes in those distant regions.

During all this period of bloodshed and alarms, the missionary stuck to his post. The obstinacy of hatred was being gradually overcome by the superior pertinacity of zeal in a good cause, and the invariable practice—so incomprehensible to the savage mind—of returning good for evil; the result was, that the Sabbath bell still sent its tinkling sound over the verdant slopes above Sandy Cove, and the hymn of praise still arose, morning and evening, from the little church, which, composed partly of wood, partly of coral rock, had been erected under the eye, and, to a large extent, by the hands of the missionary.

But false friends within the camp were more dangerous and troublesome to Mr Mason than avowed enemies without. Some of the European traders, especially, who settled on the island a few years after the missionary had made it habitable, were the worst foes he had to contend with.

In the same vessel that brought the missionary to the island, there came a widow, Mrs Stuart, with her son Henry, then a stout lad of thirteen. The widow was not, however, a member of the missionary's household. She came there to settle with her son, who soon built her a rudely constructed but sufficiently habitable hut, which, in after years, was enclosed, and greatly improved; so that it at last assumed the dimensions of a rambling picturesque cottage, whitewashed, brilliant, and neat in its setting of bright green.

The widow, although not an official assistant to the missionary, was nevertheless a most efficient one. She taught in his schools, being familiar with the native tongue; and, when the settlement grew in numbers, both of white and black, she became known as the good angel of the place—the one who was ever ready with sympathy for the sorrowful, and comfort for the dying. She was fair and fragile, and had been exceedingly beautiful; but care had stamped his mark deeply in her brow. Neither care nor time, however, could mar the noble outline of her fine features, or equal the love that beamed in her gentle eyes.

The widow was a great mystery to the gossips of Sandy Cove; for there are gossips even in the most distant isles of the sea! Some men (we refer, of course, to white men) thought that she must have

been the wife of an admiral at least, and had fallen into distressed circumstances, and gone to these islands to hide her poverty. Others said she was a female Jesuit in disguise, sent there to counteract the preaching of the gospel by the missionary. A few even ventured to hint their opinion that she was an outlaw, "or something of that sort" and shrewdly suspected that Mr Mason knew more about her than he was pleased to tell. But no one, either by word or look, had ever ventured to express an opinion of any kind to herself, or in the hearing of her son; the latter, indeed, displayed such uncommon breadth of shoulders, and such unusual development of muscle, that it was seldom necessary for him—even in those savage regions and wild times—to display anything else, in order to make men respectful.

While our three friends were doing justice to the bacon and breadfruit set before them by Widow Stuart, the widow herself was endeavouring to repress some strong feeling, which caused her breast to heave more than once, and induced her to turn to some trifling piece of household duty to conceal her emotion. These symptoms were not lost upon her son, whose suspicions and anger had been aroused by the familiarity of Gascoyne. Making some excuse for leaving the room, towards the conclusion of the meal, he followed his mother to an outhouse, whither she had gone to fetch some fresh milk.

"Mother," said Henry, respectfully, yet with an unwonted touch of sternness in his voice; "there is some mystery connected with this man Gascoyne that I feel convinced, you can clear up—"

"Dear Henry," interrupted the widow, and her cheek grew pale as she spoke, "do not, I beseech you, press me on this subject. I cannot clear it up."

"Say you *will* not, mother," answered Henry, in a tone of disappointment.

"I would if I dared," continued the widow. "The time may come when I—"

"But why not now," urged the youth, hastily. "I am old enough, surely, to be trusted. During the four visits this man has paid to us, I have observed a degree of familiarity on his part which no man has a right to exhibit towards you; and which, did I not see that you permit it, no man would *dare* to shew. Why do you allow him to call you 'Mary?' No one else in the settlement does so."

"He is a very old friend," replied the widow, sadly. "I have known him from childhood. We were playmates long ago."

"Humph! that's some sort of reason, no doubt; but you don't appear to like him, and his presence always seems to give you pain. Why do you suffer yourself to be annoyed by him? Only say the word, mother, and I'll kick him out of the house, neck and crop—"

"Hush, boy; you are too violent."

"Too violent! Why, it would make a coward violent, to see his mother tormented as you are by this fellow, and not be allowed to put a stop to it. I suspect—"

"Henry," said the widow, again interrupting her exasperated son, "do you think your mother would do what is wrong?"

"Mother," exclaimed the youth, seizing her hand, and kissing her brow almost violently, "I would as soon think that the angels above would do wrong; but I firmly believe that you are suffering wrong to be done *to you*; and—just listen to the fellow, I do believe he's howling for more bacon at this moment!"

There could be no doubt whatever about the fact; for just then the deep tones of Gascoyne's voice rang through the cottage, as he reiterated the name of the widow, who hastened away, followed by her son. Henry scarcely took the trouble to conceal the frown that darkened his brow as he re-entered the apartment where his companions were seated.

"Why, Mary, your bacon surpasses anything I have tasted for the last six months; let's have another rasher, like a good woman. That mountain air sharpens the appetite amazingly; especially of men who are more accustomed to mount the rigging of a ship than the hills on shore. What say you, John Bumpus?"

John Bumpus could not at that moment say anything, in consequence of his mouth being so full of the bacon referred to, that there was no room for a single word to pass his lips. In the height

of his good-humour, however, he did his best by signs to express his entire approval of the widow's provender, and even *attempted* to speak. In so doing, he choked himself, and continued in convulsions for the next five minutes, to the immense delight of the captain, who vowed he had never before seen such a blue face in the whole course of his life.

While this scene was enacting, and ere Jo Bumpus had effectually wiped away the tears from his eyes, and cleared the bacon out of his windpipe, the door opened, and the commander of H.M.S. *Talisman* entered.

Edmund Montague was a young man to hold such a responsible position in the navy; but he was a bold, vigorous little Englishman—a sort of gentlemanly and well-educated John Bull terrier; of frank address, agreeable manners, and an utterly reckless temperament, which was qualified and curbed, however, by good sense, and hard-earned experience.

"Good day to you, Mrs Stuart; I trust you will forgive my abrupt intrusion, but urgent business must be my excuse. I have called to have a little further conversation with your son, respecting that rascally pirate who has given me so much trouble. If he will have the goodness to take a short walk with me, I shall be much indebted."

"By all means," said Henry, rising and putting on his cap.

"Perhaps," said Gascoyne, as they were about to leave the room, "if the commander of the *Talisman* would condescend to take a little information from a stranger, he might learn something to the purpose regarding the pirate Durward; for he it is, I presume, of whom you are in search."

"I shall be happy to gain information from any source," replied Montague, eyeing the captain narrowly. "Are you a resident in this island?"

"No, I am not; my home is on the sea, and has been since I was a lad."

"Ah! you have fallen in with this pirate then on your native ocean, I fancy, and have disagreeable cause to remember him, perchance," said Montague, smiling. "Has he given you much trouble?"

"Ay, that he has," replied Gascoyne, with a sudden scowl of ferocity. "No one in these seas has received so much annoyance from him as I have. Any one who could rid them of his presence would do good service to the cause of humanity. But," he added, while a grim smile overspread his handsome face, "it is said that few vessels can cope with his schooner in speed, and I can answer for it that he is a bold man, fond of fighting, with plenty of reckless cut-throats to back him, and more likely to give chase to a sloop-of-war than to shew her his heels. I trust you are well manned and armed, Captain Montague, for this Durward is a desperate fellow, I assure you."

The young commander's countenance flushed as he replied, "Your anxiety on my account, sir, is quite uncalled for. Had I nothing but my own longboat wherewith to attack this pirate, it would be my duty to do so. I had scarcely expected to find unmanly fears exhibited in one so stalwart in appearance as you are. Perhaps it may relieve you to know that I am both well manned and armed. It is not usual for a British man-of-war to cruise in distant seas in a less suitable condition to protect her flag. And yet, methinks, one who has spent so many years of his life on salt water might know the difference between a frigate and a sloop-of-war."

"Be not so hasty, young man," answered Gascoyne, gravely; "you are not on your own quarter-deck just now. There ought to be civility between strangers. I may, indeed, be very ignorant of the cut and rig of British war vessels, seeing that I am but a plain trader in seas where ships of war are not often wont to unfurl their flags, but there can be no harm, and there was meant no offence, in warning you to be on your guard."

A tinge of sarcasm still lingered in Captain Montague's tone as he replied, "Well, I thank you for the caution. But to come to the point, what know you of this pirate—this Durward, as he calls himself; though I have no doubt he has sailed under so many aliases that he may have forgotten his real name."

"I know him to be a villain," replied Gascoyne.

"That much I know as well as you," said Montague.

"And yet it is said he takes fits of remorse at times, and would fain change his way of life if he could," continued Gascoyne.

"That I might guess," returned the other; "most wicked men have their seasons of remorse. Can you tell me nothing of him more definite than this, friend?"

"I can tell you that he is the very bane of my existence," said Gascoyne, the angry expression again flitting for a moment across his countenance. "He not only pursues and haunts me like my own shadow, but he gets me into scrapes by passing his schooner for mine when he is caught."

The young officer glanced in surprise at the speaker as he uttered these words.

"Indeed," said he, "that is a strange confusion of ideas. So then, the two schooners bear so strong a resemblance as to be easily mistaken for each other?"

"They are twins. They were built at the same time, from the same moulds, and were intended for the sandal-wood trade between these islands and Calcutta, Manilla, and Australia. One of them, the *Avenger*, was seized on her first voyage, by this Durward, then mate of the schooner, and has ever since scoured the South Seas as a pirate; the other, named the *Foam*, which I have the misfortune to command, still continues the traffic for which she was originally built."

"Ha!" exclaimed Montague, turning suddenly round with an inquiring gaze at the stalwart figure of the sandal-wood trader; "it is most fortunate that I have met with you, Mr Gascoyne. I doubt not that you can conduct me to this vessel of yours, so that I may know the pirate when I fall in with him. If the two vessels resemble each other so closely, a sight of the *Foam* will be of great service to me in my search after the *Avenger*."

"You are most welcome to a sight of my craft," replied Gascoyne. "The only difference between the two is, that the figurehead of the pirate is a griffin's head, painted scarlet, that of my schooner is a female, painted white. There is also a red streak round the sides of the pirate; the hull of the *Foam* is entirely black."

"Will you come on board my vessel, and accompany me in one of my boats to yours?" inquired Montague.

"That is impossible," replied Gascoyne; "I came here on urgent business which will not brook delay; but my schooner lies on the other side of the island; if you pull round, my mate will receive you. You will find him a most intelligent and hospitable man. He will conduct you over the vessel, and give you all the information you may desire. Meanwhile," added the captain of the *Foam*, rising and putting on his cap, "I must bid you adieu."

"Nay, but you have not yet told me when or where you last saw or heard of this remarkable pirate, who is so clever at representing other people, perhaps I should rather say misrepresenting them," said Montague, with a meaning smile.

"I saw him no longer ago than this morning," replied Gascoyne gravely. "He is now in these waters, with what intent I know not, unless from his unnatural delight in persecuting me, or, perhaps, because fate has led him into the very jaws of the lion."

"Humph! he will find that I bite before I roar, if he does get between my teeth," said the young officer.

"Surely you are mistaken, Gascoyne," interposed Henry Stuart, who, along with John Bumpus, had hitherto been silent listeners to the foregoing conversation. "Several of our people have been out fishing among the islands, and have neither seen nor heard of this redoubted pirate."

"That is possible enough, boy, but I have seen him, nevertheless, and I shall be much surprised if you do not see and hear more of him than you desire before many days are out. That villain does not sail the seas for pastime, you may depend on it."

As Gascoyne said this, the outer door of the house was burst violently open, and the loud voice of a boy was heard in the porch or short passage that intervened between it and the principal apartment of the cottage, shouting wildly—"Ho! hallo! hurrah! I say, Widow Stuart! Henry! here's a business —sich fun! only think, the pirate's turned up at last, and murdered half the niggers in—"

There was an abrupt stoppage both of the voice and the muscular action of this juvenile tornado as he threw open the door with a crash, and, instead of the widow or her son, met the gaze of so many strangers. The boy stood for a few seconds on the threshold, with his curly brown hair dishevelled, and his dark eyes staring in surprise, first at one, then at another of the party, until at length they alighted on John Bumpus. The mouth, which up to that moment had formed a round O of astonishment, relaxed into a broad grin, and, with sudden energy, exclaimed—

"*What* a grampus!"

Having uttered this complimentary remark, the urchin was about to retreat, when Henry made a sudden dart at him, and caught him by the collar.

"Where got you the news, Will Corrie?" said Henry, giving the boy a squeeze with his strong hand.

"Oh, please, be merciful, Henry, and I'll tell you all about it. But, pray, don't give me over to that grampus," cried the lad, pretending to whimper. "I got the news from a feller, that said he'd got it from a feller, that saw a feller, who said he'd heard a feller tell another feller, that he saw a *black* feller in the bush, somewhere or other 'tween this and the other end o' the island, with a shot hole in his right arm, running like a cogolampus, with ten pirates in full chase. Ah! oh! have mercy, Henry; really my constitution will break down if you—"

"Silence, you chatter-box, and give me a reasonable account of what you have heard or seen, if you can."

The volatile urchin, who might have been about thirteen years of age, became preternaturally grave all of a sudden, and, looking up earnestly in his questioner's face, said, "Really, Henry, you are becoming unreasonable in your old age, to ask me to give you a reasonable account of a thing, and at the same time to be silent!"

"I'll tell you what, Corrie, I'll throttle you if you don't speak," said Henry.

"Ah! you *couldn't*," pleaded Corrie in a tone of deep pathos.

"P'raps," observed John Bumpus, "p'raps if you hand over the young gen'l'm'n to the 'grampus,' *he'll* make him speak."

On hearing this, the boy set up a howl of affected despair, and suffered Henry to lead him unresistingly to within a few feet of Bumpus, but, just as he was within an inch of the huge fist of that nautical monster, he suddenly wrenched his collar out of his captor's grasp, darted to the door, turned round on the threshold, hit the side of his own nose a sounding slap with the forefinger of his right hand, uttered an inexpressively savage yell, vanished from the scene, and,—

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Left not a wreck behind."

Except the wreck of the milk-saucer of the household cat, which sagacious creature had wisely taken to flight at the first symptom of war.

The boy was instantly followed by Henry, but so light was his foot, that the fastest runner in the settlement had to penetrate the woods immediately behind his mother's house for a quarter of a mile before he succeeded in again laying hold of the refractory lad's collar.

"What do you mean, Corrie, by such conduct?" said his captor, shaking him vigorously. "I have half a mind to give you a wallopping."

"Never do anything by halves, Henry," said the boy mildly. "*I* never do. It's a bad habit; always go the whole length or none. Now that we are alone, I'll give you a reasonable account of what I know, if you'll remove your hand from my collar. You forget that I'm growing, and that, when I am big enough, the day of reckoning between us will surely come!"

"But why would you not give me the information I want in the house. The people you saw there are as much interested in it as I am."

"Oh! are they?" returned Corrie with a glance of peculiar meaning; "perhaps they are *more* interested than you are."

"How so?"

"Why, how do I know, and how do you know, that these fellows are not pirates in disguise?"

"Because," said Henry, "one of them is an old friend—that is, an acquaintance—at least a sort of intimate, who has been many and many a time at our house before, and my mother knows him well. I can't say I like him—that is to say, I don't exactly like some of his ways—though I don't dislike the man himself."

"A most unsatisfactory style of reply, Henry, for a man—ah, beg pardon, a boy—of your straightforward character. Which o' the three are you speaking of—the grampus?"

"No, the other big handsome-looking fellow."

"And you're sure you've known him long?" continued the boy, while an expression of perplexity flitted over his face.

"Quite sure; why?"

"Because *I* have seen you often enough, and your house and your mother, not to mention your cat and your pigs, and hens; but I've never seen *him* before to-day."

"That's because he usually comes at night, and seldom stays more than an hour or two."

"A most uncomfortable style of acquaintance," said Corrie, trying to look wise, which was an utterly futile effort, seeing that his countenance was fat and round, and rosy, and very much the reverse of philosophical. "But how do you know that the grampus is not the pirate?"

"Because he is one of Gascoyne's men."

"Oh! his name is Gascoyne, is it?—a most piratical name it is. However, since he is your friend, Henry, it's all right; what's tother's name?"

"Bumpus—John Bumpus."

On hearing this, the boy clapped both hands to his sides, expanded his eyes and mouth, shewed his teeth, and finally gave vent to roars of uncontrollable laughter, swaying his body about the while as if in agony.

"Oh, clear!" he cried, after a time, "John Bumpus, ha! ha! ha! what a name!—John Bumpus, ha! ha! the grampus—why, it's magnificent, ha! ha!" and again the boy gave free vent to his merriment, while his companion looked on with a quiet grin of amusement.

Presently, Corrie became grave, and said, "But what of the third, the little chap, all over gold lace? P'r'aps he's the pirate. He looked bold enough a'most for anything."

"Why, you goose, that's the commander of his Britannic Majesty's frigate *Talisman*."

"Indeed? I hope his Britannic Majesty has many more like him."

"Plenty more like him. But come, boy; what have you heard of this pirate, and what do you mean about a wounded nigger?"

"I just mean this," answered the lad, suddenly becoming serious, "that when I was out on the mountain this morning, I thought I would cross the ridge, and when I did so, the first thing I saw was a schooner lying in the bay at the foot of the hill, where you and I have so often gone chasing pigs together; well, being curious to know what sort of a craft she was, I went down the hill, intendin' to go aboard; but before I'd got half way through the cocoanut grove, I heard a horrible yell of a savage; so, thinks I, here comes them blackguard pagans again, to attack the settlement; and before I could hide out of the way, a naked savage almost ran into my arms. He was sea-green in the face with fright, and blood was running over his right arm.

"The moment he saw me, instead of splitting me up with his knife and eating me alive, as these fellers are so fond of doin', he gave a start, and another great cry, and doubled on his track like a hare. His cry was answered by a shout from half a dozen sailors, who burst out of the thicket at that moment, and I saw they were in pursuit of him. Down I went at once behind a thick bush, and the whole lot o' the blind bats passed right on in full cry, within half an inch of my nose. And I never saw

sich a set o' piratical-looking villains since I was born. I felt quite sure that yon schooner is the pirate that has been doing so much mischief hereabouts, so I came back as fast as my legs could carry me, to tell you what I had seen. There, you have got all that I know of the matter now."

"You are wrong, boy—the schooner you saw is not the pirate, it is the *Foam*. Strange, very strange!" muttered Henry.

"What's strange," inquired the lad.

"Not the appearance of the wounded nigger," answered the other; "I can explain all about him, but the sailors—that puzzles me."

Henry then related the morning's adventure to his young companion.

"But," continued he, after detailing all that the reader already knows, "I cannot comprehend how the pirates you speak of could have landed without their vessel being in sight; and that nothing is to be seen from the mountain tops except the *Talisman* on the one side of the island and the *Foam* on the other, I can vouch for. Boats might lie concealed among the rocks on the shore, no doubt. But no boats would venture to put ashore with hostile intentions, unless the ship to which they belonged were within sight. As for the crew of the *Foam*, they are ordinary seamen, and not likely to amuse themselves chasing wounded savages, even if they were allowed to go ashore, which I think is not likely, for Gascoyne knows well enough, that that side of the island is inhabited by the pagans, who would as soon kill and eat a man as they would a pig."

"Sooner,—the monsters," exclaimed the boy indignantly, for he had, on more than one occasion, been an eye-witness, of the horrible practice of cannibalism which prevails, even at the present day, among some of the South Sea islanders.

"There is mystery here," said Henry, starting up, "and the sooner we alarm the people of the settlement, the better. Come, Corrie, we shall return to the house and let the British officer hear what you have told me."

When the lad had finished relating his adventure to the party, in Widow Stuart's cottage, Gascoyne said quietly, "I would advise you, Captain Montague, to return to your ship and make your preparations for capturing this pirate, for that he is even now almost within range of your guns, I have not the slightest doubt. As to the men appearing piratical-looking fellows to this boy, I don't wonder at that; most men are wild enough when their blood is up. Some of my own men are as savage to look at as one would desire. But I gave strict orders this morning, that only a few were to go ashore, and these were to keep well out of sight of the settlement of the savages. Doubtless, they are all aboard by this time. If you decide upon anything like a hunt among the mountains, I can lend you a few hands."

"Thank you, I may perhaps require some of your hands," said Montague, with a dash of sarcasm in his tone; "meanwhile, since you will not favour me with your company on board, I shall bid you good afternoon."

He bowed stiffly, and, leaving the cottage, hastened on board his ship, where the shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle, and the deep hoarse tones of that officer's gruff voice, quickly announced to the people on shore that orders had been promptly given, and were in course of being as promptly obeyed.

During the hour that followed these events, the captain of the *Foam* was closeted with Widow Stuart and her son, and the youthful Corrie was engaged in laying the foundations of a never-to-die friendship with John Bumpus, or, as that eccentric youngster preferred to style him, Jo Grampus.

Chapter Five
The pastor's household—Preparations for war

When the conference in the widow's cottage closed, Henry Stuart and Gascoyne hastened into the woods together, and followed a narrow footpath which led towards the interior of the island. Arriving at a spot where this path branched into two, Henry took the one that ran round the outskirts of the settlement towards the residence of Mr Mason, while his companion pursued the other which struck into the recesses of the mountains.

"Come in," cried the missionary, as Henry knocked at the door of his study. "Ah, Henry, I'm glad to see you. You were in my thoughts this moment. I have come to a difficulty in my drawings of the spire of our new church, and I want your fertile imagination to devise some plan whereby we may overcome it. But of that I shall speak presently. I see from your looks that more important matters have brought you hither. Nothing wrong at the cottage, I trust?"

"No, nothing—that is to say, not exactly wrong, but things, I fear, are not altogether right in the settlement. I have had an unfortunate rencontre this morning with one of the savages, which is likely to lead to mischief, for blood was drawn, and I know the fellow to be revengeful. In addition to this, it is suspected that Durward, the pirate, is hovering among the islands, and meditates a descent on us. How much truth there may be in the report I cannot pretend to guess; but Gascoyne, the captain of the *Foam*, has been over at our cottage, and says he has seen the pirate, and that there is no saying what he may venture to attempt, for he is a bold fellow, and, as you know, cannot have a good-will to missionary settlements."

"I'm not so sure of that," said the pastor, in answer to the last remark. "It is well known that wherever a Christian settlement is founded in these islands, that place becomes a safe port for vessels of all sorts—pirates as well as others, if they sail under false colours and pretend to be honest traders; —while in all the other islands, it is equally well known, the only safety one can count on, in landing, is superior force. But I am grieved to hear of your affray with the native. I hope that life will not be sacrificed."

"No fear of that; the rascal got only a flesh wound."

Here the young man related his adventure of the morning, and finished by asking what the pastor advised should be done in the way of precaution.

"It seems to me," said Mr Mason, gravely, "that our chief difficulty will be to save ourselves from our friends—"

"Would friends harm us, father?" asked a sweet soft voice at the pastor's elbow. Next moment Alice Mason was seated on her father's knee, gazing up in his face with an expression of undisguised amazement.

Alice was a fair, delicate, gentle child. Twelve summers and winters had passed over her little head without a cloud to obscure the sunshine of her life save one—but that one was a terribly dark one, and its shadow lingered over her for many years. When Alice lost her mother, she lost the joy and delight of her existence; and although six years had passed since that awful day, and a fond Christian father had done his best to impress on her young mind that the beloved one was not lost for ever, but would one day be found sitting at the feet of Jesus in a bright and beautiful world, the poor child could not recover her former elasticity of spirits. Doubtless, her isolated position and the want of suitable companions, had something to do with the prolonged sadness of her little heart.

It is almost unnecessary to say that her love for her father was boundless. This was natural, but it did not seem by any means so natural that the delicate child should give the next place in her heart to a wild little boy, a black girl, and a ragged little dog! Yet so it was, and it would have been difficult for the closest observer to tell which of these three Alice liked best.

No one could so frequently draw forth the merry laugh that in former days had rung so sweetly over the hill-sides of the verdant isle, as our young friend Will Corrie. Nothing could delight the heart of the child so much as to witness the mad gambols, not to mention the mischievous deeds, of that ragged little piece of an old door-mat, which, in virtue of its being possessed of animal life, was named Toozle. And when Alice wished to talk quietly,—to pour out her heart, and sometimes her tears,—the bosom she sought on which to lay her head, next to her father's, was that of her youthful nursery-maid, a good, kind, and gentle, but an awfully stupid native girl named Kekupoopi.

This name was, of course, reduced in its fair proportions by little Alice, who, however, retained the latter part thereof in preference to the former, and styled her maid Poopy. Young Master Corrie, on the other hand, called her Kickup or Puppy, indifferently, according to the humour he chanced to be in when he met her, or to the word that rose most readily to his lips.

Mr Mason replied to the question put by Alice, at the beginning of this somewhat lengthy digression, "No, my lamb, friends would not willingly do us harm; but there are those who call themselves friends who do not deserve the name, who pretend to be such, but who are in reality secret enemies. But go, dearest, to your room; I am busy just now talking with Henry—he, at least, is a trusty friend. When I have done you shall come back to me."

Alice kissed her father, and, getting off his knee, went at once in search of her friend Poopy.

That dark-skinned and curly black-headed domestic was in the kitchen, seated on the bottom of an overturned iron pot, inside the dingy niche in which the domestic fire was wont to burn when anything of a culinary nature was going on. At the time when her mistress entered, nothing of the kind was in progress, and the fire had subsided to extinction.

The girl, who might have been any age between twelve and sixteen—nearer the latter, perhaps, than the former—was gazing with expressionless eyes straight before her, and thinking, evidently, of nothing. She was clothed in a white tunic, from which her black legs, arms, neck, and head protruded —forming a startling contrast therewith.

"Oh! Poopy, what a bad girl you are!" cried Alice, laughing, as she observed where her maid was seated.

Poopy's visage at once beamed with a look of good humour, a wide gash suddenly appeared somewhere near her chin, displaying a double row of brilliant teeth surrounded by red gums; at the same time the whites of her eyes disappeared, because, being very plump, it was a physical impossibility that she should laugh and keep them uncovered.

"Hee! hee!" exclaimed Poopy.

We are really sorry to give the reader a false impression, as we feel that we have done, of our friend Kekupoopi, but a regard for truth compels us to shew the worst of her character first. She was not demonstrative; and the few words and signs by which she endeavoured to communicate the state of her feelings to the outward world were not easily interpreted except by those who knew her well. There is no doubt whatever that Poopy was—we scarcely like to use the expression, but we know of no other more appropriate—a donkey! We hasten to guard ourselves from misconstruction here. That word, if used in an ill-natured and passionate manner, is a bad one, and by no means to be countenanced; but, as surgeons may cut off legs at times, without thereby sanctioning the indiscriminate practice of amputation in a miscellaneous sort of way as a pastime, to this otherwise objectionable word may, we think, be used to bring out a certain trait of character in full force. Holding this opinion, and begging the reader to observe that we make the statement gravely and in an entirely philosophical way, we repeat that Poopy was—figuratively speaking—a donkey!

Yet she was an amiable, affectionate: good girl for all that, with an amount of love in her heart for her young mistress which words cannot convey, and which it is no wonder, therefore, that Poopy herself could not adequately express either by word or look.

"It's all very well for you to sit there and say 'Hee! hee!'" cried Alice, advancing to the fire-place; "but you must have made a dreadful mark on your clean white frock. Get up and turn round."

"Hee! hee!" exclaimed the girl, as she obeyed the mandate.

The "Oh! oh!! oh!!!" that burst from Alice, on observing the pattern of the pot neatly printed off on Poopy's garment, was so emphatic, that the girl became impressed with the fact that she had done something wrong, and twisted her head and neck in a most alarming manner in a series of vain attempts to behold the extent of the damage.

"*What* a figure!" exclaimed Alice, on recovering from the first shock.

"It vill vash," said Poopy, in a deprecatory tone.

"I hope it will," replied Alice, shaking her head doubtfully, for her experience in the laundry had not yet been so extensive as to enable her to pronounce at once on the eradicability of such a frightfully deep impression. While she was still shaking her head in dubiety on this point, and while Poopy was still making futile attempts to obtain a view of the spot, the door of the kitchen opened, and Master Corrie swaggered in with his hands thrust into the outer pockets of his jacket, his shirt collar thrown very much open, and his round straw hat placed very much on the back of his head; for, having seen some of the crew of the *Talisman*, he had been smitten with a strong desire to imitate a man-of-war's-man in aspect and gait.

At his heels came that scampering mass of ragged door-mat Toozle, who, feeling that a sensation of some kind or other was being got up for his amusement, joined heartily in the shout of delight that burst from the youthful Corrie when he beheld the extraordinary figure in the fireplace.

"Well, I say, Kickup," cried the youth, picking up his hat, which had fallen off in the convulsion, and drying his tears, "you're a sweet lookin' creetur, you are! Is this a new frock you've got to go to church with? Come, I rather like that pattern, but there's not quite enough of 'em. Suppose I lend a hand and print a few more all over you. There's plenty of pots and pans here to do it; and if Alice will bring down her white frock I'll give it a touch up too."

"How can you talk such nonsense, Corrie!" said Alice, laughing. "Down, Toozle; silence, sir. Go, my dear Poopy, and put on another frock, and make haste, for I've something to say to you."

Thus admonished, the girl ran to a small apartment that opened off the kitchen, and speedily reappeared in another tunic. Meanwhile, Corrie had seated himself on the floor, with Toozle between his knees and Alice on a stool at his side. Poopy, in a fit of absence of mind, was about to resume her seat on the iron pot, when a simultaneous shriek, bark, and roar, recalled her scattered faculties, produced a "hee! hee!" varied with a faint "ho!" and induced her to sit down on the floor beside her mistress.

"Now, tell me, Poopy," said Alice, "did you ever hear of friends who were not really friends, but enemies?"

The girl stared with a vacant countenance at the bright intelligent face of the child, and shook her head slowly.

"Why don't you ask *me*?" inquired Corrie. "*You* might as well ask Toozle as that potato Kickup. Eh? Puppy, don't you confess that you are no better than a vegetable? Come, now, be honest."

"Hee! hee!" replied Poopy.

"Humph! I thought so. But that's an odd question of yours, Alice. What do you mean by it?"

"I mean that my papa thinks there are friends in the settlement who are enemies."

"Does he, though? Now, that's mysterious," said the boy, becoming suddenly grave. "That requires to be looked to. Come, Alice, tell me all the particulars. Don't omit anything—our lives may depend on it."

The deeply serious manner in which Corrie said this, so impressed and solemnised the child, that she related, word for word, the brief conversation she had had with her father, and all that she had heard of the previous converse between him and Henry.

When she had concluded, Master Corrie threw a still more grave and profoundly philosophical expression into his chubby face, and asked, in a hollow tone of voice, "Your father didn't say anything against the Grampus, did he?"

"The what?" inquired Alice.

"The Grampus—the man, at least, whom *I* call the Grampus, and who calls hisself Jo Bumpus."

"I did not hear such names mentioned, but Henry spoke of a wounded nigger."

"Ay, they're all a set of false rascals together," said Corrie.

"Niggers ob dis here settlement is good mans, ebery von," said Poopy, promptly.

"Hallo! Kickup, wot's wrong? I never heard ye say so much at one time since I came to this place."

"Niggers is good peepils," reiterated the girl.

"So they are, Puppy, and you're the best of 'em; but I was speakin' of the fellers on the other side of the island, d'ye see?"

"Hee! hee!" ejaculated the girl.

"Well, but what makes you so anxious?" said Alice, looking earnestly into the boy's face.

Corrie laid his hand on her head and stroked her fair hair as he replied—

"This is a serious matter, Alice; I must go at once and see your father about it."

He rose with an air of importance, as if about to leave the kitchen.

"Oh! but please don't go till you have told me what it is; I'm so frightened," said Alice; "do stay and tell me about it before you go to papa."

"Well, I don't mind if I do," said the boy, sitting down again. "You must know, then, that it's reported there are pirates on the island."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice.

"D'ye know what pirates are, Puppy?"

"Hee! hee!" answered the girl.

"I do believe she don't know nothin'," said the boy, looking at her with an air of compassion "wot a sad thing it is to belong to a lower species of human natur! Well, I s'pose it can't be helped. A pirate, Kickup, is a sea-robber. D'ye understand?"

"Ho! ho!"

"Ay, I thought so. Well, Alice, I am told that there's been a lot o' them landed on the island and took to chasin' and killin' the niggers, and Henry was all but killed by one o' the niggers this very morning, an' was saved by a big feller that's a mystery to me, and by the Grampus, who is the best feller I ever met—a regular trump he is; and there's all sorts o' doubts, and fears, and rumours, and things of that sort, with a captain of the British navy, that you and I have read so much about, trying to find this pirate out, and suspectin' everybody he meets is him. I only hope he won't take it into his stupid head to mistake *me* for him—not so unlikely a thing after all." And the youthful Corrie shook his head with much gravity, as he surveyed his rotund little legs complacently.

"What are you laughing at?" he added, suddenly, on observing that a bright smile had overspread Alice's face.

"At the idea of you being taken for a pirate," said the child.

"Hee! hee! ho! ho!" remarked Poopy.

"Silence, you lump of black putty!" thundered the aspiring youth.

"Come, don't be cross to my maid," said Alice, quickly.

Corrie laughed, and was about to continue his discourse on the events and rumours of the day, when Mr Mason's voice was heard the other end of the house.

"Ho! Corrie."

"That's me," cried the boy, promptly springing up and rushing out of the room.

"Here, my boy, I thought I heard your voice. I want you to go a message for me. Run down, like a good lad, to Ole Thorwald and tell him to come up here as soon as he conveniently can. There are matters to consult about which will not brook delay."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Corrie, sailor fashion, as he touched his forelock and bounded from the room.

"Off on pressing business," cried the sanguine youth, as he dashed through the kitchen, frightening Alice, and throwing Toozle into convulsions of delight—"horribly important business that 'won't brook delay;' but what *brook* means is more than I can guess."

Before the sentence was finished, Corrie was far down the hill, leaping over every obstacle like a deer. On passing through a small field he observed a native bending down, as if picking weeds, with his back towards him. Going softly up behind, he hit the semi-naked savage a sounding slap, and exclaimed, as he passed on, "Hallo! Jackolu, important business, my boy—hurrah!"

The native to whom this rough salutation was given, was a tall stalwart young fellow who had for some years been one of the best behaved and most active members of Frederick Mason's dark-skinned congregation. He stood erect for some time, with a broad grin on his swarthy face, and a twinkle in his eye, as he gazed after the young hopeful, muttering to himself, "Ho! yes—bery wicked boy dat, bery; but hims capital chap for all dat."

A few minutes later, Master Corrie burst in upon the sturdy middle-aged merchant, named Ole Thorwald, a Norwegian who had resided much in England, and spoke the English language well, and who prided himself on being entitled to claim descent from the old Norwegian sea-kings. This man was uncle and protector to Corrie.

"Ho! uncle Ole; here's a business. Sich a to do—wounds, blood, and murder! or at least an attempt at it;—the whole settlement in arms, and the parson sends for you to take command!"

"What means the boy?" exclaimed Ole Thorwald, who, in virtue of his having once been a private in a regiment of militia, had been appointed to the chief command of the military department of the settlement. This consisted of about thirty white men, armed with fourteen fowling-pieces, twenty daggers, fifteen swords, and eight cavalry pistols; and about two hundred native Christians, who, when the assaults of their unconverted brethren were made, armed themselves—as they were wont to do in days gone by—with formidable clubs, stone hatchets, and spears. "What means the boy!" exclaimed Ole, laying down a book which he had been reading, and thrusting his spectacles up on his broad bald forehead.

"Exactly what the boy says," replied Master Corrie.

"Then add something more to it, pray."

Thorwald said this in a mild tone, but he suddenly seized the handle of an old pewter mug which the lad knew, from experience, would certainly reach his head before he could gain the door if he did not behave; so he became polite, and condescended to explain his errand more fully.

"So, so," observed the descendant of the sea-kings, as he rose and slowly buckled on a huge old cavalry sabre, "there is double mischief brewing this time. Well, we shall see—we shall see. Go, Corrie, my boy, and rouse up Terrence and Hugh and—"

"The whole army, in short," cried the boy, hastily—"you're so awfully slow, uncle, you should have been born in the last century, I think."

Farther remark was cut short by the sudden discharge of the pewter mug, which, however, fell harmlessly on the panel of the closing door as the impertinent Corrie sped forth to call the settlement to arms.

Chapter Six
Suspicions allayed and re-awakened

Gascoyne, followed by his man Jo Bumpus, sped over the rugged mountains and descended the slopes on the opposite side of the island soon after nightfall, and long before Captain Montague, in his large and well-manned boat, could pull half way round in the direction of the sequestered bay where the *Foam* lay quietly at anchor.

There was not a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the glassy sea, as the captain of the sandal-wood trader reached the shore and uttered a low cry like the hoot of an owl. The cry was instantly replied to, and in a few minutes a boat crept noiselessly towards the shore, seeming, in the uncertain light, more like a shadow than a reality. It was rowed by a single man. When within a few yards of the shore, the oars ceased to move, and the deep stillness of the night was scarcely broken by the low voice of surly Dick demanding—"Who goes there?"

"All right, pull in," replied Gascoyne, whose deep bass voice sounded sepulchral in the almost unearthly stillness. It was one of those dark oppressively quiet nights which make one feel a powerful sensation of loneliness, and a peculiar disinclination, by word or act, to disturb the prevailing quiescence of nature—such a night as suggests the idea of a coming storm to those who are at sea, or of impending evil to those on land.

"Is the mate aboard?" inquired Gascoyne.

"He is, sir."

"Are any of the hands on shore?"

"More than half of 'em, sir."

Nothing more was said; and in a few minutes Gascoyne was slowly pacing the quarter-deck of his little vessel in earnest consultation with his first mate. There seemed to be some difference of opinion between the captain and his officer, for their words, which at first were low, at length became audible.

"I tell you, Manton, it won't do," said Gascoyne, sternly.

"I can only suggest what I believe to be for the good of the ship," replied the other, coldly. "Even if you succeed in your attempt, you will be certain to lose some of our hands; for although the best of them are on shore, the commander of the *Talisman* will think those that remain too numerous for a sandal-wood trader, and you are aware that we are sufficiently short-handed in such dangerous seas."

The latter part of this speech was uttered in a slightly sarcastic tone.

"What would you have me do, then?" demanded Gascoyne, whose usual decision of character seemed to have deserted him under the influence of conflicting feelings, which, the first mate could plainly perceive, agitated the breast of his commander, but which he could by no means account for. Certainly he had no sympathy with them, for Manton's was a hard, stern nature—not given to the melting mood.

"Do?" exclaimed the mate vehemently, "I would mount the red, and get out the sweeps. An hour's pull will place the schooner on the other side of the reef. A shot from Long Tom will sink the best boat in the service of his Britannic Majesty, and we could be off and away with the land breeze before morning."

"What! sink a man-of-war's boat!" exclaimed Gascoyne; "why, that would make them set us down as pirates at once, and we should have to run the gauntlet of half the British navy before this time next year."

Manton received this remark with a loud laugh, which harshly disturbed the silence of the night.

"That is true," said he, "yet I scarcely expected to see Captain Gascoyne shew the white feather."

"Possibly not," retorted the other, grimly; "yet methinks that he who counsels flight shews more of the white feather than he who would shove his head into the very jaws of the lion. It won't do, Manton; I have my own reasons for remaining here. The white lady must in the meantime smile on the British commander. Besides, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to do all this and get our fellows on board again before morning. The land-breeze will serve to fill the sails of the *Talisman* just as well as those of the *Foam*; and they're sure to trip their anchor to-night, for, you'll scarcely believe it, this mad little fellow Montague actually suspects me to be the pirate Durward!"

Again the harsh laugh of Manton disturbed the peaceful calm, and this time he was joined by Gascoyne, who seemed at length to have overcome the objections of his mate, for their tones again sank into inaudible whispers.

Shortly after this conversation the moon broke out from behind a bank of clouds, and shone brightly down on land and sea, throwing into bold relief the precipices, pinnacles, and gorges of the one, and covering the other with rippling streaks of silver. About the same time the oars of the man-of-war's boat were heard, and in less than half an hour Captain Montague ascended the side of the *Foam*, where, to his great surprise, he was politely received by Gascoyne.

"Captain Gascoyne has reason to be proud of his pedestrian powers," said the young commander; "he must have had urgent reason for making such good use of his legs since we last met."

"To do the honours of his own ship, when he expects a visit from a British officer, is surely sufficient reason to induce a poor skipper to take an extra walk of a fine evening," replied Gascoyne, blandly. "Besides, I know that men-of-war are apt to take a fancy to the crews of merchantmen sometimes, and I thought my presence might be necessary here to-night."

"How?" exclaimed Montague, quickly. "Do you fancy that your single arm, stout though it be, could avail to prevent this evil that you dread if I think proper to act according to established usage in time of war."

"Nay, that were extreme vanity indeed," returned the other, "but I would fain hope that the explanations which I can give of the danger of our peculiar trade, and the necessity we have for a strong crew, will induce Captain Montague to forego his undoubted privilege and right on this occasion."

"I'm not sure of that," replied Montague, "it will depend much on your explanations being satisfactory. How many men have you?"

"Twenty-two."

"So many! that is much more than enough to work so small a vessel."

"But not more than enough to defend my vessel from a swarm of bloody savages."

"Perhaps not," returned Montague, on whom the urbanity and candour of the captain of the *Foam* were beginning to have a softening influence. "You have no objection to let me see your papers, and examine your ship, I suppose."

"None in the world," replied Gascoyne, smiling, "and if I had, it would make little difference, I should imagine, to one who is so well able to insist on having his will obeyed."—(He glanced at the boat full of armed men as he spoke.)—"Pray, come below with me."

In the examination that ensued Captain Montague was exceedingly strict, although the strength of his first suspicions had been somewhat abated by the truthful tone and aspect of Gascoyne, and the apparent reasonableness of all he said; but he failed to detect anything in the papers, or in the general arrangements of the *Foam*, that could warrant his treating her otherwise than as an honest trader.

"So," said he, on returning to the deck; "this is the counterpart of the noted pirate, is it? You must pardon my having suspected you, sir, of being this same Durward, sailing under false colours. Come, let me see the points of difference between you, else if we happen to meet on the high seas I may chance to make an unfortunate hole in your timbers."

"The sides of my schooner are altogether black, as you see," returned Gascoyne. "I have already explained that a narrow streak of red distinguishes the pirate, and this fair lady" (leading Montague

to the bow) "guides the *Foam* over the waves with smiling countenance, while a scarlet griffin is the more appropriate figurehead of Durward's vessel."

As he spoke, the low boom of a far distant gun was heard. Montague started, and glanced inquiringly in the face of his companion, whose looks expressed a slight degree of surprise.

"What was that, think you?" said Montague, after a momentary pause.

"The commander of the *Talisman* ought, I think, to be the best judge of the sound of his own guns."

"True," returned the young officer, somewhat disconcerted; "but you forget that I am not familiar with the eruptions of those volcanic mountains of yours; and, at so great a distance from my ship, with such hills of rock and lava between us, I may well be excused feeling a little doubt as to the bark of my own bull-dogs. But that signal betokens something unusual. I must shorten my visit to you, I fear."

"Pray do not mention it," said Gascoyne, with a peculiar smile; "under the circumstances I am bound to excuse you."

"But," continued Montague, with emphasis, "I should be sorry indeed to part without some little memorial of my visit. Be so good as to order your men to come aft."

"By all means," said Gascoyne, giving the requisite order promptly, for, having sent all his best men on shore, he did not much mind the loss one or two of those that remained.

When they were mustered, the British commander inspected them carefully, and then he singled out surly Dick, and ordered him into the boat. A slight frown rested for a moment on Gascoyne's countenance, as he observed the look of ill-concealed triumph with which the man obeyed the order. The expression of surly Dick, however, was instantly exchanged for one of dismay as his captain strode up to him, and looked in his face for one moment with a piercing glance, at the same time thrusting his left hand into the breast of his red shirt.

"Goodbye," he said, suddenly, in a cheerful tone, extending his right hand and grasping that of the sailor. "Goodbye, lad; if you serve the king as well as you have served me, he'll have reason to be proud of you."

Gascoyne turned on his heel, and the man slunk into the boat with an aspect very unlike that of a bold British seaman.

"Here is another man I want," said Montague, laying his hand on the shoulder of John Bumpus.

"I trust, sir, that you will not take that man," said Gascoyne earnestly. "I cannot afford to lose him; I would rather you should take any three of the others."

"Your liberality leads me to think that you could without much difficulty supply the place of the men I take—but three are too many. I shall be satisfied with this one. Go into the boat, my lad."

Poor John Bumpus, whose heart had been captivated by the beauties of the island, obeyed the order with a rueful countenance; and Gascoyne bit his lip and turned aside to conceal his anger. In two minutes more the boat rowed away from the schooner's side.

Not a word was spoken by any one in the boat until a mile had separated it from the schooner. They had just turned a point which shut the vessel out of view, when surly Dick suddenly recovered his self-possession and his tongue, and, starting up in an excited manner, exclaimed to Montague—

"The schooner you have just left, sir, is a pirate. I tell the truth, though I should swing for it."

The crew of the boat ceased rowing, and glanced at each other in surprise on hearing this.

"Ha! say you so," exclaimed Montague, quickly.

"It's a fact, sir; ask my comrade there, and he'll tell you the same thing."

"He'll do nothin' o' the sort," sharply returned honest Bumpus, who, having been only a short time previously engaged by Gascoyne, could perceive neither pleasure nor justice in the idea of being hanged for a pirate, and who attributed Dick's speech to an ill-natured desire to get his late commander into trouble.

"Which of you am I to believe?" said Montague, hastily.

"W'ich ever you please," observed Bumpus, with an air of indifference.

"It's no business o' mine," said Dick, sulkily; "if you choose to let the blackguard escape, that's your own look out."

"Silence, you scoundrel," cried Montague, who was as much nettled by a feeling of uncertainty how to act as by the impertinence of the man.

Before he could decide as to the course he ought to pursue, the report of one of the guns of his own vessel boomed loud and distinct in the distance. It was almost immediately followed by another.

"Ha! that settles the question; give way, my lads, give way."

In another moment the boat was cleaving her way swiftly through the dark water in the direction of the *Talisman*.

Chapter Seven
Master Corrie caught napping—Snakes in the grass

The Sabbath morning which succeeded the events we have just narrated dawned on the settlement of Sandy Cove in unclouded splendour, and the deep repose of nature was still unbroken by the angry passions and the violent strife of man, although from the active preparations of the previous night it might have been expected that those who dwelt on the island would not have an opportunity of enjoying the rest of that day.

Everything in and about the settlement was eminently suggestive of peace. The cattle lay sleepily in the shade of the trees; the sea was still calm like glass. Men had ceased from their daily toil; and the only sounds that broke the quiet of the morning were the chattering of the parrots and other birds in the cocoanut groves; and the cries of seafowl, as they circled in the air, or dropt on the surface of the sea in quest of fish.

The British frigate lay at anchor in the same place which she had hitherto occupied, and the *Foam* still floated in the sequestered bay on the other side of the island. In neither vessel was there the slightest symptom of preparation; and to one who knew not the true state of matters, the idea of war being about to break forth was the last that would have occurred.

But this deceitful quiet was only the calm that precedes the storm. On every hand men were busily engaged in making preparation to break that Sabbath day in the most frightful manner, or were calmly, but resolutely, awaiting attack. On board the ship-of-war, indeed, there was little doing, for, her business being to fight, she was always in a state of readiness for action. Her signal guns, fired the previous night, had recalled Montague to tell him of the threatened attack by the savages. A few brief orders were given, and they were prepared for whatever might occur. In the village, too, the arrangements to repel attack having been made, white men and native converts alike rested with their arms placed in convenient proximity to their hands.

In a wild and densely-wooded part of the island, far removed from those portions which we have yet had occasion to describe, a band of fiendish-looking men were making arrangements for one of those unprovoked assaults which savages are so prone to make on those who settle near them.

They were all of them in a state of almost complete nudity, but the complicated tattooing on their dark skins gave them the appearance of being more clothed than they really were. Their arms consisted chiefly of enormous clubs of hardwood, spears, and bows; and, in order to facilitate their escape should they chance to be grasped in a hand-to-hand conflict, they had covered their bodies with oil, which glistened in the sunshine as they moved about their village.

Conspicuous among these truly savage warriors was the form of Keona, with his right arm bound up in a sort of sling. Pain and disappointed revenge had rendered this man's face more than usually diabolical as he went about among his fellows, inciting them to revenge the insult and injury done to them through his person by the whites. There was some reluctance, however, on the part of a few of the chiefs to renew a war that had been terminated, or rather, been slumbering, only for a few months.

Keona's influence, too, was not great among his kindred, and had it not been that one or two influential chiefs sided with him, his own efforts to relight the still smoking torch of war would have been unavailing.

As it was, the natives soon worked themselves up into a sufficiently excited state to engage in any desperate expedition. It was while all this was doing in the native camp, that Keona, having gone to the nearest mountain top to observe what was going on in the settlement, had fallen in with and been chased by some of those men belonging to the *Foam*, who had been sent on shore to escape being pressed into the service of the king of England.

The solitary exception to this general state of preparation for war was the household of Frederick Mason. Having taken such precautionary steps the night before as he deemed expedient, and having consulted with Ole Thorwald, the general commanding, who had posted scouts in all the mountain passes, and had seen the war-canoes drawn up in a row on the strand, the pastor retired to his study and spent the greater part of the night in preparing to preach the gospel of peace on the morrow, and in committing the care of his flock and his household to Him who is the "God of battles" as well as the "Prince of peace."

It is not to be supposed that Mr Mason contemplated the probable renewal of hostilities without great anxiety. For himself, we need scarcely say, he had no fears, but his heart sank when he thought of his gentle Alice falling into the hands of savages. As the night passed away without any alarms, his anxiety began to subside, and when Sunday morning dawned, he lay down on a couch to snatch a few hours' repose before the labours of the day began.

The first object that greeted the pastor's eyes on awaking in the morning was a black visage, and a pair of glittering eyes gazing at him through the half open door with an expression of the utmost astonishment.

He leaped up with lightning, speed and darted towards the intruder, but checked himself suddenly and smiled, as poor Poopy uttered a scream, and, falling on her knees, implored for mercy.

"My poor girl, I fear I have frightened you by my violence," said he, sitting down on his couch and yawning sleepily; "but I was dreaming, Poopy; and when I saw your black face peeping at me, I took you at first for one of the wild fellows on the other side of the mountains. You have come to sweep and arrange my study, I suppose."

"Why, mass'r, you no hab go to bed yet," said Poopy, still feeling and expressing surprise at her master's unwonted irregularity. "Is you ill?"

"Not at all, my good girl, only a little tired. It is not a time for me to take much rest when the savages are said to be about to attack us."

"When is they coming?" inquired the girl, meekly. The pastor smiled as he replied,—"That is best known to themselves, Poopy. Do you think it likely that murderers or thieves would send to let us know when they were coming?"

"Hee! hee!" laughed Poopy, with an immense display of teeth and gums.

"Is Alice awake?" inquired Mr Mason.

"No, her be sound 'sleep wid her two eye shut tight up, dis fashion, and her mout' wide open —so."

The representations of Alice's condition, as given by her maid, although hideously unlike the beautiful object they were meant to call up to the father's mind, were sufficiently expressive and comprehensible.

"Go wake her, my girl, and let us have breakfast as soon as you can. Has Will Corrie been here this morning?"

"Hims bin here all night," replied the girl, with a broad grin—(and the breadth of Poopy's *broad* grin was almost appalling!)

"What mean you? has he slept in this house all night?"

"Yes—eh! no," said Poopy.

"Yes, no," exclaimed Mr Mason. "Come, Poopy, don't be stupid, explain yourself."

"Hee! hee! hee! yes, ho! ho!" laughed Poopy, as if the idea of explaining herself was about the richest joke she had listened to since she was born. "Hee! hee! me no can 'splain, but you com here and see."

So saying, she conducted her wondering master to the front door of the cottage, where, across the threshold, directly under the porch, lay the form of the redoubted Corrie, fast asleep, and armed to the teeth!

In order to explain the cause of this remarkable apparition, we think it justifiable to state to the reader, in confidence, that young Master Corrie was deeply in love with the fair Alice. With all his reckless drollery of disposition, the boy was intensely romantic and enthusiastic; and, feeling that the unsettled condition of the times endangered the welfare of his lady-love, he resolved, like a true knight, to arm himself and guard the threshold of her door with his own body.

In the deep silence of the night he buckled on a sabre, the blade of which, by reason of its having been broken, was barely eight inches long, and the hilt whereof was battered and rusty. He also stuck a huge brass-mounted cavalry pistol in his belt, in the virtue of which he had great faith, having only two days before shot with it a green-headed parrot at a distance of two yards. The distance was not great, to be sure, but it was enough for his purpose—intending, as he did, to meet his foe, when the moment of action should come, in close conflict, and thrust the muzzle of his weapon down the said foe's throat before condescending to draw the trigger.

Thus prepared for the worst, he sallied out on tiptoe, intending to mount guard at the missionary's door, and return to his own proper couch before the break of day.

But alas for poor Corrie's powers of endurance! no sooner had he extended his chubby form on the door-mat, earnestly wishing, but not expecting, that Alice would come out and find him there, than he fell fast asleep, while engaged in the hopeless task of counting the starry host—a duty which he had imposed on himself in the hope that he might thereby be kept awake. Once asleep he slept on, as a matter of course, with his broad little chest heaving gently; his round little visage beaming upwards like a terrestrial moon; his left arm under his head in lieu of a pillow, (by consequence of which *it* was fast asleep also,) and his right hand grasping the hilt of the broken sabre.

As for Corrie's prostrate body affording protection to Alice—the entire savage population might have stepped across it, one by one, and might have stepped back again, bearing away into slavery the fair maiden, with her father and all the household furniture to boot, without in the least disturbing the deep slumbers of the youthful knight. At least we may safely come to this conclusion from the fact that Mr Mason shook him, first gently and then violently, for full five minutes before he could get him to speak; and even then he only gave utterance, in very sleepy tones, and half-formed words, to the remark—

"Oh! don' borer me. It aint b'kfust-t'm' yet?"

"Ho! Corrie, Corrie," shouted Mr Mason, giving the victim a shake that threatened to dislocate his neck, "get up, my boy—rouse up!"

"Hallo! hy! murder! Come on you vill— eh! Mr Mason—I beg pardon, sir," stammered Corrie, as he at length became aware of his condition, and blushed deeply; "I—I really, Mr Mason, I merely came to watch while you were all asleep, as there are savages about, you know—and ha! ha! ha!—oh! dear me!" (Corrie exploded at this point, unable to contain himself at the sight of the missionary's gaze of astonishment,) "Wot a sight for a Sunday mornin' too!"

The hilarity of the boy was catching, for at this point a vociferous "hee! hee!" burst from the sable Poopy; the clear laugh of Alice, too, came ringing through the passage, and Mr Mason himself finally joined in the chorus.

"Come, sir knight," exclaimed the latter, on recovering his gravity, "this is no guise for a respectable man to be seen in on Sunday morning; come in and lay down your arms. You have done very well as a soldier for this occasion; let us see if you can do your duty equally well as a church-officer. Have you the keys."

"No, they are at home."

"Then run and get them, my boy, and leave your pistol behind you. I dare say the savages won't attack during the daytime."

Corrie did as he was desired, and the pastor went, after breakfast, to spend a short time with Alice on a neighbouring eminence, from which could be obtained a fine view of the settlement, with

its little church and the calm bay on which floated the frigate, sheltered by the encircling coral reef from the swell of the ocean.

Here it was Mr Mason's wont to saunter with Alice every Sunday morning, to read a chapter of the Bible together, and converse about that happy land where one so dear to both of them now dwelt with their Saviour. Here, also, the child's maid was sometimes privileged to join them. On this particular morning, however, they were not the only spectators of the beautiful view from that hill, for, closely hidden in the bushes—not fifty yards from the spot where they sat—lay a band of armed savages who had escaped the vigilance of the scouts, and had come by an unguarded pass to the settlement.

They might easily have slain or secured the missionary and his household without alarming the people in the village, but their plan of attack forbade such a premature proceeding. The trio therefore finished their chapter and their morning prayer undisturbed, little dreaming of the number of glittering eyes that watched their proceedings.

Chapter Eight
A surprise—A battle and a fire

The sound of the Sabbath bell fell sweetly on the pastor's ear as he descended to his dwelling to make a few final preparations for the duties of the day, and from every hut in Sandy Cove trooped forth the native Christians—young and old—to assemble in the house of God.

With great labour and much pains had this church been built, and pastor and people alike were not a little proud of their handiwork. The former had drawn the plans and given the measurements, leaving it to Henry Stuart to see them properly carried out in detail, while the latter did the work. They cut and squared the timbers, gathered the coral, burnt it for lime and plastered the building. The women and children carried the lime from the beach in baskets, and the men dragged the heavy logs from the mountains—in some cases for several miles—the timber in the immediate neighbourhood not being sufficiently large for their purpose.

The poor natives worked with heart and soul—for love, and the desire to please and to be pleased, had been awakened within them. Besides this, the work had for them all the zest of novelty. They wrought at it with somewhat of the feelings of children at play,—pausing frequently in the midst of their toil to gaze in wonder and admiration at the growing edifice, which would have done no little credit to a professional architect and to more skilled workmen.

The white men of the place also lent a willing hand; for although some of them were bad men, yet they were constrained to respect the consistent character and blameless life of the missionary, who not unfrequently experienced the fulfilment of that word:

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Besides this, all of them, however unwilling they might be to accept Christianity for themselves, were fully alive to the advantages they derived from its introduction among the natives.

With so many willing hands at work, the little church was soon finished; and, at the time when the events we are describing occurred, there was nothing to be done to it except some trifling arrangements connected with the steeple, and the glazing of the windows. This latter piece of work was, in such a climate, of little importance.

Long before the bell had ceased to toll, the church was full of natives, whose dark, eager faces were turned towards the door, in expectation of the appearance of their pastor. The building was so full, that many of the people were content to cluster round the door, or the outside of the unglazed windows. On this particular Sunday, there were strangers there, who roused the curiosity and attracted the attention of the congregation. Before Mr Mason arrived, there was a slight bustle at the door as Captain Montague, with several of his officers and men, entered, and were shewn to the missionary's seat by Master Corrie, who, with his round visage elongated as much as possible, and his round eyes expressing a look of inhuman solemnity, in consequence of his attempt to affect a virtue which he did not possess, performed the duties of door-keeper. Montague had come on shore to ascertain from Mr Mason what likelihood there was of an early attack by the natives.

"Where's Alice," whispered the boy to Poopy, as the girl entered the church, and seated herself beside a little midshipman, who looked at her with a mingled expression of disgust and contempt, and edged away.

"Got a little headache, hee! hee!"

"Don't laugh in church, you monster," said Corrie, with a frown.

"I'se not larfin," retorted Poopy, with an injured look.

Just then the boy caught sight of a gigantic figure entering the church, and darted away to usher the stranger into the pastor's seat; but Gascoyne (for it was he) took no notice of him. He passed steadily up the centre of the church, and sat down beside the Widow Stuart, whose face expressed

anxiety and surprise the moment she observed who was seated there. The countenance of Henry, who sat on the other side of his mother, flushed, and he turned with an angry glance towards the captain of the *Foam*; but the look was thrown away, for Gascoyne had placed his arms on the back of the seat in front of him, and rested his head on them; in which position he continued to remain without motion while the service was going on.

Mr Mason began with a short earnest prayer in English; then he read out a hymn in the native tongue, which was sung in good tune, and with great energy, by the whole congregation. This was followed by a chapter in the New Testament, and another prayer; but all the service, with the exception of the first prayer, was conducted in the native language. The text was then read out:– "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Frederick Mason possessed the power of chaining the attention of an audience, and a deep breathless silence prevailed, as he laboured, with intense fervour, to convince his hearers of the love of God, and the willingness and ability of Jesus Christ to save even the chief of sinners. During one part of the service, a deep low groan startled the congregation; but no one could tell who had uttered it. As it was not repeated, it was soon forgotten by most of the people.

While the pastor was thus engaged, a pistol-shot was heard, and immediately after, a loud fierce yell burst from the forest, causing the ears of those who heard it to tingle, and their hearts for a moment to quail. In less than ten minutes, the church was empty, and the males of the congregation were engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand conflict with the savages; who, having availed themselves of the one unguarded pass, had quietly eluded the vigilance of the scouts, and assembled in force on the outskirts of the settlement.

Fortunately for the worshippers that morning, the anxiety of Master Corrie for the welfare of his fair Alice induced him to slip out of the church just after the sermon began. Hastening to the pastor's house, he found the child sound asleep on a sofa, and a savage standing over her with a spear in his hand. The boy had approached so stealthily, that the savage did not hear him. Remembering that he had left his pistol on the kitchen table, he darted round to the back door of the house, and secured it just as Alice awoke with a scream of surprise and terror, on beholding who was near her.

Next moment Corrie was at her side, and before the savage could seize the child, he levelled the pistol at his head and fired. The aim was sufficiently true to cause the ball to graze the man's forehead, while the smoke and fire partially blinded him.

It was this shot that first alarmed the natives in church, and it was the yell uttered by the wounded man, as he fell stunned on the floor, that called forth the answering yell from the savage host, and precipitated the attack.

It was sufficiently premature to give the people of the settlement time to seize their arms; which, as has been said, they had placed so as to be available at a moment's notice.

The fight that ensued was a desperate, and almost indiscriminate melée. The attacking party had been so sure of taking the people by surprise, that they formed no plan of attack; but simply arranged that, at a given signal from their chief, a united rush should be made upon the church, and a general massacre ensue. As we have seen, Corrie's pistol drew forth the signal sooner than had been intended. In the rush that immediately ensued, a party dashed through the house, the boy was overturned, and a savage gave him a passing blow with a club that would have scattered his brains on the floor had it taken full effect; but it was hastily delivered; it glanced off his head, and spent its force on the shoulder of the chief, who was thus unfortunate enough to be wounded by friends as well as foes.

On the first alarm, Gascoyne sprang up, and darted through the door. He was closely followed by Henry. Stuart, and the captain of the *Talisman*, with his handful of officers and men, who were all armed, as a matter of course.

"Sit where you are," cried Henry to his trembling mother, as he sprang after Gascoyne; "the church is the safest place you'll find."

The widow fell on her knees and prayed to God, while the fight raged without.

Among the first to leave the church was the pastor. The thought of his child having been left in the house unprotected, filled him with an agony of fear. He sought no weapon of war, but darted unarmed straight into the midst of the savage host that stood between him and the object of his affection. His rush was so impetuous, that he fairly overturned several of his opponents by dashing against them. The numbers that surrounded him, however, soon arrested his progress; but he had pressed so close in amongst them, that they were actually too closely packed, for a few seconds, to be able to use their heavy clubs and long spears with effect.

It was well for the poor missionary, at that moment, that he had learned the art of boxing when a boy! The knowledge so acquired had never induced him to engage in dishonourable and vulgar strife; but it had taught him how and where to deliver a straightforward blow with effect; and he now struck out with tremendous energy, knocking down an adversary at every blow,—for the thought of Alice lent additional strength to his powerful arm. Success in such warfare, however, was not to be expected. Still, Mr Mason's activity and vigour averted his own destruction for a few minutes; and these minutes were precious, for they afforded time for Captain Montague and his officers to cut their way to the spot where he fought, just as a murderous club was about to descend on his head from behind. Montague's sword unstrung the arm that upheld it, and the next instant the pastor was surrounded by friends.

Among their number was John Bumpus, who was one of the crew of Montague's boat, and who now rushed upon the savages with a howl peculiarly his own, felling one with a blow of his fist, and another with a slash of his cutlass.

"You must retire," said Montague, hastily, to Frederick Mason, who stood panting and inactive for a few moments in order to recover breath. "You are unarmed, sir; besides, your profession forbids you taking part in such work as this. There are men of war enough here to keep these fellows in play."

Montague spoke somewhat sharply, for he erroneously fancied that the missionary's love of fighting had led him into the fray.

"My profession does not forbid me to save my child," exclaimed the pastor, wildly.

He turned in the direction of his cottage, which was full in view; and, at that moment, smoke burst from the roof and windows. With a cry of despair, Mr Mason once more launched himself on the host of savages; but these were now so numerous that, instead of making head against them, the little knot of sailors who opposed them at that particular place found it was as much as they could do to keep them at bay.

The issue of the conflict was still doubtful, when a large accession to their numbers gave the savages additional power and courage. They made a sudden onset, and bore back the small band of white men. In the rush the pastor was overthrown and rendered for a time insensible.

While this was going on in one part of the field, in another, stout Ole Thorwald, with several of the white settlers and the greater part of the native force, was guarding the principal approach to the church against immensely superior numbers. And nobly did the descendant of the Norse sea-kings maintain the credit of his warlike ancestors that day. With a sword that might have matched that of Goliath of Gath, he swept the way before him wherever he went, and more than once by a furious onset turned the tide of war in favour of his party when it seemed about to overwhelm them.

In a more distant part of the field, on the banks of a small stream, which was spanned by a bridge about fifty paces farther down, Gascoyne and Henry Stuart contended, almost alone; with about thirty savages. These two had rushed so impetuously forward at the first onset as to have been separated from their friends, and, with four Christian natives, had been surrounded. Henry was armed with a heavy claymore, the edge of which betokened that it had once seen much service in the wars of the youth's Scottish ancestors. Gascoyne, not anticipating this attack, had returned to the settlement armed only with his knife. He had seized the first weapon that came to hand, which chanced to be an enormous iron shovel, and with this terrific implement the giant carried all before him.

It was quite unintentionally that he and Henry had come together. But the nature and power of the two men being somewhat similar, they had singled out the same point of danger, and had made their attack with the same overwhelming vehemence. The muscles of both seemed to be made of iron, for, as increasing numbers pressed upon them, they appeared to deliver their terrible blows with increasing rapidity and vigour, and the savages, despite their numbers, began to quail before them.

Just then Keona—who, although wounded, hovered about doing as much mischief as he could with his left hand, (which, by the way, seemed to be almost as efficient as his right,)—caught sight of this group of combatants on the banks of the stream. He, with a party, had succeeded in forcing the bridge, and now, uttering a shout of wild delight at the sight of his two greatest enemies within his power—as he thought—he rushed towards them and darted his spear with unerring aim and terrible violence. The man's anger defeated his purpose, for the shout attracted the attention of Gascoyne, who saw the spear coming straight towards Henry's breast. He interposed the shovel instantly, and the spear fell harmless to the ground. At the same time, with a back-handed sweep he brained a gigantic savage who at the moment was engaging Henry's undivided attention. Bounding forward with a burst of anger, Gascoyne sought to close with Keona. He succeeded but too well, however, for he could not check himself sufficiently to deliver an effective blow, but went crashing against his enemy, and the two fell to the ground together.

In an instant a rush was made on the fallen man; but Henry leaped forward, and sweeping down two opponents with one cut of his claymore, afforded his companion time to leap up.

"Come, we are quits," said Henry, with a grim smile, as the two darted again on the foe.

At that moment Ole Thorwald, having scattered the party he first engaged, came tearing down towards the bridge, whirling the great sword round his head, and shouting "victory" in the voice of a Stentor.

"Hah! here is more work," he cried, as his eye fell on Gascoyne's figure. "Thorwald to the rescue! hurrah!"

In another moment the savages were flying pellmell across the bridge with Gascoyne and Henry close on their heels, and the stout merchant panting after them, with his victorious band, as fast as his less agile limbs could carry him.

It was at this moment that Gascoyne and Henry noticed the attack made on the small party of sailors, and observed the fall of Mr Mason.

"Thorwald to the rescue!" shouted Gascoyne, in a voice that rolled deep and loud over the whole field like the roar of a lion.

"Ay, ay, my noisy stranger; it's easy for your tough limbs to carry you up the hill," gasped Ole, "but the weight of ten or fifteen years will change your step. Hurrah!"

The cry of the bold Norseman, coupled with that of Gascoyne, had the double effect of checking the onset of the enemy, and of collecting their own scattered forces around them. The battle was now drawing to a point. Men who were skirmishing in various places left off and hastened to the spot on which the closing scene was now evidently to be enacted; and for a few minutes the contending parties paused, as if by mutual consent, to breathe and scan each other before making the final attack.

It must not be supposed that, during the light which we have described, the crew of the *Talisman* were idle. At the first sign of disturbance on shore, the boats were lowered, and a well-armed force rowed for the landing-place as swiftly as the strong and willing arms of the men could pull. But the distance between the vessel and the shore was considerable, and the events we have recounted were quickly enacted, so that before the boats had proceeded half the distance the fight was nearly over, and the settlement seemed about to be overwhelmed.

These facts were not lost upon the first lieutenant of the *Talisman*, Mr Mulroy, who, with telescope in hand, watched the progress of the fight with great anxiety. He saw that it was impossible for the boats to reach the shore in time to render efficient aid. He also observed that a fresh band of savages were hastening to reinforce their comrades, and that the united band would be so

overpoweringly strong as to render the chances of a successful resistance on the part of the settlers very doubtful indeed almost hopeless.

In these circumstances he adopted a course which was as bold as it was dangerous. Observing that the savages mustered for the final onset in a dense mass on an eminence which just raised their heads a little above those of the party they were about to attack, he at once loaded three of the largest guns with round shot and pointed them at the mass of human beings with the utmost possible care. There was the greatest danger of hitting friends instead of foes, but Mr Mulroy thought it his duty to incur the responsibility of running the risk.

Montague, to whom the command of the united band of settlers had been given by general consent, had thrown them rapidly into some sort of order, and was about to give the word to charge, when the savage host suddenly began to pour down the hill with frantic yells.

Mulroy did not hear the shouts, but he perceived the movement. Suddenly, as if a thunderstorm had burst over the island, the echoes of the hills were startled by the roar of heavy artillery, and, one after another, the three guns hurled their deadly contents into the centre of the rushing mass, through which three broad lanes were cut in quick succession.

The horrible noise and the dreadful slaughter in their ranks, seemed to render the affrighted creatures incapable of action, for they came to a dead halt.

"*Well* done, Mulroy," shouted Montague, "forward, boys—charge!"

A true British cheer burst from the tars and white settlers, which served farther to strike terror into the hearts of the enemy. In another moment they rushed up the hill, led on by Montague, Gascoyne, Henry, and Thorwald. But the savages did not await the shock. Seized with a complete panic, they turned and fled in utter confusion.

Just as this occurred, Mr Mason began to recover consciousness. Recollecting suddenly what had occurred, he started up and followed his friends, who were now in hot pursuit of the foe in the direction of his own cottage. Quickly though they ran, the anxious father overtook and passed them, but he soon perceived that his dwelling was wrapt in flames, from end to end.

Darting through the smoke and fire to his daughter's room he shouted her name, but no voice replied. He sprang to the bed—it was empty. With a cry of despair, and blinded by smoke, he dashed about the room, grasping wildly at objects in the hope that he might find his child. As he did so he stumbled over a prostrate form, which he instantly seized, raised in his arms, and bore out of the blazing house, round which a number of the people were now assembled.

The form he had thus plucked from destruction was that of the poor boy, who would willingly have given his life to rescue Alice, and who still lay in the state of insensibility into which he had been thrown by the blow from the savage's heavy club.

The missionary dropped his burden, turned wildly round, and was about to plunge once again into the heart of the blazing ruin, when he was seized in the strong arms of Henry Stuart, who, with the assistance of Ole Thorwald, forcibly prevented him from doing that which would have resulted in almost certain death.

The pastor's head sunk on his breast; the excitement of action and hope no longer sustained him; with a deep groan he fell to the earth insensible.

Chapter Nine
Baffled and perplexed—Plans for a rescue

While the men assembled round the prostrate form of Mr Mason were attempting to rescue him from his state of stupor, poor Corrie began to shew symptoms of returning vitality. A can of water, poured over him by Henry, did much to restore him. But no sooner was he enabled to understand what was going on, and to recall what had happened, than he sprang up with a wild cry of despair, and rushed towards the blazing house. Again Henry's quick arm arrested a friend in his mad career.

"Oh! she's there! Alice is *there*!" shrieked the boy, as he struggled passionately to free himself.

"You can do nothing, Corrie," said Henry, trying to soothe him.

"Coward!" gasped the boy in a paroxysm of rage, as he clenched his fist and struck his captor on the chest with all his force.

"Hold him," said Henry, turning to John Bumpus, who at that moment came up.

Bumpus nodded intelligently, and seized the boy, who uttered a groan of anguish as he ceased a struggle which he felt was hopeless in such an iron gripe.

"Now, friends—all of you," shouted Henry, the moment he was relieved of his charge, "little Alice is in that house—we must pull it down! who will lend a hand?"

He did not pause for an answer, but seizing an axe, rushed through the smoke and began to cut down the door-posts. The whole party there assembled, numbering about fifty, rushed forward, as one man, to aid in the effort. The attempt was a wild one. Had Henry considered for a moment, he would have seen that, in the event of their succeeding in pulling down the blazing pile, they should in all probability smother the child in the ruins.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.