

ROBERT MICHAEL BALLANTYNE

THE LONELY ISLAND: THE
REFUGE OF THE
MUTINEERS

Robert Michael Ballantyne
The Lonely Island: The
Refuge of the Mutineers

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=36097029

The Lonely Island: The Refuge of the Mutineers:

Содержание

Chapter One	4
Chapter Two	20
Chapter Three	35
Chapter Four	44
Chapter Five	55
Chapter Six	62
Chapter Seven	73
Chapter Eight	82
Chapter Nine	89
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	91

R. M. Ballantyne

The Lonely Island: The Refuge of the Mutineers

Chapter One

The Refuge of the Mutineers

The Mutiny

On a profoundly calm and most beautiful evening towards the end of the last century, a ship lay becalmed on the fair bosom of the Pacific Ocean.

Although there was nothing piratical in the aspect of the ship—if we except her guns—a few of the men who formed her crew might have been easily mistaken for roving buccaneers. There was a certain swagger in the gait of some, and a sulky defiance on the brow of others, which told powerfully of discontent from some cause or other, and suggested the idea that the peaceful aspect of the sleeping sea was by no means reflected in the breasts of the men. They were all British seamen, but displayed at that time none of the well-known hearty off-hand rollicking characteristics of the Jack-tar.

It is natural for man to rejoice in sunshine. His sympathy

with cats in this respect is profound and universal. Not less deep and wide is his discord with the moles and bats. Nevertheless, there was scarcely a man on board of that ship on the evening in question who vouchsafed even a passing glance at a sunset which was marked by unwonted splendour. The vessel slowly rose and sank on a scarce perceptible ocean-swell in the centre of a great circular field of liquid glass, on whose undulations the sun gleamed in dazzling flashes, and in whose depths were reflected the fantastic forms, snowy lights, and pearly shadows of cloudland. In ordinary circumstances such an evening might have raised the thoughts of ordinary men to their Creator, but the circumstances of the men on board of that vessel were not ordinary—very much the reverse.

“No, Bill McCoy,” muttered one of the sailors, who sat on the breach of a gun near the forecastle, “I’ve bin flogged twice for merely growlin’, which is an Englishman’s birthright, an’ I won’t stand it no longer. A pretty pass things has come to when a man mayn’t growl without tastin’ the cat; but if Captain Bligh won’t let me growl, I’ll treat him to a roar that’ll make him cock his ears an’ wink six times without speakin’.”

The sailor who said this, Matthew Quintal by name, was a short, thick-set young man of twenty-one or thereabouts, with a forbidding aspect and a savage expression of face, which was intensified at the moment by thoughts of recent wrongs. Bill McCoy, to whom he said it, was much the same in size and appearance, but a few years older, and with a cynical expression

of countenance.

“Whether you growl or roar, Matt,” said McCoy, with a low-toned laugh, “I’d advise you to do it in the minor key, else the Captain will give you another taste of the cat. He’s awful savage just now. You should have heard him abusin’ the officers this afternoon about his cocoa-nuts.”

“So I should,” returned Quintal. “As ill luck would have it, I was below at the time. They say he was pretty hard on Mr Christian.”

“Hard on him! I should think he was,” rejoined McCoy. “Why, if Mr Christian had been one of the worst men in the ship instead of the best officer, the Cap’n could not have abused him worse. I heard and saw ’im with my own ears and eyes. The cocoa-nuts was lyin’, as it might be here, between the guns, and the Cap’n he came on deck an’ said he missed some of his nuts. He went into a towerin’ rage right off—in the old style—and sent for all the officers. When they came aft he says to them, says he, ‘Who stole my cocoa-nuts?’ Of course they all said they didn’t know, and hadn’t seen any of the people take ’em. ‘Then,’ says the Cap’n, fiercer than ever, ‘you must have stole ’em yourselves, for they couldn’t have been taken away without your knowledge.’ So he questioned each officer separately. Mr Christian, when he came to him, answered, ‘I don’t know, sir, who took the nuts, but I hope you do not think me so mean as to be guilty of stealing yours.’ Whereupon the Cap’n he flared up like gunpowder. ‘Yes, you hungry hound, I do,’ says he; ‘you must have stolen them

from me, or you would have been able to give a better account of them.”

“That was pitchin’ into ’im pretty stiff,” said Quintal, with a grim smile. “What said Mr Christian?”

“He said nothin’, but he looked thunder. I saw him git as red as a turkey cock, an’ bite his lips till the blood came. It’s my opinion, messmate,” added McCoy, in a lower tone, “that if Cap’n Bligh don’t change his tone there’ll be—”

“Come, come, mate,” interrupted a voice behind him; “if you talk mutiny like that you’ll swing at the end o’ the yard-arm some fine mornin’.”

The sailor who joined the others and thus spoke was a short, sturdy specimen of his class, and much more like a hearty hare-brained tar than his two comrades. He was about twenty-two years of age, deeply pitted with small-pox, and with a jovial carelessness of manner that had won for him the sobriquet of Reckless Jack.

“I’m not the only one that talks mutiny in this ship,” growled McCoy. “There’s a lot of us whose backs have bin made to smart, and whose grog has been stopped for nothin’ but spite, John Adams, and you know it.”

“Yes, I do know it,” returned Adams, sharply; “and I also know that there’s justice to be had in England. We’ve got a good case against the Captain, so we’d better wait till we get home rather than take the law into our own hands.”

“I don’t agree with you, Jack,” said Quintal, with much

decision, “and I wonder to see you, of all men, show the white feather.”

Adams turned away with a light laugh of contempt, and the other two joined a group of their mates, who were talking in low tones near the windlass.

Matthew Quintal was not the only man on board who did not agree with the more moderate counsels of Reckless Jack, *alias* John Adams, *alias* John Smith, for by each of those names was he known. On the quarter-deck as well as on the forecastle mutterings of deep indignation were heard.

The vessel was the celebrated *Bounty*, which had been fitted up for the express purpose of proceeding to the island of Otaheite, (now named Tahiti), in the Pacific for plants of the breadfruit tree, it being thought desirable to introduce that tree into the West India Islands. We may remark in passing, that the transplantation was afterwards accomplished, though it failed at this time.

The *Bounty* had been placed under the command of Lieutenant Bligh of the Royal Navy. Her burden was about 215 tons. She had been fitted with every appliance and convenience for her special mission, and had sailed from Spithead on the 23rd December 1787.

Lieutenant Bligh, although an able and energetic seaman, was of an angry tyrannical disposition. On the voyage out, and afterwards at Otaheite, he had behaved so shamefully, and with such unjustifiable severity, both to officers and men, that he was

regarded by a large proportion of them with bitter hatred. It is painful to be obliged to write thus of one who rose to positions of honour in the service; but the evidence led in open court, coupled with Bligh's own writings, and testimony from other quarters, proves beyond a doubt that his conduct on board the *Bounty* was not only dishonourable but absolutely brutal.

When the islanders were asked at first the name of the island, they replied, "O-Tahiti," which means, "It is Tahiti", hence the earlier form of the name—*Otaheite*.

It was after the *Bounty* had taken in the breadfruit trees at Otaheite, and was advanced a short distance on the homeward voyage, that the events we are about to narrate occurred.

We have said that mutterings of deep discontent were heard on the quarter-deck. Fletcher Christian, acting lieutenant, or master's mate, leaned over the bulwarks on that lovely evening, and with compressed lips and frowning brows gazed down into the sea. The gorgeous clouds and their grand reflections had no beauty for him, but a shark, which swam lazily alongside, showing a fin now and then above water, seemed to afford him a species of savage satisfaction.

"Yes," he muttered, "if one of his legs were once within your ugly jaws, we'd have something like peace again after these months of torment."

Fletcher Christian, although what is called a high-spirited youth, was not quick to resent injury or insult. On the contrary, he had borne with much forbearance the oft-repeated and coarse

insolence of his superior. His natural expression was bright and his temperament sunny. He possessed a powerful frame and commanding stature, was agile and athletic, and a favourite with officers and men. But Bligh's conduct had soured him. His countenance was now changed. The last insult about the coconuts, delivered openly, was more than he could bear. "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war." In this case the tug was tremendous, the immediate results were disastrous, and the ultimate issues amazing, as will be seen in the sequel of our tale.

"To whom does your amiable wish refer?" asked a brother-officer named Stewart, who came up just then and leaned over the bulwarks beside him.

"Can you not guess?" said the other, sternly.

"Yes, I can guess," returned the midshipman, gazing contemplatively at the shark's fin. "But, I say, surely you don't really mean to carry out your mad intention of deserting."

"Yes, I do," said Christian with emphasis. "I've been to the fore-cockpit several times to-day, and seen the boatswain and carpenter, both of whom have agreed to help me. I've had a plank rigged up with staves into a sort of raft, on which I mean to take my chance. There's a bag all ready with some victuals in it, and another with a few nails, beads, etcetera, to propitiate the natives. Young Hayward is the only other officer besides yourself to whom I have revealed my intention. Like you, he attempts to dissuade me, but in vain. I shall go to-night."

“But where will you go to?” asked Stewart.

Christian pointed to Tofoa, one of the Friendly Islands, which was then in sight like a little black speck on the glowing sky where the sun had just disappeared.

“And how do you propose to escape *him*?” said the midshipman, pointing significantly to the shark, which at the moment gave a wriggle with its tail as if it understood the allusion and enjoyed it.

“I’ll take my chance of that,” said Christian, bitterly, and with a countenance so haggard yet so fierce that his young companion felt alarmed. “See here,” he added, tearing open his vest and revealing within it a deep sea-lead suspended round his neck; “I had rather die than live in the torments of the last three weeks. If I fail to escape, you see, there will be no chance of taking me alive.”

“*Better try to take the ship!*” whispered a voice behind him.

Christian started and grew paler, but did not turn his head to see who had spoken. The midshipman at his side had evidently not heard the whisper.

“I cannot help thinking you are wrong,” said Stewart. “We have only to bear it a little longer, and then we shall have justice done to us in England.”

Well would it have been for Fletcher Christian, and well for all on board the *Bounty*, if he had taken the advice of his young friend, but his spirit had been tried beyond its powers of endurance—at least so he thought—and his mind was made

up. What moral suasion failed to effect, however, the weather accomplished. It prevented his first intention from being carried out.

While the shades of evening fell and deepened into a night of unusual magnificence, the profound calm continued, and the ship lay motionless on the sea. The people, too, kept moving quietly about the deck, either induced thereto by the sweet influences around them, or by some indefinable impression that a storm sometimes succeeds a calm as well in the moral as the material world. As the ship had no way through the water, it was impossible for the rash youth to carry out his plan either during the first or middle watches. He was therefore compelled to give it up, at least for that night, and about half-past three in the morning he lay down to rest a few minutes, as he was to be called by Stewart to relieve the watch at four o'clock.

He had barely fallen into a troubled slumber when he was awakened by Stewart, and rose at once to go on deck. He observed in passing that young Hayward, the mate of his watch, had lain down to take a nap on the arm-chest. Mr Hallet, the other midshipman of the watch, had also gone to sleep somewhere, for he was not to be seen. Whether the seriously reprehensible conduct of these two officers roused his already excited spirit to an ungovernable pitch, or their absence afforded a favourable opportunity, we cannot tell, but certain it is that Fletcher Christian opened his ear at that time to the voice of the tempter.

“*Better try to take the ship,*” seemed burning in words of fire into his brain.

Quick to act as well as to conceive, he looked lustily and earnestly at the men of his watch. The one who stood nearest him, looking vacantly out upon the sea, was Matthew Quintal. To him Christian revealed his hastily adopted plan of seizing the ship, and asked if he would join him. Quintal was what men call a deep villain. He was quite ripe for mutiny, but from some motive known only to himself he held back, and expressed doubt as to the possibility of carrying out the plan.

“I did not expect to find cowardice in *you*,” said Christian, with a look of scornful indignation.

“It is not cowardice, sir,” retorted Quintal. “I will join if others do. Try some one else. Try Martin there, for instance.”

Isaac Martin was a raw-boned, sallow, six-foot man of about thirty, who had been undeservedly flogged by Bligh. Christian went to him at once, and put the question, “Will you join me in taking the ship?”

“The very thing, Mr Christian. I’m with you,” answered Martin, promptly.

The eager readiness of this man at once decided Quintal. Christian then went to every man in his watch, all of whom had received more or less harsh treatment from the Captain, and most of whom were more than willing to join the conspirators. Those who hesitated, whatever might have been their motives, had not sufficient regard for their commander to warn him of his danger.

Perhaps the very suddenness of the proposal, as well as fear of the mutineers, induced them to remain silent. In passing along the deck Christian encountered a man named William Brown. He was assistant-botanist, or gardener, to the expedition, and having been very intimate with Christian, at once agreed to join him. Although a slenderly made young man, Brown was full of vigour and resolution.

“We must look sharp,” said Christian to him, in that low eager whisper in which the conversation among the mutineers had hitherto been carried on. “It will soon be daylight. You know the men as well as I do. Go below and gain over those whom you feel sure of influencing. Don’t waste your time on the lukewarm or cowardly. Away with you. Here, Williams,” he added, turning to another man who was already in the plot, “go below and send up the gunner’s mate, I want him; then call John Adams,—I feel sure that Reckless Jack will join; but do it softly. No noise or excitement.”

In a few seconds John Mills, the gunner’s mate, a strongly-built middle-aged man, came on deck, and agreeing at once to join, was sent to fetch the keys of the arm-chest from the armourer, under pretence of getting out a musket to shoot a shark which was alongside.

Meanwhile John Williams went to the hammock of John Adams and roused him.

“I don’t half like it,” said Adams, when he was sufficiently awake to understand the message of his mate. “It’s all very true

what you say, Williams; the ship *has* been little better than a hell since we left Spithead, and Captain Bligh don't deserve much mercy, but mutiny is wrong any way you look at it, and I've got my doubts whether any circumstances can make it right."

The reasoning of Adams was good, but his doubts were cleared away, if not solved, by the abrupt entrance of Christian, who went to the arm-chest just opposite Adams's hammock and began to distribute arms to all the men who came for them. Seeing this, and fearing to be left on the weaker side, Adams rose, armed himself with a cutlass, and went on deck.

The morning of the 28th of April was now beginning to dawn. Before that the greater part of the ship's company had been gained over and armed; yet all this was done so quietly and with such firmness that the remainder of the crew were ignorant of what was going on. No doubt a few who might have given the alarm were afraid to do so. Among those who were asleep was one deserving of special notice, namely, Peter Heywood, a midshipman who was true as steel at heart, but whose extreme youth and inexperience, coupled with the surprise and alarm of being awakened to witness scenes of violence, produced a condition of inaction which resulted in his being left, and afterwards classed, with the mutineers.

Shortly after five o'clock the armed men streamed quietly up the fore-hatch and took possession of the deck. Sentinels were placed below at the doors of the officers' berths, and above at the hatchways. Then Fletcher Christian, John Adams, Matthew

Quintal, William McCoy, Isaac Martin, and several others went aft, armed with muskets, bayonets, and cutlasses. Leaving Martin in charge of the quarter-deck, they descended to Captain Bligh's cabin.

The commander of the *Bounty*, all ignorant of the coming storm which his ungentlemanly and cruel conduct had raised, was sleeping calmly in his berth.

He was roughly awakened and bidden to rise.

"What is the reason of such violence?" he demanded, addressing Christian, as they half forced him out of bed.

"Silence, sir," said Christian, sternly; "you know the reason well enough. Tie his hands, lads."

Disregarding the order to be silent, Bligh shouted "murder!" at the top of his voice.

"Hold your tongue, sir, else you're a dead man," said Christian, seizing him by the tied hands with a powerful grasp, and holding a bayonet to his breast.

Of course no one responded to the Captain's cry, the hatchways, etcetera, being guarded. They gave him no time to dress, but hurried him on deck, where, amid much confusion and many abusive cries, preparations were being made for getting out a boat, for it was resolved to set Bligh and his friends adrift. At first there was some disputing among the mutineers as to which boat should be given to them. Eventually the launch was decided on.

"Hoist her out, bo's'n. Do it smartly and instantly, or look-out

for yourself.”

The order was given sternly, for the boatswain was known to be friendly to Bligh. He obeyed at once, with the assistance of willing men who were only too glad to get rid of their tyrannical commander.

“Now, Mr Hayward and Mr Hallet, get into the boat,” said Christian, who seemed to be torn with conflicting emotions. His tone and look were sufficient for those young midshipmen. They obeyed promptly.

Mr Samuel the clerk and several more of the crew were then ordered into the boat. At this point Captain Bligh attempted to interfere. He demanded the intentions of the mutineers, but was told to hold his tongue, with threats of instant death if he did not obey. Particular persons were then called on to go into the boat, and some of these were allowed to collect twine, canvas, lines, sails, cordage, and other things to take with them. They were also allowed an eight-and-twenty gallon cask of water, fifty pounds of bread, a small quantity of rum and wine, a quadrant, and a compass.

When all the men obnoxious to the mutineers were in the boat, Captain Bligh was ordered into it. Isaac Martin had been placed as a guard over the Captain, and appeared to favour him, as he enabled him to moisten his parched lips with a shaddock. For this he was removed, and Adams took his place. Bligh looked round, but no friendly eye met his. He had forfeited the regard of all on board, though there were undoubtedly men there whose

detestation of mutiny and whose sense of honour would have inclined them to aid him if they had not been overawed by the numbers and resolution of the mutineers. The master, indeed, had already made an attempt to rally some of the men round him, but had failed, and been sent to his cabin. He, with the others, was now in the boat. Poor young Peter Heywood the middy looked on bewildered as if in a dream. He could not be said in any sense, either by look or act, to have taken part with the mutineers.

At last he went below for some things, intending to go in the boat, but was ordered to remain below. So also, it is thought, was Edward Young, another midshipman, who did not make his appearance on deck at all during the progress of the mutiny. It was afterwards said that the leading seamen among the mutineers had purposely ordered these officers below, and detained them with a view to their working the ship in the event of anything happening to Christian.

Bligh now made a last appeal.

“I’ll give you my honour, Mr Christian,” he said, “never to think of what has passed this day if you will desist. To cast us adrift here in an open boat is to consign us to destruction. Think of my wife and family!”

“No, Captain Bligh,” replied Christian, sternly; “if you had any honour things had not come to this; and if you had any regard for your wife and family, you should have thought of them before and not behaved so much like a villain. It is too late. You have treated me like a dog all the voyage. Come, sir, your officers and

men are now in the boat, and you must go with them. If you attempt resistance you shall be put to death.”

Seeing that further appeal would be useless, Bligh allowed himself to be forced over the side. When in the boat his hands were untied.

“You will at least allow us arms, to defend ourselves from the savages,” he said. Fire-arms were refused, but four cutlasses were ultimately allowed him. At this point Isaac Martin quietly descended into the boat, but Quintal, pointing a musket at him, threatened to shoot him if he did not return to the ship. He obeyed the order with reluctance, and soon after the boat was cast adrift.

The crew of the *Bounty* at the time consisted of forty-four souls, all told. Eighteen of these went adrift with the Captain. The remaining twenty-five steered back to the sunny isles of the Pacific.

Chapter Two

Records the Duties and Troubles of the Mutineers

It is not our purpose to follow the fortunes of Captain Bligh. The mutineers in the *Bounty* claim our undivided attention.

As regards Bligh, it is sufficient to say that he performed one of the most remarkable boat-voyages on record. In an overloaded and open boat, on the shortest allowance of provision compatible with existence, through calm and tempest, heat and cold, exposed to the attacks of cannibals and to the reproaches of worn-out and mutinous men, he traversed 3618 miles of ocean in forty-one days, and brought himself and his followers to land, with the exception of one man who was killed by the natives. In this achievement he displayed those qualities of indomitable resolution and unflagging courage which ultimately raised him to high rank in the navy. But we leave him now to trace those incidents which result from the display of his other qualities—ungovernable passion, overbearing impetuosity, and incomprehensible meanness.

The first act of Fletcher Christian, after taking command of the ship, was to serve out a glass of grog all round. He then called a council of war, in which the mutineers discussed the question what they should do.

“You see, lads,” said Christian, “it is absolutely certain that we shan’t be left among these islands in peace. Whether Bligh manages to get home or not, the British Government is sure to send out to see what has become of us. My notion is that we should bear away to the south’ard, far out of the usual track of ships, find out some uninhabited and suitable island, and establish ourselves thereon?”

“What! without wives, or sisters, or mothers, or grandmothers, to say nothin’ o’ mothers-in-law, to cook our victuals an’ look after our shirt-buttons?” said Isaac Martin, who, having been detained against his will, had become lugubriously, or recklessly, facetious, and was stimulated to a sort of fierce hilarity by his glass of rum.

“You’re right, Martin,” said Brown, the assistant botanist, “we couldn’t get along without wives, so I vote that we go back to Otaheite, get married, every man of us, an’ ho! for the South Pole. The British cruisers would never find us there.”

There was a general laugh at this sally, but gravity returned almost instantly to every face, for they were in no humour just then for jesting. It is probable that each man began to realise the dreadful nature of his position as an outlaw whose life was forfeited to his country, and who could never more hope to tread the shores of Old England, or look upon the faces of kindred or friends. In such circumstances men sometimes try to hide their true feelings under a veil of recklessness or forced mirth, but seldom succeed in the attempt.

“No man in his senses would go back to Otaheite—at least not to stay there,” said John Adams, gravely; “it’s the first place they will send to look for us.”

“What’s the odds?” growled one of the seamen. “They won’t look there for us for a long time to come, unless Cap’n Bligh borrows a pair of wings from an albatross, an’ goes home as the crow flies.”

At this point John Mills, the gunner’s mate, a man of about forty, cleared his throat and gave it as his opinion that they should not go back to Otaheite, but should leave the matter of their future destination in the hands of Mr Christian, who was well able to guide them.

This proposal was heartily backed by Edward Young, midshipman, a stout young fellow of twenty-two, who was fond of Christian; but there were one or two dissentient voices, among which were the little middy Peter Heywood, his brother-officer George Stewart, and James Morrison the boatswain’s mate. These wished to return to Otaheite, but the counsel of the majority prevailed, and Christian ultimately steered for the island of Toubouai, which lay some five hundred miles to the south of Otaheite. There he expected to be safe from pursuit, and there it was resolved that the mutineers should take up their abode if the natives proved friendly.

That night, while the *Bounty* was skimming gently over the starlit sea before a light breeze, the three officers, Heywood, Stewart, and Young, leaned over the weather side of the quarter-

deck, and held a whispered conversation.

“Why did you vote for going back to Otaheite, Heywood?” asked Young.

“Because it is to Otaheite that they will send to look after us, and I should like to be there to give myself up, the instant a man-of-war arrives, and declare my innocence of the crime of mutiny.”

“You are right, Heywood,” said Stewart; “I, too, would like to give myself up the moment I get the chance. Captain Bligh knows that you and I had no hand in the mutiny, and if he reaches England will clear us of so foul a stain. It’s a pity that those who voted for Otaheite were not in the majority.”

“That’s all very well for you, who were seen to go below to fetch your clothes, and were detained against your will,” said Young, “but it was not so with me. I was forcibly detained below. They would not allow me to go on deck at all until the launch had left, so that it would go hard with me before a court-martial. But the die is now cast, and there’s no help for it. Although I took no part in the mutiny, I won’t risk falling into the hands of justice, with such an unprincipled scoundrel as Bligh to witness against me. My future fortunes now lie with Fletcher Christian. I cannot avoid my fate.”

Young spoke sadly, yet with some bitterness of tone, like one who has made up his mind to face and endure the worst.

On reaching the remote island of Toubouai the mutineers were much impressed with its beauty. It seemed exceedingly

fertile, was wooded to the water's edge, and surrounded by a coral reef, with one opening through which a ship might enter. Altogether it seemed a most suitable refuge, but here they met with an insurmountable difficulty. On drawing near to the shore they saw hundreds of natives, who, armed with clubs and spears, lined the beach, blew their shell-horns, and resolutely opposed the landing of the strangers.

As all efforts to conciliate them were fruitless, resort was had to cannon and musketry. Of course the terrible thunder of the white man's artillery had its usual effect on the savages. They fled inland, and the mutineers gained a footing on the island.

But the natives continued their opposition so vigorously, that this refuge proved to be the reverse of a place of rest.

Christian therefore changed his plan, and, re-embarking in the *Bounty*, set sail for Otaheite.

On the way thither the mutineers disagreed among themselves. Some of those who had been forcibly detained even began to plot the retaking of the ship, but their intentions were discovered and prevented.

On the 6th of June they reached their former anchorage in Otaheite, where the natives received them with much joy and some surprise, but a story was trumped up to account for this sudden re-appearance of the mutineers.

Christian, however, had not yet given up his intention of settling on the island of Toubouai. He foresaw the doom that awaited him if he should remain at Otaheite, and resolved to

return to the former island with a quantity of livestock. He began to barter with the friendly Otaheitans, and soon had as many hogs, goats, fowls, cats, and dogs as he required, besides a bull and a cow which had been left there by Captain Cook. With these and several natives he sailed again for Toubouai. Arriving there in nine days, he found that a change had come over the spirit of the natives. They were decidedly and unaccountably amiable. They not only permitted the white men to land, but assisted them in warping the ship into a place of shelter, as well as in landing provisions and stores.

Fletcher Christian, whatever his faults may have been, seems to have had peaceful tendencies. He had not only secured the friendship of the Otaheitans by his just and considerate treatment of them while engaged in barter, but he now managed to conciliate some of the chiefs of Toubouai. As a precaution, however, he set about building an entrenched fortress, in the labours connected with which he took his full share of work with the men. While the building was in progress the natives, despite the friendly chiefs, threw off the mask of good-will, which had doubtless been put on for the purpose of getting the white men into their power. Strong in overwhelming numbers, they made frequent attacks on the mutineers, which these latter, being strong in arms, successfully repelled. It soon became evident that warfare, not peace, was to be the lot of the residents on Toubouai, and, finally, it was agreed that the *Bounty* should be got ready for sea, and the whole party should return to Otaheite.

The resolution was soon carried into effect, and the mutineers ere long found themselves once again drawing near to the island.

As they approached it under full sail, for the wind was light, the men stood looking at it, commenting on its beauty and the amiableness of its people, but Fletcher Christian stood apart by himself, with his back to the shore, gazing in the opposite direction.

Edward Young went up to him.

“If this breeze holds, sir, we shall soon be at anchor in our old quarters.”

The midshipman spoke in the respectful tone of one addressing his superior officer. Indeed, although Christian had, by his rash and desperate act of mutiny, forfeited his position, and lowered himself to a level with the worst of his associates, he never lost their respect. It is recorded that they styled him *Mister* Christian to the end.

“At anchor!” said Christian, in a tone of deepest despondency. “Ah, Edward Young, there is no anchorage for us now in this world! We may anchor in Matavai Bay to-night, but it will only be to up anchor and off again in a few days.”

“Come, come, sir,” said Young, heartily, “don’t give way to despondency. You know we were driven to act as we did, and it can’t be helped now.”

“We were driven! My poor fellow,” returned Christian, laying a hand on the midshipman’s shoulder, “*you* had no part in this miserable business. It is I who have drawn you all into it, but—

well, well, as you say, it can't be helped now. We must make the best of it,—God help us!”

He spoke in a low, soft tone of profound sadness, and continued his wistful gaze over the stern of the *Bounty*. Presently he looked quickly round, and, taking Young's arm, began to pace the deck while he spoke to him.

“As you say, Edward, we shall anchor once more in Matavai Bay, but I am firmly resolved not to remain there.”

“I'm sorry to hear it, sir,” said Young, “for most of the men are as firmly resolved to stay, and you know several of them are resolute, not to say desperate, characters.”

“I am quite aware of that, but I shall make a proposal to them, which I think they will accept. I will first of all propose to leave Otaheite for some safer place of refuge, and when they object to that, I will propose to divide the whole of the ship's stores and property among us all, landing that portion which belongs to those who elect to remain on the island, and sailing away with the rest, and with those who choose to follow my fortunes, to seek a more distant and a safer home.”

“That may perhaps suit them,” said Young.

“Suit *them*,” rejoined Christian, with a quick glance; “then *you* don't count yourself one of them?”

“No,” returned the midshipman with a frank look, “I will follow you now, sir, to the end. How far I am guilty is a question that does not concern me at present. If the British Government gets hold of me, my fate is sealed. I am in the same boat with

yourself, Mr Christian, and I mean to stick by it.”

There was a strange spasm on Christian’s countenance, as if of conflicting emotions, while he grasped the youth’s hand and squeezed it.

“Thank you, Edward, thank you. Go now and see the anchor cleared to let go.”

He descended quickly to the cabin, while the unfortunate midshipman went forward to give the order.

When the proposal just referred to was made the following day, after landing at Otaheite, it was at once agreed to. Peter Heywood, Stewart, Morrison, and others who had taken no active part in the mutiny, were glad to have the prospect of being enabled, sooner or later, to make a voluntary surrender of themselves, while the thoughtless and reckless among the men were well pleased to have done with uncertain wanderings, and to be allowed to settle among their amiable native friends.

Preparations for instant departure were made by Christian and those who chose to follow his lead. The contents of the *Bounty* were landed and fairly divided; then the vessel was got ready for her final voyage. Those who resolved to sail in her were as follows:—

Fletcher Christian, formerly acting lieutenant—age 24.

Edward Young, midshipman—age 22.

John Adams, seaman—age 22.

William McCoy, seaman—age 25.

Matthew Quintal, seaman—age 21.

John Williams, seaman—age 25.

Isaac Martin, seaman—age 30.

John Mills, gunner's mate—age 40.

William Brown, botanist's assistant—age 27.

All these had married native women of Otaheite, who agreed to forsake home and kindred and follow the fortunes of their white husbands. There were also six native men who consented to accompany them. Their names were Talaloo, Ohoo, Timoa, Nehow, Tetaheite, and Menalee. Three of these had wives, and one of the wives had a baby girl by a former husband. The European sailors named the infant Sally. She was a round light-brown embodiment of gleeful impudence, and had barely reached the staggering age of infancy when taken on board the *Bounty* to begin her strange career.

Thus the party consisted of twenty-eight souls—namely, nine mutineers, six native men, twelve native women, and the light-brown baby.

It was a pleasant bright morning in September 1790 when Fletcher Christian and his followers bade farewell to Otaheite. For some time the breeze was light, and the *Bounty* hovered round the Island as if loath to leave it. In the dusk of evening a boat put off from her, pulled to the shore, and Christian landed, alone, near the house of a chief who had become the special friend of Peter Heywood and Stewart. With the two midshipmen he spent some time in earnest conversation.

“I could not leave you,” he said in conclusion, “without

relieving my mind of all that I have just said about the mutiny, because you are sure to be sent for and taken to England as soon as the intelligence of this sad affair reaches. I advise you to go off at once to the first ship that may appear, and give yourselves up to the commander.”

“Such is our intention,” said Heywood.

“Right,” rejoined Christian; “you are both innocent. No harm can come to you, for you took no part in the mutiny. For me, my fate is fixed. I go to search for some remote and uninhabited island, where I hope to spend the remainder of my days without seeing the face of any Europeans except those who accompany me. It is a dreary thought, lads, to lose country and kindred and friends for *ever* by the act of one dark hour. Now, remember, Heywood, what I have told you to tell my friends. God knows I do not plead guiltless; I am alone responsible for the mutiny, and I exonerate all, even my adherents, from so much as suggesting it to me; nevertheless, there are some who love me in England, to whom I would beg of you to relate the circumstances that I have told you. These may extenuate though they cannot justify the crime I have committed. I assure you, most solemnly, that almost up to the last I had no intention of doing more than making my own escape from the ship which the injustice and brutality of Bligh had made a place of torment to me. When you called me, Stewart, to relieve the watch, my brain seemed on fire, and it was when I found the two officers both asleep, who should have been on duty, that I suddenly made up my mind to take the ship. Now,”

concluded Christian, grasping the hands of the youths, "I must say farewell. I have done you grievous wrong. God forgive me, and bless you. Good-bye, Peter; good-bye, Stewart, good-bye."

He turned abruptly, stepped into his boat, and was rowed out to sea.

The young midshipmen, with moistened eyes, stood silently watching the boat until it reached the ship. Then they saw the *Bounty* steering away to the northward. Before daylight was quite gone she had disappeared on the distant horizon.

Thus did Fletcher Christian and his comrades pass from the sight and ken of man, and they were not heard of after that for more than twenty years!

But you and I, reader, have a special privilege to follow up these mutineers. Before doing so, however, let us note briefly what became of their comrades left on Otaheite.

These, to the number of sixteen, soon distributed themselves among the houses of their various friends, and proceeded to make themselves quite at home. Some of them, however, were not disposed to take up a permanent abode there. Among these was the boatswain's mate, James Morrison, a man of superior mental power and energy, who kept an interesting and graphic journal of events.¹

He, with the armourer, cooper, carpenter's mate, and others, set to work to construct a small vessel, in which they meant to sail

¹ Part of this journal is quoted in an excellent account of the *Mutineers of the Bounty*, by Lady Belcher.

to Batavia, whence they hoped to procure a passage to England. The natives opposed this at first, but on being told that the vessel was only meant for pleasure trips round the island, they ceased their opposition, and watched with great wonder at the process of ship-building, which was carried on industriously from day to day.

During the progress of the work there was witnessed an interesting ceremony, which, according to custom, was annually performed by the chief of the district and a vast concourse of natives. It shows how deeply the celebrated Captain Cook had gained the reverence and love of the people of Otaheite. A picture of the circumnavigator, which had been presented to the islanders by the captain of a merchant vessel, was brought out with great ceremony and held up before the people, who, including their queen, Eddea, paid homage to it. A ceremonial dance was also performed in its honour, and a long oration was pronounced by a leading chief, after which the portrait was returned to the care of an old man, who was its appointed custodian.

Long and earnestly did the white men labour at their little ship, and with equal, if not superior, earnestness did the natives flock from all parts of the island to see the wonderful work advance, bringing supplies of provisions to the whites as a sort of payment for admission to the show. The vessel was completed and launched after months of toil, but its sails of matting were found to be so untrustworthy that the plan of proceeding in it to

Batavia had to be given up.

Meanwhile, two of the worst of the mutineers, named Thompson and Churchill, came to a tragical end. The former insulted a member of the family with whom he resided, and was knocked down. He left them in high dudgeon, and went to that part of the island where the vessel above referred to was being built. One day a canoe from a distant district touched there, and the owner landed with his wife and family, carrying his youngest child in his arms. Thompson angrily ordered him to go away, but the man did not obey the order, whereupon Thompson seized his musket and shot father and child with the same bullet. For this murder he was shunned with abhorrence by his comrades, and obliged to go off to another part of the island, accompanied by Churchill. These two took up their abode with a chief who was a *tayo*, or sworn friend, of the latter. This chief died shortly afterwards, leaving no children behind him; and Churchill, being his *tayo*, succeeded to his possessions and dignity, according to the custom of the country. He did not, however, enjoy his new position long, for Thompson, from jealousy or some other cause, shot him. The natives were so incensed at this that they arose *en masse* and stoned Thompson to death.

While these events were occurring, a messenger of retribution was speeding over the sea to Otaheite. On the morning of 23rd March 1791, exactly sixteen months after the landing of the mutineers, H.M.S. *Pandora*, Captain Edwards, sailed into Matavai Bay. Before she had anchored, Coleman the

armourer swam off to her, and Peter Heywood and Stewart immediately followed and surrendered themselves. These, and all the mutineers, were immediately put in irons, and thrown into a specially prepared prison on the quarter-deck, named the "Pandora's Box," in which they were conveyed to England.

We have not space to recount the stirring incidents of this remarkable and disastrous voyage, and the subsequent trial of the mutineers. Let it suffice to say, that the *Pandora*, after spending three months in a fruitless search for the *Bounty*, was wrecked on the homeward voyage, and a large number of the crew and some of the prisoners were drowned, among whom was poor Stewart the midshipman. The remainder of the crew were saved in the ship's boats, after performing a voyage which, as to its length and the sufferings endured, rivals that previously made by Bligh. Thereafter, on reaching England, the mutineers were tried by court-martial; some were honourably acquitted, others were condemned to death but afterwards pardoned, and ultimately only three were executed.

Among those who were condemned, but afterwards pardoned as being unquestionably innocent, was Peter Heywood, whose admirable defence and correspondence with his family, especially that between himself and his charming sister Nessy, form a most interesting feature in the records of the trial; but all this must be passed over in silence, while we resume the thread of our story.

Chapter Three

The Lonely Island Sighted

It is pleasant to turn for a time from the dark doings of evil men to the contemplation of innocent infancy.

We return to the *Bounty*, and solicit the reader's attention to a plump brown ball which rolls about that vessel's deck, exhibiting a marked tendency to gravitate towards the lee scuppers. This brown ball is Sally, the Otaheitan infant.

Although brown, Sally's face is extremely pretty, by reason of the regularity of her little features, the beauty of her little white teeth, and the brilliancy of her large black eyes, to say nothing of her luxuriant hair and the gleeful insolence of her sweet expression.

We cannot say how many, or rather how few, months old the child is, but, as we have already remarked, she is a staggerer. That is to say, she has begun to assert the independence of her little brown legs, and progresses, even when on shore, with all the uncertainty of a drunken woman. Of course, the ship's motion does not tend to remedy this defect. Sally's chief delight is wallowing. No matter what part of the ship's deck she may select for her operations—whether the scuppers, the quarter-deck, or the forecabin—she lays her down straightway for a luxurious wallow. If the spot be dirty, she wallows it clean; if it

be clean, she wallows it dirty. This might seem an awkward habit to an English mother; but it is a matter of supreme indifference to Sally's mother, who sits on a gun-carriage plaiting a mat of cocoa-nut fibre, for Sally, being naked, requires little washing. A shower of rain or a dash of spray suffices to cleanse her when at sea. On shore she lives, if we may say so, more in the water than on the land.

The day is fine, and the breeze so light that it scarce ruffles the face of the great ocean, though it manages to fill the topsails of the *Bounty*, causing her to glide quietly on. Some of the mutineers are seated on the deck or bulwarks, patching a canvas jacket or plaiting a grass hat. Others are smoking contemplatively. John Adams is winding up the log-line with McCoy. Edward Young stands gazing through a telescope at something which he fancies is visible on the horizon, and Fletcher Christian is down in the cabin poring over Carteret's account of his voyage in the Pacific.

There were goats on board. One of these, having become a pet with the crew, was allowed to walk at liberty, and became a grand playmate for Sally. Besides the goats, Christian had taken care to procure a number of hogs and poultry from Otaheite; also a supply of young breadfruit-trees and other vegetable products of the island, wherewith to enrich his new home when he should find it. All the animals were confined in cribs and pens with the exception of Sally's playmate.

"Take care!" exclaimed John Adams as he left the quarter-

deck with his hands in his pockets; “your mate’ll butt you overboard, Sal, if you don’t look-out.”

There was, indeed, some fear of such a catastrophe, for the precocious infant had a tendency to scramble on any object which enabled her to look over the low bulwarks, and the goat had a propensity to advance on its hind legs with a playful toss of its head and take its playmate by surprise, in truth, what between the fore-hatch, the companion-hatch, and the low bulwarks, it may be said that Sally led a life of constant and imminent danger. She was frequently plucked by the men out of the very jaws of death, and seemed to enjoy the fun.

While attempting to avoid one of the goat’s playful assaults, Sally stumbled up against Matthew Quintal, deranged the work on which he was engaged, and caused him to prick his hand with a sail-needle, at which William McCoy, who was beside him, laughed.

“Get out o’ that, you little nigger!” exclaimed Quintal, angrily, giving the child a push with his foot which sent her rolling to the side of the ship, where her head came in contact with an iron bolt. Sally opened her mouth, shut her eyes, and howled.

Quintal had probably not intended to hurt the child, but he expressed no regret. On the contrary, seeing that she was not much injured, he laughed in concert with McCoy.

These two, Quintal and McCoy, were emphatically the bad men of the party. They did not sympathise much, if at all, with human suffering—certainly not with those whom they styled

“niggers;” but there was one witness of the act whose heart was as tender towards the natives as Quintal’s was hard.

“If you ever dare to touch her so again,” said Young, striding up to Quintal, “I’ll kick you into the pig-sty.”

The midshipman seemed to be the last man on board whose natural disposition would lead him to utter such a threat, and Quintal was quite taken aback; but as Young was a powerful fellow, perfectly capable of carrying his threat into execution, and seemed, moreover, thoroughly roused, the former thought it best to hold his tongue, even though lugubrious Isaac Martin chuckled audibly, and Ohoo, one of the natives, who stood near, displayed his fine teeth from ear to ear.

Lifting up Sally with much tenderness, Young carried her to her mother, who, after a not very careful examination of the bruised head, set her down on the deck, where she immediately began to wallow as before. Rising on her brown little feet, she staggered forward a few paces, and then seated herself without bending her knees. From this position she rolled towards the starboard side of the ship and squeezed herself between a gun-carriage and the bulwarks, until she got into the porthole. Thrusting her head over the edge of this, she gazed at the ripples that rolled pleasantly from the side. This was paradise! The sun glittered on these ripples, and Sally’s eyes glittered in sympathy. A very gentle lurch of the ship soon after sent Sally head foremost into the midst of the ripples.

This event was nothing new to Sally. In her Otaheitan home

her mother had been wont to take her out for a swim as British mothers take their offspring for a walk. Frequently had that mother pitched Sally off her shoulders and left her to wobble in the water, as eagles are said to toss their eaglets into the air, and leave them to flutter until failing strength renders aid advisable.

No doubt when Sally, falling from such a height, and turning so as to come flat on her back, experienced a tingling slap upon her skin, she felt disposed to shed a salt tear or two into the mighty ocean; but when the smart passed away, she took to wallowing in the water, by way of making the most of her opportunities. Both Christian and Young heard the plunge. The former leaped up the companion ladder, the latter ran to the stern of the ship, but before either could gain the side one of the Otaheitan men, who had witnessed the accident, plunged into the sea and was soon close to Sally. The playful creature, after giving him a kick in the face, consented to be placed on his shoulders.

The ship of course was brought up to the wind and her topsails backed as quickly as possible, but the swimmers were left a considerable distance astern before this was accomplished.

“No need to lower a boat,” remarked Christian, as he drew out the tubes of his telescope; “that fellow swims like a fish.”

“So do all his countrymen,” said Young.

“And the women and children too,” added John Adams, who was at the helm.

“She’s tugging at the man’s woolly head as if it were a door mat,” said Christian, laughing; “and I do believe—yes—the little

thing is now reaching round—and pulling his nose. Look at them, Young.”

Handing the glass to the midshipman, he turned to inquire for the child’s mother, and to his astonishment found that brown lady sitting on the deck busy with her mat-making, as unconcerned as if nothing unusual were going on.

The fact was, that Sally’s mother thought no more of Sally falling into the sea than a white mother might of her child falling on its nose—not so much, perhaps. She knew that the ship would wait to pick her up. She also knew that Sally was an expert swimmer for her age, and that the man who had gone to her rescue was thoroughly able for the duty, having, like all the South Sea Islanders, been accustomed from infancy to spend hours at a time in the water.

In a few minutes he came alongside, with Sally sitting astride his neck, holding on to both sides of his head, and lifting her large eyes with a gaze of ecstasy to those who looked over the vessel’s side. She evidently regarded the adventure as one of the most charming that had up to that time gladdened her brief career. Not only so, but, no sooner had she been hauled on board with her deliverer, than she made straight for the porthole from which she had fallen, and attempted to repeat the manoeuvre, amid shouts of laughter from all who saw her. After that the various portholes had to be closed up, and the precocious baby to be more carefully watched.

“I have come to the conclusion,” said Christian to Young, as

they paced the deck by moonlight that same night, “that it is better to settle on Pitcairn’s Island than on any of the Marquesas group. It is farther out of the track of ships than any known island of the Pacific, and if Carteret’s account of it be correct, its precipitous sides will induce passers-by to continue their voyage without stopping.”

“If we find it, and it should turn out to be suitable, what then!” asked Young.

“We shall land, form a settlement, and live and die there,” answered Christian.

“A sad end to all our bright hopes and ambitions,” said Young, as if speaking to himself, while he gazed far away on the rippling pathway made by the sun upon the sea.

Christian made no rejoinder. The subject was not a pleasant one to contemplate. He thought it best to confront the inevitable in silence.

Captain Carteret, the navigator who discovered the island and named it Pitcairn, after the young officer of his ship who was the first to see and report it, had placed it on his chart no less than three degrees out of its true longitude. Hence Christian cruised about unsuccessfully in search of it for several weeks. At last, when he was on the point of giving up the search in despair, a solitary rock was descried in the far distance rising out of the ocean.

“There it is at last!” said Christian, with a sigh that seemed to indicate the removal of a great weight from his spirit.

Immediately every man in the ship hurried to the bow of the vessel, and gazed with strangely mingled feelings on what was to be his future home. Even the natives, men and women, were roused to a feeling of interest by the evident excitement of the Europeans, and hastened to parts of the ship whence they could obtain a clear view. By degrees tongues began to loosen.

"It's like a fortress, with its high perpendicular cliffs," remarked John Adams.

"All the better for us," said Quintal; "we'll need some place that's difficult to get at and easy to defend, if one o' the King's ships should find us out."

"So we will," laughed McCoy in gruff tones, "and it's my notion that there's a natural barrier round that island which will go further to defend us agin the King's ships than anything that we could do. Isn't that white line at the foot o' the cliffs like a heavy surf, boys?"

"It looks like it," answered John Mills, the gunner's mate; "an' wherever you find cliffs rising like high walls out o' the sea, you may be pretty sure the water's too deep for good anchorage."

"That's in our favour too," returned Quintal; "nothin' like a heavy surf and bad anchorage to indooce ships to give us a wide berth."

"I hope," said William Brown the botanist, "that there's some vegetation on it. I don't see much as yet."

"Ain't it a strange thing," remarked long-legged Isaac Martin, in a more than usually sepulchral tone, "that land-lubbers

invariably shows a fund of ignorance when at sea, even in regard to things they might be supposed to know somethin' about?"

"How have I shown ignorance just now?" asked Brown, with a smile, for he was a good-humoured man, and could stand a great deal of chaffing.

"Why, how can you, bein' a gardener," returned Martin, "expect to see wegitation on the face of a perpindikler cliff?"

"You're right, Martin; but then, you know, there is generally an interior as well as a face to a cliffy island, and one might expect to find vegetation there, don't you see."

"That's true—to *find* it," retorted Martin, "but not to *see* it through tons of solid rock, and from five or six miles out at sea."

"But what if there's niggers on it?" suggested Adams, who joined the party at this point.

"Fight 'em, of coorse," said John Williams.

"An' drive 'em into the sea," added Quintal.

"Ay, the place ain't big enough for more than one lot," said McCoy. "It don't seem more than four miles long, or thereabouts."

An order to shorten sail stopped the conversation at this point.

"It is too late to attempt a landing to-night," said Christian to Young. "We'll dodge off and on till morning."

The *Bounty* was accordingly put about, and her crew spent the remainder of the night in chatting or dreaming about their future home.

Chapter Four

The Island Explored

A bright and pleasant morning forms a powerful antidote to the evils of a cheerless night. Few of the mutineers slept soundly on the night of their arrival off Pitcairn, and their dreams of that island were more or less unpleasantly mingled with manacles and barred windows, and men dangling from yard-arms. The blessed sunshine dissipated all this, rousing, in the hearts of some, feelings of hope and forgiveness, in the breasts of others, only those sensations of animal enjoyment which man shares in common with the brutes.

“Lower away the boat there,” said Fletcher Christian, coming on deck with a more cheerful air than he had worn since the day of the mutiny; “we shall row round the island and search for a landing-place. You will take charge, Mr Young, during my absence. Put muskets and ammunition into the boat, John Adams; the place may be inhabited—there’s no saying—and South Sea savages are not a hospitable race as a rule. Now then, look sharp, lads.”

In a few minutes, Adams, Martin, McCoy, Brown, and Quintal were in the boat, with two of the Otaheitan men.

“Won’t you take cutlasses?” asked Young, looking over the side.

“Well, yes, hand down half-a-dozen; and don’t go far from this end of the island, Mr Young. Just keep dodging off and on.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” said the middy, touching his cap from the mere force of habit.

“Shove off,” said Christian, seating himself at the helm.

In a few minutes the boat was skimming over the calm water towards the shore, while the *Bounty*, wearing round, went slowly out to sea.

As the boat neared the shore it soon became evident that it would be extremely difficult to effect a landing. Nothing could be seen but high precipitous cliffs without any sign of a harbour or creek sufficiently large or safe to afford anchorage for the ship. Worst of all, the only spot that seemed to offer any prospect of a landing-place, even for a boat, was guarded by tremendous breakers that seemed to bid defiance to man’s feeble powers. These great waves, or rollers, were not the result of storm or wind, but of the mere ocean-swell of the great Pacific, which undulates over her broad breast even when becalmed. No signs of the coming waves were visible more than a few hundred yards from the shore. There, each roller gradually and silently arose when the undulating motion of the sea caught the bottom. A little farther in it assumed the form of a magnificent green wall of liquid glass, which became more and more vast and perpendicular as it rolled on, until it curled over and rushed with a mighty roar and a snowy crest towards the beach. There it dashed itself in tumultuous foam among the rocks.

“Give way, lads,” said Christian, sitting down after a prolonged gaze at this scene; “we may find a better spot farther on.”

As they proceeded they were received with wild and plaintive cries by innumerable sea-birds, whose homes were on the cliffs, and who evidently resented this intrusion of strangers.

“Shall we give ’em a shot, sir?” asked McCoy, laying his hand on a musket.

“No, time enough for that,” replied Christian, shortly.

They pulled right round the island without seeing a single spot more available for a landing than the place they had first approached.

It was a very little bay, with a small clump of six cocoa-nut trees near the water’s edge on the right, and a single cocoa-nut tree on the left, about two hundred yards from the others. Above these, on a hill a little to the westward, there was a grove of the same species.

“We’ll have to try it, sir,” said John Adams, looking at his leader inquiringly.

“We’re sure to capsize,” observed McCoy.

“No matter,” said Christian; “we have at last reached *home*, and I’m bound not to be baffled at the door. Come, Ohoo, you know something about beaching canoes in a surf; there can’t be much difference with a boat. Get up in the bow and direct me how to steer.”

He spoke to one of the native in the imperfect jumble of

Otaheitan and English with which the white men had learned to communicate with the natives. Ohoo understood, and at once went to the bow of the boat, the head of which was now directed towards a place in the cliffs where there seemed to be a small bay or creek. The native gave directions with his arms right or left, and did not require to speak. Christian steered with one of the oars instead of the rudder, to give him more power over the boat.

Soon they began to feel the influence of the in-going wave. It was a moment of intense anxiety. Christian ordered the men to cease rowing. Ohoo made a sudden and violent indication with his left arm. Christian obeyed.

“Give a gentle pull, boys,” he said.

They rose as he spoke on the top of a wave so high that they could look down for a moment on the seething foam that raged between them and the beach, and Christian was about to order the men to pull hard, when the native looked back and shook his head excitedly. They had not got sufficiently into the grasp of that wave; they must wait for the next.

“Back all!” shouted the steersman. The boat slid back into the trough of the sea, while the wave went roaring inward.

The succeeding wave was soon close astern. It seemed to curl over them, threatening destruction, but it lifted them, instead, on its high shoulders. There was a slight appearance of boiling on the surface of the moving billow as it caught them. It was about to break, and the boat was fairly in its grasp.

“Give way!” shouted Christian, in a sharp, loud voice.

A moment more, and they were rushing grandly in on a mountain of snow, with black rocks rising on either side. It was nervous work. A little to the right or a little to the left, and their frail bark would have been dashed to pieces. As it was, they were launched upon a strip of sand and gravel that lay at the foot of the towering cliffs.

“Hurrah!” cried Martin and Brown, in wild excitement, as they leaped over the bow after the natives, while Christian, Adams, Quintal, and McCoy went over the stern to prevent the boat being dragged back by the recoiling foam, and pushed it high and dry on the beach.

“Well done! Here we are at last in Bounty Bay!” exclaimed Christian, with a look of satisfaction, giving to the spot, for the first time, that name which it ever afterwards retained. “Make fast the painter—there; get your arms now, boys, and follow me.”

At the head of the bay there was a hill, almost a cliff, up which there wound something that had the appearance of a path, or the almost dry bed of a water-course. It was exceedingly steep, but seemed the only route by which the interior of the island could be reached. Up the tangled pass for about three hundred yards the explorers advanced in single file, all except Quintal, who was left in charge of the boat.

“It looks very like a path that has been made by men,” said Christian, pausing to breathe, and turning round when half-way up the height; “don’t you think so, Brown?”

Thus appealed to, the botanist, whose eyes had been

enchained by the luxuriant and lovely herbage of the place, stooped to inspect the path.

“It does look a little like it, sir,” he replied, with some caution, “but it also looks not unlike a water-course. You see it is a little wet just hereabouts. Isn’t it? What think you, Isaac Martin?”

“I don’t think nothin’ about it,” returned Martin, solemnly, turning over the quid of tobacco that bulged his cheek; “but if I might ventur’ for to give an opinion, I should say it don’t much matter what it is, one way or another.”

“That’s true, Isaac,” said Christian, with a short laugh, as he resumed his march up the cliff.

On the way they were shaded and kept pleasantly cool by the neighbouring precipices but on gaining the top they came into a blaze of sunshine, and then became suddenly aware that they had discovered a perfect paradise. They stood on a table-land which was thickly covered with cocoa-nut trees. A quarter of a mile farther on lay a beautiful valley, the slopes and mounds of which were clothed with trees and beautiful flowering herbage of various kinds, in clumps and groves of picturesque form, with open glades and little meadows between, the whole being backed by a grand mountain-range which traversed the island, and rose to a height of more than a thousand feet.

“It is heaven upon earth!” exclaimed Brown, as they began to push into the heart of the lovely scene.

“Humph! It’s not all gold that glitters,” growled McCoy, with a sarcastic smile.

"It's pretty real, nevertheless," observed Isaac Martin; "I only hope there ain't none o' the rascally niggers livin' here."

Christian said nothing, but wandered on, looking about him like one in a dream.

Besides cocoa-nut palms and other trees and shrubs, there were banyan-trees, the branches of which dropped downwards to the earth and there took root, and other large timber-trees, and plantains, bananas, yams, taro-roots, mulberry, tee-plant, and other fruit-bearing plants in great profusion. Over this richly varied scene the eyes of William Brown wandered in rapture.

"Magnificent!" he exclaimed; "a perfect garden!"

"Rich enough soil, eh?" said Martin, turning some of it up with the point of his shoe.

"Rich enough, ay; couldn't be finer," said Brown. "I should think, from its deep red colour, that it is chiefly decomposed lava. The island is evidently volcanic in its origin. I hope we shall find fresh water. We've not seen much yet, but it's sure to be found somewhere, for such magnificent vegetation could not exist without it."

"What have we here?" said Christian, stooping to pick up something. "A stone implement of some kind, like a spear-head, I think. It seems to me that the island must have been inhabited once, although it does not appear to be so now."

After they had wandered about for some time, examining the land, and passing many a commentary, both grave and humorous, they turned to retrace their steps, when Brown, who had gone

on in advance, was heard to cheer as he waved his hat above his head. He had discovered a spring. They all hastened towards the spot. It lay like a clear gem in the hollow of a rock a considerable distance up the mountain. It was unanimously named "Brown's Pool," but it did not contain much water at the time.

"Can we do better than dine here?" said Isaac Martin. "There's lots o' food around us."

This was true, for of the various fruits which grew wild in the island, the cocoa-nut, plantain, and banana were to be had all the year round.

Brown had brought a small hatchet with him, which enabled them to break open several cocoa-nuts, whose hard outer husks would not have yielded easily to a clasp-knife.

While they sat thus enjoying themselves beside Brown's Pool, a small lizard was observed to run over a rock near to them. It stopped for a moment to raise its little head and look at the visitors, apparently with great surprise. A rat was also seen, and chased without success, by Isaac Martin.

A small species of fly-catcher, of a whitey-brown colour, was likewise observed, and those creatures, it was afterwards ascertained, were the only living things to be found on the island, with the exception of a variety of insects and the innumerable gulls already mentioned.

"Here, then," said Christian, raising a piece of the cocoa-nut shell filled with water to his lips, "I drink to our health and happiness in our island home."

There was a strange mingling of pathos with heartiness in his tone, which did not fail to impress his companions, who cheerfully responded to the toast.

"I only wish we had something stronger than water to drink it in," said McCoy.

"Better without strong drink," remarked John Adams, who was naturally a temperate man.

"Worse without it, *I* think," growled McCoy, who was naturally contentious and quarrelsome; "don't it warm the heart and raise the spirits and strengthen the frame, and—"

"Ay, and clear the brain," interrupted Martin, with one of his most lugubrious looks, "an' steady the gait, specially w'en one's pretty far gone, an' beautify the expression, an'—an'—clear the int'leck, an' (hic) an' gen'r'ly in—in—tenshify sh' powers (hic) of c—converzashun, eh?"

Martin was a pretty fair mimic, and illustrated his meaning so well, not only with his tongue but with his solemn countenance, that the whole party burst into a laugh, with the exception of McCoy, who replied with the single word, "Bosh!"

To which Martin returned, "Bam!"

"Just so," said Christian, as he stooped to refill the cocoa-nut shell; "you may be said to have reduced that spirited question to an essence, which is much beyond proof, and closed it; we will therefore return to the shore, get on board as quickly as possible, and make arrangements for anchoring in the bay."

"I doubt it's too deep for anchoring," remarked Adams, as they

walked down the hill.

“Well, then, we shall run the ship on shore,” said Christian, curtly, “for here we must remain. There is no other island that I know of in these regions. Besides, this one seems the very thing we want. It has wood and water in abundance; fruits and roots of many kinds; a splendid soil, if we may believe our eyes, to say nothing of Brown’s opinion; bad anchorage for ships, great difficulty and some danger in landing even in fine weather, and impossible to land at all, I should think, in bad; beautiful little valleys and hills; rugged mountains with passes so difficult that a few resolute men might defy a host, and caves to which we might retreat and sell our lives dearly if hard pushed. What more could we wish for?”

In a short time they reached the little narrow strip of shingly beach where the boat had been left in charge of Quintal. Here they had to encounter the great difficulty of forcing their way through the surf which had borne them shoreward in such grand style. The chief danger lay in the liability of the boat to be caught by the bow, turned broadside to the great tumbling billows, and overturned. Safety and success lay in keeping the boat’s bow straight “end-on” to the seas, and pulling hard. To accomplish this, Fletcher Christian again took an oar to steer with, in preference to the rudder. Besides being the most powerful man of the party, he was the best boatman, and the most agile in his movements.

“Steady, now!” he said, as the boat lay in the seething foam

partially sheltered by a rock, while the men sat with oars out, ready for instant action.

A bigger wave than usual had just hurled itself with a thunderous roar on the reverberating cliffs, and the great sheet of foaming water had just reached that momentary pause which indicated the turning-point previous to the backward rush, when Christian shouted—

“Give way!”

The boat leaped out, was kept end-on by a powerful stroke of the steersman, rushed on the back-draught as if down a cataract, and met the succeeding billow fairly. The bow was thrown up so high that it seemed as if the boat were standing on end, and must inevitably be thrown right over, but the impetus given by the willing men forced her half through and half over the crest of the watery mountain.

“With a will, boys, with a will!” cried Christian.

Another moment and they slid down the billow's back into the trough between the seas. A few more energetic strokes carried them over the next wave. After that the danger was past, and in less than half-an-hour they were once more on board the *Bounty*.

Chapter Five

The Landing of the Livestock in Bounty Bay

Preparations were now made for landing. The bay which they had discovered, and was the only one on the island, lay on its northern side. Into it they succeeded in running the *Bounty*, and cast anchor. Soon the women, with little Sally, were landed and sent up to the table-land above, to make some sort of encampment, under the charge of midshipman Young. The ship was warped close up to the cliffs, so close that she ran the end of her bowsprit against them and broke it off. Here there was a narrow ledge that seemed suitable for a landing-place. Night put a stop to their labours on board. While some lighted fires and encamped on the shore, others remained in the ship to guard her and to be ready for the debarkation that was to take place in the morning.

And a strange debarkation it was. It had been found that there was a rise of eight feet in the tide. This enabled Christian to lay the ship in such a position that it was possible to extend several long planks from the bow to the beach. Fortunately the weather was fine, otherwise the landing would have been difficult if not disastrous.

When all was complete, the goats were collected and driven

over the bow to the shore. The procession was headed by an old billy-goat, who looked supremely philosophical as he went slowly along the rough gangway.

“It minds one o’ pirates makin’ the crew of a merchantman walk the plank,” remarked John Williams, as he assisted to urge the unwilling flock along.

“Quite like a menadgerie,” suggested Mills.

“More like old Noah comin’ out o’ the ark,” said Williams, “on the top o’ Mount—Mount—what was its name? I forget.”

“Mount Sy-nee,” suggested Quintal.

“Not at all; it was Mount Arrowroot,” said Isaac Martin, with the air of an oracle.

“Clear the way, lads, for the poultry,” shouted midshipman Young.

A tremendous cackling in rear rendered further orders inaudible as well as unnecessary, while the men stood aside from the opening to the gangway of planks.

A considerable number of fowls had been taken on board at Otaheite, and these, besides being bewildered and uncertain as to the point to which they were being driven, and the precise duty that was required of them, were infected with the general obstinacy of the rest of the animal kingdom. At last, however, a splendid cock was persuaded to enter the gangway, down which he ran, and flew shrieking to the shore, followed by the rest of his kindred.

“Now for the hogs,” said Quintal, to whose domineering spirit

the work was congenial.

But the hogs were not to be managed as easily as the goats and fowls had been. With native obstinacy and amazing energy they refused to do what they were bid, and shrieked defiance when force was attempted. The noise was further increased by the butting of a few goats and the cackling of some poultry, which had got mixed up with them.

First of all they declined to leave the enclosures, out of which they had tried pertinaciously to escape all the voyage. By way of overcoming this difficulty, Christian ordered the enclosures to be torn down, and the planks with which they had been formed were used as persuaders to urge the refractory creatures on. As each poke or slap produced a series of horrible yells, it may be understood that the operation was accompanied with noise.

At last some of the men, losing patience, rushed at the hogs, seized them by ears and tails, and forcibly dragged them to the gangway. McCoy and Quintal distinguished themselves in this service, hurling their animals on the planks with such violence that several of them fell over into the sea, and swam towards the shore in the surf from which they were rescued by the Otaheitan men, who danced about in the water, highly enjoying this part of their labour.

A profound calm seemed to succeed a wild storm when the last of the unruly pigs had left the ship.

“We’ve got ’em all out at last,” said one of the men, with a sigh, wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his sleeve.

“Bad luck to them,” growled another, tying up a slight wound received in the conflict.

“We’ve done with the live stock, anyhow, and that’s a comfort,” said a third.

“Done with the live stock!” exclaimed Martin. “Why, the worst lot has yet to come.”

“That must be yourself, then, Martin, my boy,” said Brown.

“I wish it was, Brown,” retorted Martin; “but you’ve forgotten the cats.”

“So we have!” exclaimed everybody.

“And you may be sure they’ll give us some trouble,” said Christian. “Come, let’s go at ’em at once.”

This estimate of the cats was fully justified by what followed. A considerable number of these useful creatures, black, white, and grey, had been brought from Otaheite for the purpose of keeping down the rats, with which many of the South Sea Islands are afflicted. During the voyage most of them had retired to the privacy of the hold, where they found holes and corners about the cargo, and came out only at night, like evil spirits, to pick up a precarious livelihood. During the recent conflict a few had found insecure refuge in holes and corners about the deck, where yelling and fugitive pigs had convulsed them with horror; and one, a huge grey cat, having taken madly to the rigging, rushed out to the end of the foresail-yard, where it was immediately roused to frenzy by a flock of astonished gulls. Now, these cats had to be rummaged out of their retreats by

violence, in which work all the white men in the ship had to take part amid a chorus of awful skirling, serpentlike fuffing, ominous and deadly growling, and, generally, hideous caterwauling, that no pen, however gifted, could adequately describe.

"*I see 'im,*" cried Mills, with his head thrust down between a nail-cask and a bundle of Otaheitan roots.

"Where?" from John Adams, who, with heels and legs in the air, and head and shoulders down somewhere about the keel, was poking a long stick into total darkness.

"There, right under you, with a pair of eyes blazing like green lamps."

A poke in the right direction caused a convulsion in the bowels of the cargo like a miniature earthquake. It was accompanied by a fearful yell.

"I've touched him at last," said Adams, quietly. "Look-out there, Brown, he's goin' to scramble up the bulkhead."

"There goes another," shouted Martin, whose head was so far down among the cargo that his voice had a muffled sound.

There was no occasion to ask where this time, for, with a wild shriek, a large black fellow left its retreat, sprang up the hatchway, and sought refuge in the rigging. At the same moment there came a sepulchral moan from a cat whose place of refuge was invaded by Quintal. The moan was followed by a cry, loud and deep, that would have done credit to a mad baby.

"Isn't it appalling to see creeturs so furious?" said Adams, solemnly, as he drew his head and shoulders out of the depths.

“They’re fiendishly inclined, no doubt,” said Christian, who stood hard by with a stick, ready to expedite the process of ejection when a cat ventured to show itself.

At last, with infinite trouble the whole body of the enemy were routed from the hold, and the hatches fastened down to prevent a return. But the end was not yet gained, for the creatures had found various refuges on deck, and some had taken to the rigging.

“Come out o’ that,” cried Martin, making a poke at the big grey cat, like a small tiger, which had fled to the foretop.

With a ferocious caterwaul and fuff the creature sprang down the shrouds on the opposite side as if it had been born and bred a sailor. Unfortunately it made a wild leap at a pendant rope in passing, missed it, and came down on the deck with a prodigious flop. Only one of its nine lives, apparently, was damaged. With the other eight it rushed to the opening in the bow, and soon gained the shore, where it immediately sprang to the leafy head of a cocoa-nut palm. At the same moment a black-and-white cat was sent flying in the same direction by Young. Quintal, indulging his savage nature, caught one of the cats by the neck and tried to strangle it into subjection, but received such punishment with teeth and claws that he was fain to fling it into the sea. It swam ashore, emerged a melancholy “drookit” spectacle, and dashed into the nearest underwood.

Thus, one by one, the cats were hunted out of the *Bounty*, and introduced to their future home. The last to give in was, appropriately, an enormous black Tom, which, with deadly

yellow eyes, erect hair, bristling tail, curved back, extended claws, and flattened ears, rushed fuffing and squealing from one refuge to another, until at last, giving way to the concentrated attack of the assembled crew, it burst through the opening, scurried down the gangway, and went like a shot into the bushes, a confirmed maniac,—if not worse.

Chapter Six

Settling down and Exploration

The first few days were devoted by the mutineers to conveying ashore every article that was likely to prove useful. Not only were chests, boxes, tools, bedding, culinary implements, etcetera, removed from the vessel, but the planks that formed the bulkheads, much of the cordage, and all the loose spars and removable iron-work were carried ashore. In short, the vessel was completely gutted.

When this was finished, a council was called to decide what should be done with the *Bounty* herself, for although Christian was the acknowledged leader of the party, he took no important step without consulting his comrades.

“You see it is useless,” he said, “to think of venturing again to sea in the *Bounty*; we are too short-handed for that. Besides, we could not find a more suitable island than this. I therefore propose that we should burn the ship, to prevent her being seen by any chance vessel that may pass this way. If she were observed, men might be tempted to land, and of course they would tell that we were here, and His Majesty would soon have a cruiser out in search of us. What say you?”

“I say wait a bit and consider,” replied Young.

“Ditto,” said Adams.

Some of the others thought with Christian. Quintal, in particular, who seemed to live in a chronic state of objection to being hanged, was strong for destroying the vessel. Eventually, after a good deal of delay and much discussion, the good ship *Bounty* finished her career by being burned to the water's edge in Bounty Bay. This occurred on the 23rd January 1790. The lower part of the vessel, which would not burn, was towed out into deep water and sunk, so that not a vestige of her remained.

And now all was bustling activity. A spot some few hundred yards farther inland than that selected as their camping-ground on the day of arrival, was fixed on as suitable for their permanent location. It was beautifully situated, and pleasantly sheltered by trees, through between the stems of which the sea was visible. To this spot everything was conveyed, and several of the most powerful of the men began to clear the ground, and fell the trees with axes.

One morning, soon after landing, a party was organised to traverse the island and investigate its character and resources. As they were not yet quite sure that it was uninhabited, this party was a strong one and well armed. It consisted of Christian, Adams, Brown, Martin, and four of the Otaheitans. Edward Young stayed at the encampment with the remaining men and the women.

"In which direction shall we go?" asked Christian, appealing to Brown.

The botanist hesitated, and glanced round him.

"If I might make so bold, sir," said Isaac Martin, "I would

suggest that we go right up to the top o' the mountains. There's nothin' like a bird's-eye view for fillin' the mind wi' right notions o' form, an' size, an' character."

Following this advice, they traversed the lower ground, which was found very prolific everywhere. Then they ascended the undulating slopes of the mountain-sides until they reached the rugged and bare rocks of the higher ground.

On the way they found further and indisputable evidence of the island having been inhabited at some previous and probably long past era. Among these evidences were spear-heads, and axes of stone, and several warlike weapons.

"Hallo! here's a circumstance," exclaimed Martin, stopping in front of an object which lay on the ground.

On closer examination the "circumstance" turned out to be an image made of a hard and coarse red stone.

"It is evidently an idol," said Christian; "and here are some smooth round stones, resembling those used by the Otaheitans in war."

Not far from the spot, and in other places as they advanced, the exploring party found heaps of stone chips, as well as more images and tools.

"I've been thinking," said Brown, turning for a moment to look down at the sea, which now lay spread out far below them like a blue plain, "I've been thinking that the proof of people having been here long ago lies not only in these stones, axes, spears, and images, but also in the fact that we find the cocoa-nut trees,

bananas, plantains, breadfruit-trees, as well as yams and sweet potatoes, grow chiefly in the sunny and sheltered parts of the island, and gathered together as if they had been planted there.”

“Here’s the best proof of all,” exclaimed Martin, who had a tendency to poke about, with his long nose advanced, as if scenting out things.

They looked at the spot to which Martin pointed, and there saw a human skeleton in the last stage of decay, with a large pearl shell under the skull. Not far-off more human bones were discovered.

“That’s proof positive,” said Brown. “Now, I wonder why these natives came here, and why they went away.”

“P'r'aps they didn't come, but was born'd here,” suggested Martin; “an' mayhap they didn't go away at all, but died here.”

“True, Martin,” said Adams; “and that shell reminds me of what Captain Bligh once told me, that the natives o' the Gambier Islands, which must lie to wind'ard o' this, have a custom of puttin' a shell under the heads of the dead in this fashion. Moreover, he told me that these same Gambier chaps, long ago, used to put the people they vanquished in war on rafts, and turn 'em adrift to sink or swim, or fetch what land they might. No doubt some of these people got drifted here.”

As he spoke the party emerged from a somewhat rugged pass, close to the highest peak of the mountain-ranges. A few minutes' scramble brought them to the summit, whence they obtained a magnificent view of the entire circuit of the island.

We have said that the peak is just over a thousand feet high. From this commanding position the Pacific was seen with a boundless horizon all round. Not a speck of land visible save the rocky isle on which they stood. Not a sail to mark the vast expanse of water, which, from that height, seemed perfectly flat and smooth, though a steady breeze was blowing, and the islet was fringed with a pure white ring of foam. Not a cloud even to break the monotony of the clear sky, and no sound to disturb the stillness of nature save the plaintive cries, mellowed by distance, of the myriads of sea-fowl which sailed round the cliffs, or dipped into the water far below.

“Solitude profound,” said Christian, in a low voice, breaking the silence which had fallen on the party as they gazed slowly round them.

Just then a loud and hideous yell issued from, apparently; the bowels of the earth, and rudely put to flight the feeling of profound solitude. The cry, although very loud, had a strangely muffled sound, and was repeated as if by an echo.

The explorers looked in each other’s faces inquiringly, and not without an expression of awe.

“Strange,” said Adams; “an’ it sounded very like some one in distress.”

It was observed suddenly that Isaac Martin was absent.

“But the voice was not like his,” said Brown.

The mysterious cry was repeated at the moment, and Christian ran quickly in the direction whence it seemed to come. As they

neared a rugged mass of rocks which lay close to the peak on which they had been standing, the cry lost much of its mystery, and finally assumed the tones of Martin's voice.

"Hallo! hi! murder! help! O my leg! Mr Christian, Adams, Brown, this way. Help! ho! hi!"

What between the muffled sound and the echo, Martin created a noise that would have set his friends into fits of laughter if they had not been greatly alarmed.

In a few seconds the party reached what seemed to be a dark hole, out of which the poor man's left leg was seen protruding. Christian and Adams grasped it. Brown and one of the Otaheitans lent a hand, and Martin was quickly dragged out of danger and set on his legs.

"I say, Martin," said Brown, anxiously, "sit down or you'll bu'st. Every drop o' blood in your body has gone to your head."

"No wonder," gasped Isaac, "if you'd bin hangin' by one fut half as long, your blood would have blowed your head off altogether."

"There now, sit down a minute, and you'll be all right," said Christian. "How did it happen?"

To this Martin replied that it was simple enough. He had fallen a few yards behind, and, taking a wrong turn, had come on a hole, into which he looked. Seeing something like a light at the bottom of it, he stooped down to look further, slipped on the rocks, and went in head foremost, but was arrested by his foot catching between two rocks and getting jammed.

In this position he would soon have perished had not his comrades come to the rescue.

With some curiosity they now proceeded to examine the hole. It turned out to be the entrance to a cave which opened towards the northern side of the island, and from which a splendid sweep of the sea could be seen, while in the immediate neighbourhood, far down the precipices, innumerable sea-birds were seen like flakes of snow circling round the cliffs. A few of the inquisitive among these mounted to the giddy height of the cave's seaward-mouth, and seemed to gaze in surprise at the unwonted sight of man.

"A most suitable cavern for a hermit or a monk," said Brown.

"More fit for a monkey," said Martin.

"Not a bad place of refuge in case our retreat should be discovered," observed Christian.

"H'm! the Mutineers' Retreat," muttered John Adams, in a slightly bitter tone.

"A few resolute men," continued Christian, taking no notice of the last remark, "could hold out here against a hundred—at least while their ammunition lasted."

He returned as he spoke to the cave's landward entrance, and clambered out with some difficulty, followed by his companions. Proceeding with their investigations, they found that, while a large part of the island was covered with rich soil, bearing fruit-trees and shrubs in abundance, the remainder of it was mountainous, rugged, and barren. They also ascertained that,

although the place had been inhabited in times long past, there seemed to be no inhabitants at that time to dispute their taking possession. Satisfied with the result of their investigations, they descended to their encampment on the table-land close to the heights above Bounty Bay.

On drawing near to the clearing they heard the sound of voices raised as if in anger.

"It's Quintal and McCoy," said Adams; "I know the sound o' their ill-natured voices."

Presently the two men could be seen through the trees. Quintal was sitting on a felled tree, looking fiercely at McCoy, who stood beside him.

"I tell you the baccy is mine," said Quintal.

"It's nothin' o' the sort, it's mine," answered McCoy, snatching the coveted weed out of the other's hand.

Quintal jumped up, hit McCoy on the forehead, and knocked him down.

McCoy instantly rose, hit Quintal on the nose, and tumbled him over the log on which he had been sitting.

Not much the worse, Quintal sprang to his feet, and a furious set-to would have immediately followed if the arrival of Christian and his party had not prevented it. It was no easy matter to calm the ruffled spirits of the men who had treated each other so unceremoniously, and there is no doubt the bad feeling would have been kept up about the tobacco in dispute if Christian had not intervened. McCoy reiterated stoutly that the tobacco was

his.

“You are wrong,” said Christian, quietly; “it belongs to Quintal. I gave it to him this morning.”

As there was no getting over this, McCoy returned the tobacco with a bad grace, and Christian was about to give the assembled party some good advice about not quarrelling, when the mother of little Sally appeared suddenly, wringing her hands, and exclaiming in her native tongue, “My child is lost! my child is lost!”

As every one of the party, even the roughest, was fond of Sally, there was an eager and anxious chorus of questioning.

“Where away did ’ee lose her?” asked McCoy; but the poor mother could only wring her hands and cry, “Lost! lost!”

“Has she gone over the cliffs?” asked Edward Young, who came up at the moment; but the woman would say nothing but “Lost! lost!” amid floods of tears.

Fortunately some of the other women, who had been away collecting cocoa-nuts, arrived just then, and somewhat relieved the men by prevailing on the mother to explain that, although she could not say positively her child had fallen over the cliffs, or come by any other mishap, Sally had nevertheless disappeared early in the forenoon, and that she had been searching for her ever since without success.

The process of interrogation was conducted chiefly by Isabella, *alias* Mainmast, the wife of Fletcher Christian, and Susannah, the wife of Edward Young; and it was interesting

to note how anxious were the native men, Talaloo, Timoa, Ohoo, Nehow, Tetaheite, and Menalee. They were evidently as concerned about the safety of the child as were the white men.

“Now, lads,” said Christian, after it was ascertained that the poor woman could give no information whatever, “we must search at once, but we must go about it according to a fixed plan. I remember once reading of a General having got lost in a great swamp one evening with his staff. It was near the sea, I think, and the tide was making. He collected his officers and bade them radiate out from him in all directions, each one in a straight line, so as to make sure of at least one of them finding the right road out of the danger. We will do likewise.”

Following out this plan, the entire party scattered themselves into the bush, each keeping in a straight line, searching as he went, and widening the field of search as his distance from the centre increased. There was no time to lose, for the shades of night had already begun to fall.

Anxiously did the poor mother and one or two of the other women sit in the clearing, listening for the expected shout which should indicate success. For a long time no shout of any kind was heard, though there was considerable noise when the searching party came upon the lairs of members of the livestock that had taken up their quarters in the bush.

We will follow only the line of search which ended in success. It was pursued by Christian himself. At first he came on spots where domestic fowls had taken up their abode. Then, while

tramping through a mass of luxuriant ferns, he trod on the toes of a slumbering hog, which immediately set up a shriek comparable only to the brake of an ill-used locomotive. This uncalled-for disturbance roused and routed a considerable number of the same family which had taken refuge in the same locality. After that he came on a bevy of cats, seated at respectful distances from each other, in glaring and armed neutrality. His sudden and evidently unexpected appearance scattered these to the four points of the compass.

Presently he came upon a pretty open spot of small size, which was surrounded by shrubs and trees, through the leafy branches of which the setting sun streamed in a thousand rays. One of these rays dazzled the eyes, and another kissed the lips of a Nanny-goat. It was Sally's pet, lying down and dozing. Beside it lay Sally herself, sound asleep, with her pretty little face resting on its side, and one of her little fat hands holding on to a lock of its white hair.

With a loud shout Christian proclaimed his success to the Pitcairn world, and, picking up the still slumbering child, carried her home in triumph to her mother.

Chapter Seven

Roasting, Foraging, and Fabricating

One morning John Adams awoke from a pleasant dream and lay for some time on his back, in that lazy, half-conscious fashion in which some men love to lie on first awaking. The canopy above him was a leafy structure through which he could see the deep azure of the sky with its few clouds of fleecy white. Around him were the rude huts of leaves and boughs which his comrades had constructed for themselves more or less tastefully, and the lairs under bush and tree with which the Otaheitan natives were content. Just in front of his own hut was that of Fletcher Christian. It was more thoroughly built than the others, being partly formed of planks and other woodwork saved from the *Bounty*, and was well thatched with the broad leaves of tropical plants.

In front of the hut Christian's wife, Isabella, was busily engaged digging a hole in the ground. She was the only member of the party astir that morning.

"I wonder why Mainmast is up so early," murmured Adams, rousing himself and using his elbow as a prop while he observed her.

Mainmast, who was better known by that sobriquet than by the name which Christian had given to her on his wedding-day

at Otaheite, was a very comely and naturally amiable creature, graceful in form, and although a so-called savage, possessing an air of simple dignity and refinement which might almost be termed lady-like. Indeed, several of the other native wives of the mutineers were similar to Mrs Christian in these respects, and, despite their brown complexions, were remarkably good-looking. One or two, however, were commonplace enough, especially the wives of the three married Otaheitan men, who seemed to be, as no doubt they were, of a lower social class than the others who had mingled with the best Otaheitan society, Edward Young's wife, for instance, being a sort of native princess—at least she was the daughter of a great chief.

The dress of these women was simple, like themselves, and not ungraceful. It consisted of a short petticoat of tapa, or native cloth, reaching below the knees, and a loose shawl or scarf of the same material thrown over the shoulders.

After gazing a short time, Adams perceived what Mainmast was about. She was preparing breakfast, which consisted of a hog. It had been shot by Christian the night before, partly because it annoyed him with pertinacious grunting in the neighbourhood of his hut, and partly because several families of hoglets having been born soon after their arrival on the island, he could not be charged with extravagance in giving the people a treat of flesh once in a way.

The process of cooking the hog was slow, hence the early move. It was also peculiar, therefore we shall describe it in detail,

in order that the enterprising housewives of England may try the plan if convenient.

Mainmast's first act was to kindle a large fire, into which she put a number of goodly-sized and rounded stones. While these were heating, she dug a large hole in the ground with a broken shovel, which was the only implement of husbandry possessed at that time by the community. This hole was the oven. The bottom of it she covered with fresh plantain leaves. The stones having been heated, were spread over the bottom of the hole and then covered with leaves. On this hotbed the carcass of the pig was placed, and another layer of leaves spread over it. Some more hot stones were placed above that, over which green leaves were strewn in bunches, and, finally, the whole was covered up with earth and rubbish piled up so as to keep in the heat.

Just as she had accomplished this, Mainmast was joined by Mrs Young (Susannah) and Mrs McCoy.

"Good-morning," said Mrs Christian, using the words of salutation which she had learned from the Europeans. "The hog will not be ready for a long time; will you help me with the cakes?"

The women at once assented, and set to work. They spoke to each other in the Otaheitan tongue. To their husbands they spoke in a jumble of that tongue and English. For convenience we shall, throughout our tale, give their conversations in ordinary English.

While Mrs McCoy prepared some yams and sweet potatoes for baking, Mrs Young compounded a cake of yams and

plantains, beaten up, to be baked in leaves. Mainmast also roasted some breadfruit.

This celebrated fruit—but for which the *Bounty*, would never have been sent forth, and the mutiny with its wonderful consequences would never have occurred—grows on a tree the size of a large apple-tree, the leaves of which are of a very deep green. The fruit, larger than an orange, has a thick rind, and if gathered before becoming ripe, and baked in an oven, the inside resembles the crumb of wheaten bread, and is very palatable. It lasts in season about eight months of the year.

While the culinary operations were going on, the precocious Sally, awaking from her slumbers, rose and staggered forth to survey the face of the newborn day. Her little body was clothed in an admirably fitting garment of light-brown skin, the gift of Nature. Having yawned and rubbed her eyes, she strayed towards the fire. Mrs Christian received her with an affable smile, and presented her with a pannikin of cocoa-nut milk to keep her quiet. Quaffing this beverage with evident delight, she dropped the pannikin, smacked her rosy lips, and toddled off to seek adventures. Her first act was to stand in front of Isaac Martin's hut, and gaze with a look not unmixed with awe at the long nose pointing to the sky, from which sonorous sounds were issuing.

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt. It was obvious that the awesome feeling passed from the infant's mind as she gazed. Under the impulse of a sudden inspiration she entered the hut, went up to the nose, and tweaked it.

“Hallo!” shouted Martin, springing up and tumbling Sally head over heels in the act. “Oh, poor thing, I haven’t hurt you, have I?”

He caught the child in his arms and kissed her; but Sally seemed to care neither for the tumble nor the kisses. Having been released, she sallied from the hut in search of more adventures.

Martin, meanwhile, having been thoroughly aroused, got up and went towards the fire.

“You’re bright and early, Mainmast,” he said, slowly filling his pipe.

“Yes, hog takes time to cook.”

“Hog is it, eh? That’ll be first-rate. Got sauce for it?”

“Hog needs no sauce,” said Mrs Christian, with a laugh. To say truth, it required very little to arouse her merriment, or that of her amiable sisterhood.

When Martin had lighted his pipe, he stood gazing at the fire profoundly, as if absorbed in meditation. Presently he seized a frying-pan which lay on the ground, and descended therewith by way of the steep cliffs to the sea.

While he was gone, one and another of the party came to the fire and began to chat or smoke, or both, according to fancy. Ere long Martin was seen slowly ascending the cliffs, holding the frying-pan with great care.

“What have you got there?” asked one.

“Oysters, eh?” said another, scrutinising the pan.

“More like jelly-fish,” said Young.

“What in all the world is it?” asked Adams, as the pan was put on the fire.

“You’ll see when it boils,” said Martin.

“There’s nothin’ in it at all but water,” said Quintal, somewhat contemptuously.

“Well, I’ve heerd of many a thing, but never fried water,” remarked McCoy.

“I should think it indigestible,” said Christian, coming up at the moment.

Whether the natives understood the jest or not we cannot say, but certain it is that all of them, men and women, burst into a fit of laughter at this, in which they were joined by Otaheitan Sally from mere sympathy.

“Well, what is to be the order of the day?” asked Christian, turning to Young. “Shall we proceed with our dwellings, or divide the island into locations?”

“I think,” answered the midshipman, “that some of us at least should set up the forge. I know that Williams’s fingers are tingling to grasp the sledge-hammer, and the sooner he goes at it, too, the better, for we’re badly off for tools.”

“If you don’t require my services,” said Brown, “I’ll go plant some breadfruits and other things at that sheltered spot we fell upon yesterday.”

“I intend to finish the thatching of my hut,” said Quintal, in that off-hand tone of independence and disregard of the wishes of others which was one of his characteristics.

“Well, there are plenty of us to do all the work,” said Christian. “Let every man do what pleases himself. I would only ask for one or two volunteers to cut the water-tanks I spoke of yesterday. The water we have discovered, although a plentiful supply for present needs, may run short or cease altogether if drought comes. So we must provide against a dry instead of a rainy day, by cutting a tank or two in the solid rock to hold a reserve.”

Adams and Mills at once volunteered for this duty. Other arrangements were soon made, and they sat down to breakfast, some using plates saved from the *Bounty*, others flat stones as substitutes, while empty cocoa-nut shells served for drinking-cups.

“Your water pancake should be done brown by this time,” said Young, as he sat down on the turf tailor-wise.

“Not quite, but nearly,” returned Martin, as he stirred the furiously-boiling contents of the frying-pan.

In a few minutes more the sea water had boiled quite away, leaving a white residuum, which Martin scraped carefully off into a cocoa-nut cup.

“You see, boys,” he said, setting down the salt thus procured, “I never could abide fresh meat without a pick o’ salt to give it a relish. It may be weakness perhaps, but—”

“Being the weakness of an old salt,” interrupted Christian, “it’s excusable. Now, boys, fall-to with a will. We’ve got plenty of work before us, an’ can’t afford to waste time.”

This exhortation was needless. The savoury smell of the roast

pig, when it had been carefully disintombed, might have given appetite to a seasick man. They ate heartily, and for some time in silence.

The women, however, did not join in the feast at that time. It was the custom among the Otaheitans that the men should eat first, the women afterwards; and the mutineers, having become habituated to the custom, did not see fit to change it. When the men had finished and discussed the day's proceedings, the remainder of the pig, fruits, and vegetables, were consumed by the females, among whom, we are bound to state, Sally was the greatest gourmand.

When pipes were finished, and the digestion of healthy young men had been thus impaired as far as was possible in the circumstances, the party went off in several groups about their various avocations.

Among other things removed from the *Bounty* were a smith's anvil and bellows, with various hammers, files, etcetera, and a large quantity of iron-work and copper. One party, therefore, under Young and Williams the armourer, busied themselves in setting up a forge near their settlement, and preparing charcoal for the forge fire.

Another party, under Christian, proceeded to some neighbouring rocks, and there, with sledge-hammer and crowbars, which they used as jumpers, began the laborious task of boring the solid rock, intending afterwards to blast, and partly to cut it, into large water-tanks. Quintal continued

the thatching of his hut, in which work his humble wife aided him effectively. Brown proceeded with the planting operations which he had begun almost immediately after landing; and the women busied themselves variously, some in preparing the mid-day meal, some in gathering fruits and roots for future use, and others in improving the internal arrangements of their various huts, or in clearing away the débris of the late feast. As for little Sally, she superintended generally the work of the home department, and when she tired of that, went further afield in search of adventures.

Chapter Eight

Division of the Island—Moralisings, Misgivings, and a Great Event

There was no difficulty in apportioning the new possessions to which the mutineers had served themselves heirs. In that free-and-easy mode in which men in power sometimes arrange matters for their own special behoof, they divided the island into nine equal parts, of which each appropriated one part. The six native men were not only ignored in this arrangement, but they were soon given to understand, by at least several of their captors, that they were to be regarded as slaves and treated as such.

It is, however, but just to Edward Young to say that he invariably treated the natives well and was much liked by them, from which it is to be supposed that he did not quite fall in with the views of his associates, although he made no objection to the unjust distribution of the land. John Adams, being an amiable and kindly man, also treated the natives well, and so did Fletcher Christian; but the others were more or less tyrannical, and those kindred spirits, Matthew Quintal and William McCoy, treated them with great severity, sometimes with excessive cruelty.

At first, however, things went well. The novelty and romance of their situation kept them all in good spirits. The necessity for constant activity in laying out their gardens, clearing the land

around the place of settlement, and erecting good log-houses,—all this, with fresh air and abundance of good food, kept them in excellent health and spirits, so that even the worst among them were for a time amiably disposed; and it seemed as if those nine men had, by their act of mutiny, really introduced themselves into a terrestrial paradise.

And so they had, as far as nature was concerned, but the seeds of evil in themselves began ere long to grow and bear fruit.

The fear of the avenger in the form of a man-of-war was constantly before their minds. We have said that the *Bounty* had been burnt, and her charred remnants sunk to remove all traces of their presence on the island. For the same end a fringe of trees was left standing on the seaward side of their clearing, and no erection of any kind was allowed upon the seaward cliffs or inland heights.

One afternoon, Christian, who had been labouring in his garden, threw down his tools, and taking up the musket which he seldom left far from his hand, betook himself to the hills. He was fond of going there, and often spent many hours in solitary watching in the cave near the precipitous mountain-peak.

On his way up he had to pass the hut of William McCoy. The others, conforming to the natural tendency of mankind to congregate together, had built their houses round the cleared space on the table-land above Bounty Bay, from which central point they were wont to sally forth each morning to their farms or gardens, which were scattered wide apart in separate valleys.

McCoy, however, aspired to higher heights and grander solitudes. His dwelling, a substantial log-hut, was perched upon a knoll overlooking the particular valley which he cultivated with the aid of his Otaheitan wife and one of the native men.

"You are getting on well," said Christian to McCoy, who was felling a tree when he came up to him.

"Ay, slowly, but I'd get on a deal faster if that lazy brown-skin Ohoo would work harder. Just look at him. He digs up that bit o' ground as if he was paid by the number o' minutes he took to do it. I had to give him a taste of a rope's end this morning, but it don't seem to have done him much good."

"It didn't seem to do much good to you when you got it on board the *Bounty*," said Christian, gravely.

"P'r'aps not; but we're not on board the *Bounty*, now," returned McCoy, somewhat angrily.

"Depend on it, McCoy," said Christian, softening his tone, "that the cat never made any man work well. It can only force a scoundrel to obedience, nothing more."

"H'm, I b'lieve you're not far wrong, sir," returned the other, resuming his work.

Giving a friendly nod to Ohoo as he passed, and a cheerful "good-morning" to Mrs McCoy, who was busy inside the hut, Christian passed slowly on through the luxuriant herbage with which that part of the hillside was covered.

At first he walked in the shade of many-stemmed banyans and feathery-topped palms, while the leaves of tall and graceful ferns

brushed his cheeks, and numerous luxuriant flowering plants perfumed the air. Then he came to a clump of bushes, into which darted one of the goats that had by this time become almost wild. The goat's rush disturbed a huge sow with a litter of quite new pigs, the gruntings and squeakings of which gave liveliness to an otherwise quiet and peaceful scene.

Coming out on the shoulder of the mountain just above the woods, he turned round to look back. It was a splendid panorama of tropical vegetation, rounded knolls, picturesque mounds, green patches, and rugged cliffs, extending downwards to Bounty Bay with its fringe of surf, and beyond—all round—the sleeping sea.

Two or three little brown, sparrow-like birds twittered in the bushes near, and looked askance, as if they would question the man's right to walk there. One or two active lizards ran across his path, pausing now and then, and glancing upwards as if in great surprise.

Christian smiled sadly as he looked at them, then turned to breast the hill.

It was a rugged climb. Towards the top, where he diverged to the cave, every step became more difficult.

Reaching the hole where Isaac Martin had come by his misadventure, Christian descended by means of a rude ladder which he had constructed and let down into it. Entering the cave, he rested his musket against the wall of rock, and sat down on a ledge near the opening towards the sea. It was a giddy height.

As he sat there with hands clasped over one knee and eyes fixed wistfully on the horizon, his right foot, thrust a little beyond the edge of the rock, overhung a tremendous precipice, many hundred feet deep.

For a long time he gazed so steadfastly and remained so motionless as to seem a portion of the rock itself. Then he heaved a sigh that relieved the pent-up feelings of an overburdened soul.

“So early!” he muttered, in a scarcely audible voice. “At the very beginning of life, just when hope, health, manhood, and opportunity were at the flood.”

He stopped, and again remained motionless for a long time. Then, continuing in the same low, sad tone, but without altering his position or his wistful gaze.

“And *now*, an outlaw, an outcast, doomed, if taken, to a felon’s death! Comrades seduced to their ruin! The brand of Cain not more terrible than mine! Self-exiled for life! Never, *never* more to see friends, country, kindred, sisters—mother! God help me!”

He laid his face in his hands and groaned aloud. Again he was silent, and remained without motion for nearly an hour.

“*Can* it be true?” he cried in a voice of suppressed agony, looking up as if expecting an answer from heaven. “Shall I never, never, *never* awake from this hideous dream!”

The conscience-smitten young man laid strong constraint upon himself and became calmer. When the sun began to approach the horizon he rose, and with an air of stern resolution, set about making various arrangements in the cave.

From the first Fletcher Christian had fixed on this cavern as a retreat, in case his place of refuge should be discovered. His hope was that, if a man-of-war should come at last and search the island, he and his comrades might escape detection in such a sequestered and well-concealed cavern. If not, they could hold out to the last and sell their lives dearly. Already he had conveyed to it, by degrees, a considerable supply of ammunition, some of the arms and a quantity of such provisions as would not readily spoil with time. Among other things, he carried to that elevated outlook Carteret's book of voyages and some other works, which had formed the very small library of the *Bounty*, including a Bible and a Church of England Prayer-book.

When not gazing on the horizon, expecting yet fearing the appearance of a sail, he passed much of his time in reading.

On the evening of which we write he had beguiled some time with Carteret, when a slight sound was heard outside the cavern.

Starting up with the nervous susceptibility induced by a guilty conscience, he seized his musket and cocked it. As quickly he set it down again, and smiled at his weakness. Next moment he heard a voice shouting. It drew nearer.

"Hallo, sir! Mr Christian!" cried John Adams, stooping down at the entrance.

"Come down, Adams, come down; there's no occasion to keep shouting up there."

"True, sir; but do you come up. You're wanted immediately." There was something in the man's voice which alarmed

Christian. Grasping his musket, he sprang up the ladder and stood beside his comrade.

“Well?”

“It’s—it’s all right, sir,” said Adams, panting with his exertions in climbing the hill; “it’s—it’s a *boy!*”

Without a word of reply Christian shouldered his weapon, and hurried down the mountain-side in the direction of home.

Chapter Nine

Sally's Chief Joys—Dark Clouds Overspread the Pitcairn Sky, and Darker Deeds are done

Just before John Adams left the settlement for the purpose of calling Christian, whose retreat at the mountain-top was by that time well-known to every one, little Sally had gone, as was her wont, to enjoy herself in her favourite playground. This was a spot close to the house of Edward Young, where the débris of material saved from the *Bounty* had been deposited. It formed a bristling pile of masts, spars, planks, cross-trees, oars, anchors, nails, copper-bolts, sails, and cordage.

No material compound could have been more dangerous to childhood, and nothing conceivable more attractive to Sally. The way in which that pretty little nude infant disported herself on that pile was absolutely tremendous. She sprang over things as if she had been made expressly to fly. She tumbled off things as if she had been created to fall. She insinuated herself among anchor-flukes and chains as if she had been born an eel. She rolled out from among the folds of sails as if she were a live dumpling. She seemed to dance upon upturned nails, and to spike herself on bristling bolts; but she never hurt herself,—at least if

she did she never cried, except in exuberant glee.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

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

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