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NO DEFENSE

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 3.

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CHAPTER XVI

A LETTER

With a deep sigh, the planter raised his head from the table where he was writing, and looked out upon the lands he had made his own. They lay on the Thomas River, a few hours' horseback travelling from Spanish Town, the capital, and they had the advantage of a plateau formation, with mountains in the far distance and ravines everywhere.

It was Christmas Day, and he had done his duty to his slaves and the folk on his plantation. He had given presents, had attended a seven o'clock breakfast of his people, had seen festivities of his negroes, and the feast given by his manager in Creole style to all who came--planting attorneys, buccras, overseers, bookkeepers, the subordinates of the local provost-marshal, small planters, and a few junior officers of the army and navy.

He had turned away with cynicism from the overladen table, with its shoulder of stewed wild boar in the centre; with its chocolate, coffee, tea, spruce-beer, cassava-cakes, pigeon-pies, tongues, round of beef, barbecued hog, fried conchs, black crab pepper-pod, mountain mullet, and acid fruits. It was so unlike what his past had known, so "damnable luxurious!" Now his eyes wandered over the space where were the grandilla, with its blossom like a passion-flower, the black Tahiti plum, with its bright pink tassel-blossom, and the fine mango trees, loaded half with fruit and half with bud. In the distance were the guinea cornfields of brownish hue, the cotton-fields, the long ranges of negro houses like thatched cottages, the penguin hedges, with their beautiful red, blue, and white convolvuluses; the lime, logwood, and breadfruit trees, the avocado-pear, the feathery bamboo, and the jack-fruit tree;

and between the mountains and his own sugar-estates, negro settlements and pens. He heard the flight of parrots chattering, he watched the floating humming-bird, and at last he fixed his eyes upon the cabbage tree down in the garden, and he had an instant desire for it. It was a natural and human taste--the cabbage from the tree-top boiled for a simple yet sumptuous meal.

He liked simplicity. He did not, as so many did in Jamaica, drink claret or punch at breakfast soon after sunrise. In a land where all were bon-vivants, where the lowest tradesmen drank wine after dinner, and rum, brandy and water, or sangaree in the forenoon, a somewhat lightsome view of table-virtues might have been expected of the young unmarried planter. For such was he who, from the windows of his "castle," saw his domain shimmering in the sun of a hot December day.

It was Dyck Calhoun.

With an impatient air he took up the sheets that he had been reading. Christmas Day was on his nerves. The whole town of Kingston, with its twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants, had but one church. If he entered it, even to-day, he would have seen no more than a hundred and fifty to two hundred people; mostly mulattoes--"bronze ornaments"--and peasants in shag trousers, jackets of coarse blue cloth, and no waistcoats, with one or two magistrates, a dozen gentlemen or so, and probably twice that number of ladies. It was not an island given over to piety, or to religious habits.

Not that this troubled Dyck Calhoun; nor, indeed, was he shocked by the fact that nearly every unmarried white man in the island, and many married white men, had black mistresses and families born to the black women, and that the girls had no married future. They would become the temporary wives of white men, to whom they were on the whole faithful and devoted. It did not even vex him that a wretched mulatto might be whipped in the market-square for laying his hands upon a white man, and that if he was a negro-slave he could be shot for the same liberty.

It all belonged to the abnormal conditions of an island where black and white were in relations impossible in the countries from which the white man had come. It did not even startle Dyck that all the planters, and the people generally in the island, from the chief justice and custos rotulorum down to the deckswabber, cultivated amplitude of living.

But let Dyck tell his own story. The papers he held were sheets of a letter he was writing to one from whom he had heard nothing since the night he enlisted in the navy, and that was nearly three years before. This was the letter:

MY DEAR FRIEND:

You will see I address you as you have done me in the two letters I have had from you in the past. You will never read this letter, but I write it as if you would. For you must know I may never hope for personal intercourse with you. I was imprisoned for killing your

father, Erris Boyne, and that separates us like an abyss. It matters little whether I killed him or not; the law says I did, and the law has taken its toll of me. I was in prison for four years, and when freed I enlisted in the king's navy, a quota man, with my servant-friend, Michael Clones. That was the beginning of painful and wonderful days for me. I was one of the mutineers of the Nore, and--

Here followed a description of the days he had spent on the Ariadne and before, and of all that happened down to the time when he was arrested by the admiral in the West Indian Sea. He told how he was sent over to the Ariadne with Captain Ivy to read the admiral's letter to the seamen, and then, by consent of the admiral, to leave again with Michael Clones for Jamaica, where he was set ashore with twenty pounds in his pocket--and not on parole, by the admiral's command. Here the letter shall again take up the story, and be a narrative of Dyck Calhoun's life from that time until this Christmas Day.

What to do was the question. I knew no one in Jamaica--no one at all except the governor, Lord Mallow, and him I had fought with swords in Phoenix Park five years before. I had not known he was governor here. I came to know it when I first saw him riding over the unpaved street into Kingston from Spanish Town with his suite, ornate with his governorship. He was a startling figure in scarlet, with huge epaulets on his lieutenant-general's uniform, as big a pot as ever boiled on any fire-chancellor, head of the government and of the army, master of the legislature, judging like one o'clock in the court of chancery, controller of the affairs of civil life, and maker of a policy of which he alone can judge who knows what interests clash in the West Indies.

English, French, Spanish, and Dutch are all hereabout. All struggle for place above the other in the world of commerce and society, though chiefly it is the English versus the French in these days; and the policy of the governor is the policy of the country. He never knows whether there will be a French naval descent or whether the blacks in his own island will do as the blacks in St. Domingo did--massacre the white people in thousands. Or whether the free blacks, the Maroons, who got their freedom by treaty with Governor Trelawney, when the British commander changed hats with Cudjoe, the Maroon chief, as the sealing of the bargain--whether they will rise again, as they before have risen, and bring terror into the white settlement; and whether, in that case, all negro-slaves will join them, and Jamaica become a land of revolution.

Of what good, then, will be the laws lately passed regulating the control of slaves, securing them rights never given before, even forbidding lashes beyond forty-nine! Of what use, then, the punishment of owners who have ill-used the slaves? The local councils who have power to punish never proceed against white men with rigour; and to preserve a fair balance between the white man up above and the black down below is the responsibility of the fair-minded governor. If, like Mallow, he is not fair-minded, then is

the lash the heavier, and the governor has burdens greater than could easily be borne in lands where the climate is more friendly.

Lord Mallow did not see me when I passed him in the street, but he soon came to know of me from the admiral and Captain Ivy, who told him all my story since I was freed from jail. Then he said I should be confined in a narrow space near to Kingston, and should have no freedom; but the admiral had his way, and I was given freedom of the whole island till word should come from the Admiralty what should be done with me. To the governor's mind it was dangerous allowing me freedom, a man convicted of crime, who had been imprisoned, had been a mutineer, had stolen one of his majesty's ships, and had fled to the Caribbean Sea. He thought I should well be at the bottom of the ocean, where he would soon have put me, I make no doubt, if it had not been for the admiral, and Captain Ivy--you do not know him, I think--who played a good part to me, when men once close friends have deserted me.

Well, we had, Michael and I, but twenty pounds between us; and if there was not plenty of free food in the island, God knows what would have become of us! But there it was, fresh in every field, by every wayside, at every doorway. We could not starve, or die of thirst, or faint for lack of sleep, since every bush was a bed in spite of the garapatos or wood-ticks, the snore of the tree-toad, the hoarse shriek of the macaw, and the shrill gird of the guinea-fowl. Every bed was thus free, and there was land to be got for a song, enough to grow what would suffice for two men's daily wants. But we did not rest long upon the land--I have it still, land which cost me five pounds out of the twenty, and for the rest there was an old but on the little place--five acres it was, and good land too, where you could grow anything at all. Heaven knows what we might have become in that tiny plantation, for I was sick of life, and the mosquitos and flying ants, and the chattering parroquets, the grim gallinazo, and the quatre, or native bed--a wooden frame and canvas; but one day at Kingston I met a man, one Cassandro Biatt, who had an obsession for adventure, and he spoke to me privately. He said he knew me from people's talk, and would I listen to him? What was there to do? He was a clean-cut rogue, if ever there was one, but a rogue of parts, as he proved; and I lent an ear.

Now, what think you was his story? Well, but this--that off the coast of Haiti, there was a ship which had been sunk with every man on board, and with the ship was treasure without counting--jewels belonging once to a Spaniard of high place, who was taking them to Paris. His box had been kept in the captain's cabin, and it could be found, no doubt, and brought to the surface. Even if that were not possible, there was plenty of gold on the ship, and every piece of it was good money. There had been searching for the ship, but none had found it; but he, Cassandro Biatt, had sure knowledge, got from an obi-man, of the place where it lay. It would not be an expensive business, but, cheap as it was, he had no means of raising cash for the purpose; while I could, no doubt, raise the needed money if I set about it. That was how he put it to me. Would I do

it? It was not with me a case of "no shots left in the locker, no copper to tinkle on a tombstone." I was not down to my last macaroni, or quarter-dollar; but I drank some sangaree and set about to do it. I got my courage from a look towards Rodney's statue in its temple--Rodney did a great work for Jamaica against Admiral de Grasse.

Why should I tell Biatt the truth about myself? He knew it. Cassandro was an accomplished liar, and a man of merit of his kind. This obi-man's story I have never believed; yet how Biatt came to know where that treasure-ship was I do not know now.

Yes, out we went through the harbour of Kingston, beyond the splendid defences of Port Royal and the men-of-war there, past the Palisadoes and Rock Fort, and away to the place of treasure-trove. We found it--that lost galleon; and we found the treasure-box of the captain's cabin. We found gold too; but the treasure-box was the chief thing; and we made it ours after many a hard day. Three months it was from the day Biatt first spoke to me to the day when, with an expert diver, we brought the box to the surface and opened it.

How I induced one of the big men of Jamaica to be banker and skipper for us need not be told; but he is one of whom men have dark sayings--chiefly, I take it, because he does bold, incomprehensible things. That business paid him well, for when the rent of the ship was met, and the few men on it paid--slaves they were chiefly--he pocketed ten thousand pounds, while Biatt and I each pouched forty thousand, and Michael two thousand. Aye, to be sure, Michael was in it! He is in all I do, and is as good as men of ten times his birth and history. Michael will be a rich man one day. In two years his two thousand have grown to four, and he misses no chance.

But those days when Biatt and I went treasure-ship hunting were not without their trials. If we had failed, then no more could this land have been home or resting-place for us. We should only have been sojourners with no name, in debt, in disgrace, a pair of braggart adventurers, who had worked a master-man of the island for a ship, and money and men, and had lost all except the ship! Though to be sure, the money was not a big thing--a, few hundred pounds; but the ship was no flea-bite. It was a biggish thing, for it could be rented to carry sugar--it was, in truth, a sugar-ship of four hundred tons--but it never carried so big a cargo of sugar as it did on the day when that treasure-box was brought to the surface of the sea.

I'm bound to say this--one of the straightest men I ever met, liar withal, was Cassandro Biatt. He took his jewels and vanished up the seas in a flourish. He would not even have another try at the gold in the bowels of the ship.

"I've got plenty to fill my paunch, and I'll go while I've enough. It's the men not going in time that get left in the end"--that's

what he said.

And he was right; for other men went after the gold and got some of it, and were caught by French and South American pirates and lost all they had gained. Still another group went and brought away ten thousand pounds, and lost it in fighting with Spanish buccaneers. So Biatt was right, and went away content, while I stayed here--because I must--and bought the land and house where I have my great sugar-plantation. It is an enterprise of volume, and all would be well if I were normal in mind and body; but I am not. I have a past that stinks to heaven, as Shakespeare says, and I am an outlaw of the one land which has all my soul and name and heritage. Yes, that is what they have done to me--made a convict, an outlaw of me. I may live--but not in the British Isles; and if any man kills me, he is not liable to the law.

Men do not treat me badly here, for I have property and money, and this is a land where these two things mean more than anywhere else, even more than in a republic like that where you live. Here men live according to the law of the knife, fork, and bottle, yet nowhere in the world is there deeper national morality or wider faith or endurance. It is a land where the sea is master, where naval might is the chief factor, and weighs down all else.

Here the navies of the great powers meet and settle their disputes, and every being in the island knows that life is only worth what a hundred-ton brig-of-war permits. I have seen here in Jamaica the off-scourings of the French and Spanish fleets on parole; have seen them entering King's House like loyal citizens; have even known of French prisoners being used as guards at the entrance of King's House, and I have informed the chief justice of dismal facts which ought to have moved him. But what can you expect of a chief justice who need not be a lawyer, as this one is not, and has other means of earning income which, though not disloyal, are lowering to the status of a chief justice? And not the chief justice alone. I have seen French officers entertained at Government House who were guilty of shocking inhumanities and cruelties. The governor, Lord Mallow, is much to blame. On him lies the responsibility; to him must go the discredit. For myself, I feel his enmity on every hand. I suffer from his suggestions; I am the victim of his dark moods.

If I want a concession from a local council, his hand is at work against me; if I see him in the street, I get a courtesy tossed, as you would toss a bone to a dog. If I appear at the king's ball, which is open to all on the island who are respectable, I am treated with such disdain by the viceroy of the king that all the island is agog. I went one day to the king's ball the same as the rest of the world, and I went purposely in dress contrary to the regulations. Here was the announcement of the affair in the Royal Gazette, which was reproduced in the Chronicle, the one important newspaper in the island:

KING'S HOUSE,

October 27th, 1797.

KING'S BALL.

There will be a Ball given by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on Tuesday evening, the 6th day of December next, in honour of

HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY.

To prevent confusion, Ladies and Gentlemen are requested to order their carriages to come by the Old Court House, and go off by the Long Room.

N.B.--No gentlemen can possibly be admitted in boots, or otherwise improperly dressed.

Well, in a spirit of mutiny--in which I am, in a sense, an expert-- I went in boots and otherwise "improperly dressed," for I wore my hair in a queue, like a peasant. What is more, I danced with a negress in the great quadrille, and thereby offended the governor and his lady aunt, who presides at his palace. It matters naught to me. On my own estate it was popular enough, and that meant more to me than this goodwill of Lord Mallow.

He does not spare me in his recitals to his friends, who carry his speech abroad. His rancour against me is the greater, I know, because of the wealth I got in the treasure-ship, to prevent which he tried to prohibit my leaving the island, through the withholding of a leave-ticket to me. His argument to the local authorities was that I had no rights, that I am a murderer and a mutineer, and confined to the island, though not on parole. He almost succeeded; but the man to whom I went, the big rich man intervened, successfully--how I know not--and I was let go with my permit-ticket.

What big things hang on small issues! If my Lord Mallow had prevented me leaving the island, I shouldn't now own a great plantation and three hundred negroes. I shouldn't be able to pay my creditors in good gold Portuguese half-johannes and Spanish doubloons, and be free of Spanish silver, and give no heed to the bitt, which, as you perhaps know, is equal to fivepence in British money, such as you and I used to spend when you were Queen of Ireland and I was your slave.

Then I worshipped you as few women have been worshipped in all the days of the world--oh, cursed spite of life and time that I should have been jailed for killing your bad father! Aye, he was a bad man, and he is better in his grave than out of it, but it puts a gulf between you and me which nothing will ever bridge--unless it should some day be known I did not kill him, and then, no doubt, it will be too late.

On my soul, I don't believe I put my sword into him; but if I did, he well deserved it, for he was worse than faithless to your mother, he was faithless to his country--he was a traitor! I did not tell that story of his treachery in court--I did not tell it because of you. You did not deserve such infamy, and the truth came not out at the trial. I, in my view, dared not, lest it might injure you, and you had suffered enough--nay, more than enough--through him.

I wonder how you are, and if you have changed--I mean in appearance. I am sure you are not married; I should have felt it in my bones, if you were. No, no, my sweet lass, you are not married. But think--it is more than seven long years since we met on the hills above Playmore, and you put your hand in mine and said we should be friends for all time. It is near three years since a letter came to me from you, and in the time I have made progress.

I did not go to the United States, as you asked me to do. Is it not plain I could not? My only course was to avoid you. You see, your mother knows the truth--knows that I was jailed for killing your father and her divorced husband. Therefore, the only way to do was as I did. I could not go where you were. There should be hid from you the fact that Erris Boyne was a traitor. This is your right, in my mind. Looking back, I feel sure I could have escaped jail if I had told what I knew of Erris Boyne; and perhaps it would have been better, for I should, no doubt, have been acquitted. Yet I could not have gone to you, for I am not sure I did not kill him.

So it is best as it is. We are as we are, and nothing can make all different for us. I am a dissolute planter of Jamaica who has snatched from destiny a living and some riches. I have a bad name in the world. Yet by saving the king's navy from defeat out here I did a good turn for my country and the empire.

So much to the good. It brought me freedom from the rope and pardon for my chief offence. Then, in company with a rogue, I got wealth from the depths of the sea, and here I am in the bottom of my luxury, drunken and obscene--yes, obscene, for I permit my overseers and my manager to keep black women and have children by them. That I do not do so myself is no virtue on my part, but the virtue of a girl whom I knew in Connemara. I fill myself with drink. I have a bottle of madeira or port every night, and pints of beer or claret. I am a creature of low habits, a man sodden with self-indulgence. And when I am in drink, no slaver can be more cruel and ruthless.

Yet I am moderate in eating. The meals that people devour here almost revolt me. They eat like cormorants and drink like dry ground; but at my table I am careful, save with the bottle. This is a land of wonderful fruits, and I eat in quantities pineapple, tamarind, papaw, guava, sweet-sop, star-apple, granadilla, hog-plum, Spanish-gooseberry, and pindal-nut. These are native, but there are also the orange, lemon, lime, shaddock, melon, fig, pomegranate, cinnamon, and mango, brought chiefly from the Spanish lands of South

America. The fruit-market here is good, Heaven knows, and I have my run of it. Perhaps that is why my drink does not fatten me greatly. Yes, I am thin--thinner even than when you saw me last. How wonderful a day it was! You remember it, I'm sure.

We stood on the high hills, you and I, looking to the west. It was a true Irish day. A little in front of us, in the sky, were great clusters of clouds, and beyond them, as far as eye could see, were hills so delicately green, so spotted with settlements, so misty and full of glamour, and so cheerful with the western light. And the storm broke--do you remember it? It broke, but not on us. It fell on the middle of the prospect before us, and we saw beyond it the bright area of sunny country where men work and prophesy and slave, and pray to the ancient gods and acclaim the saints, and die and fructify the mould; where such as Christopher Dogan live, and men a thousand times lower than he. Christopher came to the jail the day I was released--with Michael Clones he came. He read me my bill of life's health--what was to become of me--the black and the white of it, the good and the bad, the fair and the foul. Even the good fortune of the treasure from the sea he foresaw, and much else that has not come to me, and, as I think, will never come; for it is too full a cup for me so little worthy of it.

It seems strange to me that I am as near to the United States here in Jamaica, or almost as near, as one in London is to one in Dublin; and yet one might as well be ten thousand leagues distant for all it means to her one loves in the United States. Yes, dear Sheila, I love you, and I would tear out the heart of the world for you. I bathe my whole being in your beauty and your charm. I hunger for you--to stand beside you, to listen to your voice, to dip my prison fingers into the pure cauldron of your soul and feel my own soul expand. I wonder why it is that to-day I feel more than I ever felt before the rare splendour of your person.

I have always admired you and loved you, always heard you calling me, as if from some sacred corner of a perfect world. Is it that yesterday's dissipation--yes, I was drunk yesternight, drunk in a new way. I was drunk with the thought of you, the longing for you. I picked a big handful of roses, and in my mind gave them into your hands. And I thought you smiled and said:

"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter Paradise." So I followed you to your home there in the Virginian country. It was a dream, all except the roses, and those I laid in front of the box where I keep your letters and a sketch I made of you when we were young and glad--when I was young and glad. For I am an old man, Sheila, in all that makes men old. My step is quick still, my eye is sharp, and my brain beats fast, but my heart is ancient. I am an ancient of days, without hope or pleasure, save what pleasure comes in thinking of one whom I worship, yet must ever worship from afar.

I wonder why I seem to feel you very near to-day! Perhaps it's because 'tis Christmas Day. I am not a religious man but Christmas

is a day of memories.

Is it because of the past in Ireland? Am I only--God, am I only to be what I am for the rest of my days, a planter denied the pleasure of home by his own acts! Am I only a helpless fragment of a world of lost things?

I have no friends--but yes, I have. I have Michael Clones and Captain Ivy, though he's far away--aye, he's a friend of friends, is Captain Ivy. These naval folk have had so much of the world, have got the bearings of so many seas, that they lose all littleness, and form their own minds. They are not like the people who knew me in Ireland--the governor here is one of them--and who believe the worst of me. The governor--faugh, he was made for bigger and better things! He is one of the best swordsmen in the world, and he is out against me here as if I was a man of importance, and not a commonplace planter on an obscure river. I have no social home life, and yet I live in what is called a castle. A Jamaica castle has none of the marks of antiquity, chivalry, and distinction which castles that you and I know in the old land possess.

What is my castle like? Well, it is a squarish building, of bungalow type, set on a hill. It has stories and an attic, with a jutting dormer-window in the front of the roof; and above the lowest story there is a great verandah, on which the livingrooms and bedrooms open. It is commodious, and yet from a broad standpoint it is without style or distinction. It has none of those Corinthian pillars which your homesteads in America have. Yet there is in it a simple elegance. It has no carpets, but a shining mahogany floor, for there are few carpets in this land of heat. It is a place where music and mirth and family voices would be fitting; but there are no family voices here, save such as speak with a negro lisp and oracularly.

I can hear music at this moment, and inside my castle. It comes from the irrepressible throats of my cook and my housemaid, who have more joy in the language of the plantation than you could have in the songs of St. Angelus. The only person in this castle out of spirits is its owner.

My castle is embowered in a loose grove of palms and acacias, pimento shrubs, splendid star-apples, and bully-trees, with wild lemon, mahogany, dogwood, Jerusalem-thorn, and the waving plumes of bamboo canes. There is nothing British in it--nothing at all. It stands on brick pillars, is reached by a stair of marble slabs, and has a great piazza on the front. You enter a fine, big hall, dark--you will understand that, though it is not so hot in Virginia, for the darkness makes for coolness. From the hall the bedrooms open all round. We are not so barbaric here as you might think, for my dining-room, which lies beyond the hall, with jalousies or movable blinds, exposed to all the winds, is comfortable, even ornate. There you shall see waxlights on the table, and finger-glasses with green leaves, and fine linen and napkins, and plenty of silver--even

silver wine-coolers, and beakers of fame and beauty, and flowers, flowers everywhere, and fruit of exquisite charm. I have to live in outward seeming as do my neighbours, even to keeping a black footman, gorgeously dressed, with bare legs.

Here at my window grows a wild aloe, and it is in flower. Once only in fifty years does this aloe flower, and I pick its sweet verdure now and offer it to you. There it lies, beside this letter that I am writing. It is typical of myself, for only once has my heart flowered, and it will be only once in fifty years. The perfume of the flower is like an everlasting bud from the last tree of Time. See, my Sheila, your drunken, reckless lover pulls this sweet offering from his garden and offers it to you. He has no virtues; and yet he would have been a thousand times worse, if you had not come into his life. He had in him the seeds of trouble, the sproutings of shame, for even in the first days of his love there in Dublin he would not restrain himself. He drank, he played cards, he fought and went with bad company--not women, never that; but he kept the company of those through whom he came at last to punishment for manslaughter.

Yet, without you, who can tell what he might have been? He might have fallen so low that not the wealth of ten thousand treasure-boxes could give him even the appearance of honesty. And now he offers you what you cannot accept--can never accept--a love as deep as the life from which he came; a love that would throttle the world for you, that would force the doors of hell to bring you what you want.

What do you want? I know not. Perhaps you have inherited the vast property to which you were the heir. If you have, what can you want that you have not means to procure? Ah, I have learned one thing, my friend 'one can get nearly everything with money. It is the hidden machinery which makes the world of success go round. With brains, you say? Yes, money and brains, but without the money brains seldom win alone. Do not I know? When I was in prison, with estate vanished and home gone and my father in his grave, who was concerned about me?

Only the humblest of all God's Irish people; but with them I have somehow managed to win back lost ground. I am a stronger man than I was in all that men count of value in the world. I have an estate where I work like any youth who has everything before him. I have nothing before me, yet I shall go on working to the end. Why? Because I have some faculties which are more than bread and butter, and I must give them opportunity.

Yet I am not always sane. Sometimes I feel I could march out and sweep into the sea one of the towns that dot the coast of this island. I have the bloody thirst, as said the great Spanish conquistador. I would like--yes, sometimes I would like to sweep to a watery grave one of the towns that are a glory to this island, as Savanna la Mar was swept to oblivion in the year 1780 by a

hurricane. You can still see the ruins of the town at the bottom of the sea--I have sailed over it in what is now the harbour, and there beneath, on the deep sands, lost to time and trouble, is the slain and tortured town of Savanna la Mar. Was the Master of the World angry that day when, with a besom of wind and a tidal wave, He swept the place into the sea? Or was it some devil's work while the Lord of All slept? As the Spanish say, Quien sabe?

Then there was that other enormous incident which made a man to be swallowed by an earthquake, then belched out again into the sea and picked up and restored to life again, and to live for many years. Indeed, yes, it is so. His tombstone may be seen even at this day at Green Bay, Kingston. His name was Lewis Galdy, and he is held in high repute in this land.

I feel sometimes as Beelzebub may feel, and I long to do what Beelzebub might do as part of his mission. Sometimes a madness of revolt comes over me, and I long to ravage all the places I see, all the people I know--or nearly all. Why I do not have negroes thrashed and mutilated, as some do, I know not. Over against the southern shore in the parish of St. Elizabeth is an estate called Salem, owned, it is said, by an American, where the manager does such things. I am told that savageries are found there. There are too many absentee owners of land in this island, and the wrongs done by agents who have no personal honour at stake are all too plentiful. If I could, I would have no slavery, would set all the blacks free, making full compensation to the owners, and less to the absentee owners.

I look out on a world of summer beauty and of heat. I see the sheep in hundreds on the far hills of pasturage--sheep with short hair, small and sweet as any that ever came from the South Downs. I see the natives in their Madras handkerchiefs. I see upon the road some planter in his ketureen--a sort of sedan chair; I see a negro funeral, with its strange ceremony and its gumbies of African drums. I see yam-fed planters, on their horses, making for the burning, sandy streets of the capital. I see the Scots grass growing five and six feet high, food unsurpassed for horses--all the foliage too--beautiful tropical trees and shrubs, and here and there a huge breeding-farm. Yet I know that out beyond my sight there is the region known as Trelawney, and Trelawney Town, the headquarters of the Maroons, the free negroes--they who fled after the Spanish had been conquered and the British came, and who were later freed and secured by the Trelawney Treaty. I know that now they are ready to rise, that they are working among the slaves; and if they rise the danger is great to the white population of the island, who are outnumbered ten to one.

The governor has been warned, but he gives no heed, or treats it all lightly, pointing out how few the Maroons are. He forgets that a few determined men can demoralize a whole state, can fight and murder and fly to dark coverts in the tropical woods, where they cannot be tracked down and destroyed; and, if they have made

supporters of the slaves, what consequences may not follow!

What do the Maroons look like? They are ferocious and isolated, they are proud and overbearing, they are horribly cruel, but they are potent, and are difficult to reach. They are not small and meagre, but are big, brawny fellows, clothed in wide duck trousers and shirts, and they are well-armed--cutlass, powder-horn, haversack, sling, shot-gun, and pouch for ball. They dress as the country requires, and they are strong fighters against our soldiers who are burdened with heavy muskets, and who defy the climate, with their stuffed coats, their weighty caps, and their tight cross-belts. The Maroons are not to be despised. They have brains, the insolence of freedom among natives who are not free, and vast cruelty. They can be mastered and kept in subjection, can be made allies, if properly handled; but Lord Mallow goes the wrong way about it all. He permits things that inflame the Maroons.

One thing is clear to me--only by hounds can these people be defeated. So sure am I upon this point, that I have sent to Cuba for sixty hounds, with which, when the trouble comes--and it is not far off--we shall be able to hunt the Maroons with the only weapon they really fear--the dog's sharp tooth. It may be the governor may intervene on the arrival of the dogs; but I have made friends with the provost-marshal-general and some members of the Jamaica legislature; also I have a friend in the deputy of the provost-marshal-general in my parish of Clarendon here, and I will make a good bet that the dogs will be let come into the island, governor or no governor.

When one sets oneself against the Crown one must be sure of one's ground, and fear no foe, however great and high. Well, I have won so far, and I shall win in the end. Mallow should have some respect for one that beat him at Phoenix Park with the sword; that beat him when he would have me imprisoned here; that beat him in the matter of the ship for Haiti, and that will beat him on every hazard he sets, unless he stoops to underhand acts, which he will not do. That much must be said for him. He plays his part in no small way, and he is more a bigot and a fanatic loyalist than a rogue. Suppose--but no, I will not suppose. I will lay my plans, I will keep faith with people here who trust me, and who know that if I am stern I am also just, and I will play according to the rules made by better men than myself.

But what is this I see? Michael Clones--in his white jean waistcoat, white neckcloth and trousers, and blue coat--is coming up the drive in hot haste, bearing a letter. He rides too hard. He has never carried himself easily in this climate. He treats it as if it was Ireland. He will not protect himself, and, if penalty followed folly, should now be in his grave. I like you, Michael. You are a boon, but--

CHAPTER XVII

STRANGERS ARRIVE

Dyck Calhoun's letter was never ended. It was only a relic of the years spent in Jamaica, only a sign of his well-being, though it gave no real picture of himself. He did not know how like a tyrant he had become in some small ways, while in the large things he remained generous, urbane, and resourceful. He was in appearance thin, dark-favoured, buoyant in manner, and stern of face, with splendid eyes. Had he dwelt on Olympus, he might have been summoned to judge and chastise the sons of men.

When Michael Clones came to the doorway, Dyck laid down his quill-pen and eyed the flushed servant in disapproval.

"What is it, Michael? Wherefore this starkness? Is some one come from heaven?"

"Not precisely from heaven, y'r honour, but--"

"But--yes, Michael! Have done with but-ing, and come to the real matter."

"Well, sir, they've come from Virginia."

Dyck Calhoun slowly got to his feet, his face paling, his body stiffening. From Virginia! Who should be come from Virginia, save she to whom he had just been writing?

"Who has come from Virginia?" He knew, but he wanted it said.

"Sure, you knew a vessel came from America last night. Well, in her was one that was called the Queen of Ireland long ago."

"Queen of Ireland--well, what then?" Dyck's voice was tuneless, his manner rigid, his eyes burning. "Well, she--Miss Sheila Llyn and her mother are going to the Salem Plantation, down by the Essex Valley Mountain. It is her plantation now. It belonged to her uncle, Bryan Llyn. He got it in payment of a debt. He's dead now, and all his lands and wealth have come to her. Her mother, Mrs. Llyn, is with her, and they start to-morrow or the next day for Salem. There'll be different doings at Salem henceforward, y'r honour. She's not the woman to see slaves treated as the manager at Salem treated 'em."

Dyck Calhoun made an impatient gesture at this last remark.

"Yes, yes, Michael. Where are they now?"

"They're at Charlotte Bedford's lodgings in Spanish Town. The governor waited on them this morning. The governor sent them flowers and--"

"Flowers--Lord Mallow sent them flowers! Hell's fiend, man, suppose he did?"

"There are better flowers here than in any Spanish Town."

"Well, take them, Michael; but if you do, come here again no more while you live, for I'll have none of you. Do you think I'm entering the lists against the king's governor?"

"You've done it before, sir, and there's no harm in doing it again. One good turn deserves another. I've also to tell you, sir, that Lord Mallow has asked them to stay at King's House."

"Lord Mallow has asked Americans to stay at King's House!"

"But they're Irish, and he knew them in Ireland, y'r honour."

"Well, he knew me in Ireland, and I'm proscribed!"

"Ah, that's different, as you know. There's no war on now, and they're only good American citizens who own land in this dominion of the king; so why shouldn't he give them courtesy?"

"From whom do you get your information?" asked Dyck Calhoun with an air of suspicion.

"From Darius Boland, y'r honour," answered Michael, with a smile. "Who is Darius Boland, you're askin' in y'r mind? Well, he's the new manager come from the Llyn plantations in Virginia; and right good stuff he is, with a tongue that's as dry as cut-wheat in August. And there's humour in him, plenty-aye, plenty. When did I see him, and how? Well, I saw him this mornin', on the quay at Kingston. He was orderin' the porters about with an air--oh, bedad, an air! I saw the name upon the parcels--Miss Sheila Llyn, of Moira, Virginia, and so I spoke to him. The rest was aisy. He looked me up and down in a flash, like a searchlight playin' on an enemy ship, and then he smiled. 'Well,' said he, 'who might you be? For there's queer folks in Jamaica, I'm told.' So I said I was Michael Clones, and at that he doffed his hat and held out a hand. 'Well, here's luck,' said he. 'Luck at the very start! I've heard of you from my mistress. You're servant to Mr. Dyck Calhoun--ain't that it?' And I nodded, and he smiled again--a smile that'd cost money annywhere else than in Jamaica. He smiled again, and give a slow hitch to his breeches as though they was fallin' down. Why, sir, he's the longest bit of man you ever saw, with a pointed beard, and a nose that's as long as a midshipman's tongue-dry, lean, and elastic. He's quick and slow all at once. His small eyes twinkle like stars beatin' up against bad weather, and his skin's the colour of Scots grass in the dead of summer-yaller, he'd call it if he called it anything, and yaller was what he called the look of the sky above the hills. Queer way of talk he has, that man, as queer as--"

"I understand, Michael. But what else? How did you come to talk about the affairs of Mrs. and Miss Llyn? He didn't just spit it out, did he?"

"Sure, not so quick and free as spittin', y'r honour; but when he'd sorted me out, as it were, he said Miss Llyn had come out here to take charge of Salem; her own estate in Virginia bein' in such good runnin' order, and her mind bein' active. Word had come of the trouble with the manager here, and one of the provost-marshal's deputies had written accounts of the flogging and ill-treatment of slaves, and that's why she come--to put things right at Salem!"

"To put things wrong in Jamaica, Michael, that's why she's come. To loose the ball of confusion and free the flood of tragedy--that's why she's come! Man, Michael, you know her history--who she was and what happened to her father. Well, do you think there's no tragedy in her coming here? I killed her father, they say, Michael. I was punished for it. I came here to be free of all those things--lifted out and away from them all. I longed to forget the past, which is only shame and torture; and here it is all spread out at my door again like a mat, which I must see as I go in and out. Essex Valley--why, it's less than a day's ride from here, far less than a day's ride! It can be ridden in four or five hours at a trot. Michael, it's all a damnable business. And here she is in Jamaica with her Darius Boland! There was no talk on Boland's part of their coming here, was there Michael?"

"None at all, sir, but there was that in the man's eye, and that in his tone, which made me sure he thought Miss Llyn and you would meet."

"That would be strange, wouldn't it, in this immense continent!" Dyck remarked cynically.

"She knew I was here before she came?"

"Aye, she knew. She had seen your name in the papers--English and Jamaican. She knew you had regained your life and place, and was a man of mark here."

"A marked man, you mean, Michael--a man whom the king has had to pardon of a crime because of an act done that served the State. I am forbidden to return to the British Isles or to the land of my birth, forbidden free traffic as a citizen, hammered out of recognition by the strokes of enmity. A man of mark, indeed! Aye, with the broad arrow on me, with the shame of prison and mutiny on my name!"

"But if she don't believe?"

"If she don't believe! Well, she must be told the truth at last. I wonder her mother let her come here. Her mother knew part of the truth. She hid it all from the girl--and now they are here! I must see it through, but it's a wretched fate, Michael."

"Perhaps her mother didn't know you were here, sir."

Dyck laughed grimly. "Michael, you've a lawyer's mind. Perhaps you're right. The girl may have hid from her mother all newspapers referring to me. That may well be; but it's not the way that will bring

understanding."

"I think it's the truth, sir, for Darius Boland spoke naught of the mother--indeed, he said only what would make me think the girl came with her own ends in view. Faith, I'm sure the mother did not know."

"She will know now. Your Darius Boland will tell her."

"By St. Peter, it doesn't matter who tells her, sir. The business must be faced."

"Michael, order my horse, and I will go to Spanish Town. This matter must be brought to a head. The truth must be told. Order my horse!"

"It is the very heat of the day, sir."

"Then at five o'clock, after dinner, have my horse here."

"Am I to ride with you, sir?"

Dyck nodded. "Yes, Michael. There's only one thing to do--face all the facts with all the evidence, and you are fact and evidence too. You know more of the truth than any one else."

Several hours later, when the sun was abating its force a little, after travelling the burning roads through yams and cocoa, grenadillas and all kinds of herbs and roots and vagrant trees, Dyck Calhoun and Michael Clones came into Spanish Town. Dyck rode the unpaved streets on his horse with its high demipicque Spanish saddle, with its silver stirrups and heavy bit, and made his way towards Charlotte Bedford's lodgings.

Dyck looked round upon the town with new eyes. He saw it like one for the first time visiting it. He saw the people passing through the wide verandahs of the houses, like a vast colonnade, down the street, to be happily sheltered from the fierce sun. As he had come down from the hills he thought he had never seen the houses look more beautiful in their gardens of wild tamarinds, kennips, cocoa-nuts, pimentos, and palms, backed by negro huts. He had seen all sorts of people at the draw-wells of the houses--British, Spanish, French, South American, Creoles, and here and there a Maroon, and the everlasting negro who sang as he worked:

"Come along o' me, my buccra brave,
You see de shild de Lord he gave:
You drink de sangaree,
I make de frichassee--"

Here a face peeped out from the glazed sash of the jalousies of the balconies above--a face that could never be said to be white, though it had only a tinge of black in its coaxing beauty. There a workman with long hair and shag trousers painted the prevailing two-storied house the prevailing colour, white and green. There was a young naval officer in full dress, gold-buckled shoes, white trousers, short jacket with gold swab on shoulders, dress-sword and smart gait making for supper at King's

House.

A long-legged "son of a gun" of a Yankee had a "clapper-claw," or handshake, with a planting attorney in a kind of four-posted gig, canopied in leather and curtained clumsily. The Yankee laughed at the heavy straight shafts and the mule that drew the volante, as the gig was called, and the vehicle creaked and cried as it rolled along over the road, which was like a dry river-bed. There a French officer in Hessian boots, white trousers, blue uniform, and much-embroidered scarlet cuffs watched with amusement a slave carrying a goglet, or earthen jar, upon his head like an Egyptian, untouched by the hand, so adding dignity to carriage. He was holding a "round-aboutation" with an old hag who was telling his fortune.

As they passed King's House, they saw troops of the viceroy's guests issuing from the palace--officers of the king's navy and army, officers and men of the Jamaica militia, pale-faced, big-eyed men of the Creole class, mulattoes, quadroons and octoroons, Samboes with their wives in loose skirts, white stockings, and pinnacle hats. There also passed, in the streets, black servants with tin cases on their heads, or carrying parcels in their arms, and here and there processions of servants, each with something that belonged to their mistresses, who would presently be attending the king's ball.

Snatches of song were heard, and voices of men who had had a full meal and had "taken observations"--as looking through the bottom of a glass of liquor was called by people with naval spirit--were mixed in careless carousal.

All this jarred on Dyck Calhoun and gave revolt to his senses. Yet he was only half-conscious of the great sensuousness of the scene as he passed through it. Now and then some one doffed a hat to him, and very occasionally some half-drunken citizen tossed at him a remark meant to wound; but he took no notice, and let things pleasant and provocative pass down the long ranges of indifference.

All was brought to focus at last, however, by their arrival at Charlotte Bedford's lodgings, which, like most houses in the town, had a lookout or belfry fitted with green blinds and a telescope, and had a green-painted wooden railing round it.

At the very entrance, inside the gate, in the garden, they saw Sheila Llyn, her mother, and Darius Boland, who seemed to be enduring from the mother some sharp reprimand, to the amusement of the daughter. As the gate closed behind Dyck and Michael, the three from Virginia turned round and faced them. As Dyck came forward, Sheila flushed and trembled. She was no longer a young girl, but her slim straightness and the soft lines of her figure, gave her a dignity and charm which made her young womanhood distinguished--for she was now twenty-five, and had a carriage of which a princess might have been proud. Yet it was plain that the entrance of Dyck at this moment was disturbing. It was not what she had foreseen.

She showed no hesitation, however, but came forward to meet her visitor, while Michael fell back, as also did Darius Boland. Both these seemed to realize that the less they saw and heard the better; and they presently got together in another part of the garden, as Dyck Calhoun came near enough almost to touch Sheila.

Surely, he thought, she was supreme in appearance and design. She was like some rare flower of the field, alert, gentle, strong, intrepid, with buoyant face, brown hair, blue eyes and cream-like skin. She was touched by a rose on each cheek and made womanly by firm and yet generous breasts, tenderly imprisoned by the white chiffon of her blouse in which was one bright sprig of the buds of a cherry-tree—a touch of modest luxuriance on a person sparsely ornamented. It was not tropical, this picture of Sheila Llyn; it was a flick of northern life in a summer sky. It was at once cheerful and apart. It had no August in it; no oil and wine. It was the little twig that grew by a running spring. It was fresh, dominant and serene. It was Connemara on the Amazon! It was Sheila herself, whom time had enriched with far more than years and experience. It was a personality which would anywhere have taken place and held it. It was undefeatable, persistent and permanent; it was the spirit of Ireland loose in a world that was as far apart from Ireland as she was from her dead, dishonoured father.

And Dyck? At first she felt she must fly to him—yes, in spite of the fact that he had suffered prison for manslaughter. But a nearer look at him stopped the impulse at its birth. Here was the Dyck Calhoun she had known in days gone by, but not the Dyck she had looked to see; for this man was like one who had come from a hanging, who had seen his dearest swinging at the end of a rope. His face was set in coldness; his hair was streaked with grey; his forehead had a line in the middle; his manner was rigid, almost frigid, indeed. Only in his eyes was there that which denied all that his face and manner said—a hungry, absorbing, hopeless look, the look of one who searches for a friend in the denying desert.

Somehow, when he bowed low to her, and looked her in the eyes as no one in all her life had ever done, she had an almost agonized understanding of what a man feels who has been imprisoned—that is, never the same again. He was an ex-convict, and yet she did not feel repelled by him. She did not believe he had killed Erris Boyne. As for the later crime of mutiny, that did not concern her much. She was Irish; but, more than that, she was in sympathy with the mutineers. She understood why Dyck Calhoun, enlisting as a common sailor, should take up their cause and run risk to advance it. That he had advanced it was known to all the world; that he had paid the price of his mutiny by saving the king's navy with a stolen ship had brought him pardon for his theft of a ship and mutiny; and that he had won wealth was but another proof of the man's power.

"You would not come to America, so I came here, and—" She paused, her voice trembling slightly. "There is much to do at Salem," he added calmly, and yet with his heart beating, as it had not beaten since the day he had first met her at Playmore.

"You would not take the money I sent to Dublin for you—the gift of a

believing friend, and you would not come to America!"

"I shall have to tell you why one day," he answered slowly, "but I'll pay my respects to your mother now." So saying he went forward and bowed low to Mrs. Llyn. Unlike her daughter, Mrs. Llyn did not offer her hand. She was pale, distraught, troubled--and vexed. She, however, murmured his name and bowed. "You did not expect to see me here in Jamaica," he said boldly.

"Frankly, I did not, Mr. Calhoun," she said.

"You resent my coming here to see you? You think it bold, at least."

She looked at him closely and firmly. "You know why I cannot welcome you."

"Yet I have paid the account demanded by the law. And you had no regard for him. You divorced him."

Sheila had drawn near, and Dyck made a gesture in her direction. "She does not know," he said, "and she should not hear what we say now?"

Mrs. Llyn nodded, and in a low tone told Sheila that she wished to be alone with Dyck for a little while. In Dyck's eyes, as he watched Sheila go, was a thing deeper than he had ever known or shown before. In her white gown, and with her light step, Sheila seemed to float away--a picture graceful, stately, buoyant, "keen and small." As she was about to pass beyond a clump of pimento bushes, she turned her head towards the two, and there was that in her eyes which few ever see and seeing are afterwards the same. It was a look of inquiry, or revelation, of emotion which went to Dyck's heart.

"No, she does not know the truth," Mrs. Llyn said. "But it has been hard hiding it from her. One never knew whether some chance remark, some allusion in the papers, would tell her you had killed her father."

"Did I kill her father?" asked Dyck helplessly. "Did I? I was found guilty of it, but on my honour, Mrs. Llyn, I do not know, and I do not think I did. I have no memory of it. We quarrelled. I drew my sword on him, then he made an explanation and I madly, stupidly drank drugged wine in reconciliation with him, and then I remember nothing more--nothing at all."

"What was the cause of your quarrel?"

Dyck looked at her long before answering. "I hid that from my father even, and hid it from the world--did not even mention it in court at the trial. If I had, perhaps I should not have gone to jail. If I had, perhaps I should not be here in Jamaica. If I had--" He paused, a flood of reflection drowning his face, making his eyes shine with black sorrow.

"Well, if you had! . . . Why did you not? Wasn't it your duty to save yourself and save your friends, if you could? Wasn't that your

plain duty?"

"Yes, and that was why I did not tell what the quarrel was. If I had, even had I killed Erris Boyne, the jury would not have convicted me. Of that I am sure. It was a loyalist jury."

"Then why did you not?"

"Isn't it strange that now after all these years, when I have settled the account with judge and jury, with state and law--that now I feel I must tell you the truth. Madam, your ex-husband, Erris Boyne, was a traitor. He was an officer in the French army, and he offered to make me an officer also and pay me well in French Government money, if I would break my allegiance and serve the French cause--Ah, don't start! He knew I was on my last legs financially. He knew I had acquaintance with young rebel leaders like Emmet, and he felt I could be won. So he made his proposal. Because of your daughter I held my peace, for she could bear it less than you. I did not tell the cause of the quarrel. If I had, there would have been for her the double shame. That was why I held my peace--a fool, but so it was!"

The woman seemed almost robbed of understanding. His story overwhelmed her. Yet what the man had done was so quixotic, so Celtic, that her senses were almost paralysed.

"So mad--so mad and bad and wild you were," she said. "Could you not see it was your duty to tell all, no matter what the consequences. The man was a villain. But what madness you were guilty of, what cruel madness! Only you could have done a thing like that. Erris Boyne deserved death--I care not who killed him--you or another. He deserved death, and it was right he should die. But that you should kill him, apart from all else--why, indeed, oh, indeed, it is a tragedy, for you loved my daughter, and the killing made a gulf between you! There could be no marriage in such a case. She could not bear it, nor could you. But please know this, Mr. Calhoun, that she never believed you killed Erris Boyne. She has said so again and again. You are the only man who has ever touched her mind or her senses, though many have sought her. Wherever she goes men try to win her, but she has no thought for any. Her mind goes back to you. Just when you entered the garden I learned--and only then--that you were here. She hid it from me, but Darius Boland knew, and he had seen your man, Michael Clones, and she had then made him tell me. I was incensed. I was her mother, and yet she had hid the thing from me. I thought she came to this island for the sake of Salem, and I found that she came not for Salem, but for you. . . . Ah, Mr. Calhoun, she deserves what you did to save her, but you should not have done it."

"She deserves all that any better man might do. Why don't you marry her to some great man in your Republic? It would settle my trouble for me and free her mind from anxiety. Mrs. Llyn, we are not children, you and I. You know life, and so do I, and--"

She interrupted him. "Be sure of this, Mr. Calhoun, she knows life even

better than either of us. She is, and has always been, a girl of sense and judgment. When she was a child she was my master, even in Ireland. Yet she was obedient and faithful, and kept her head in all vexed things. She will have her way, and she will have it as she wants it, and in no other manner. She is one of the world's great women. She is unique. Child as she is, she still understands all that men do, and does it. Under her hands the estates in Virginia have developed even more than under the hands of my brother. She controls like another Elizabeth. She has made those estates run like a spool of thread, and she will do the same here with Salem. Be sure of that."

"Why does she not marry? Is there no man she can bear? She could have the highest, that's sure." He spoke with passion and insistence. If she were married his trouble would be over. The worst would have come to him--like death. His eyes were only two dark fires in a face that was as near to tragic pain crystallized as any the world has seen. Yet there was in it some big commanding thing, that gave it a ghastly handsomeness almost; that bathed his look in dignity and power, albeit a reckless power, a thing that would not be stayed by any blandishments. He had the look of a lost angel, one who fell with Belial in the first days of sin.

"There is no man she can bear--except here in Jamaica. It is no use. Your governor, Lord Mallow, whom she knew in Ireland, who is distant kin of mine, he has already made advances here to her, as he did in Ireland --you did not know that. Even before we left for Virginia he came to see us, and brought her books and flowers, and here, on our arrival, he brought her choicest blooms of his garden. She is rich, and he would be glad of an estate that brings in scores of thousands of pounds yearly. He has asked us to stay at King's House, but we have declined. We start for Salem in a few hours. She wants her hand on the wheel."

"Lord Mallow--he courts her, does he?" His face grew grimmer. "Well, she might do worse, though if she were one of my family I would rather see her in her grave than wedded to him. For he is selfish--aye, as few men are! He would eat and keep his apple too. His theory is that life is but a game, and it must be played with steel. He would squeeze the life out of a flower, and give the flower to his dog to eat. He thinks first and always of himself. He would--but there, he would make a good husband as husbands go for some women, but not for this woman! It is not because he is my enemy I say this. It is because there is only one woman like your daughter, and that is herself; and I would rather see her married to a hedger that really loved her than to Lord Mallow, who loves only one being on earth--himself. But see, Mrs. Llyn, now that you know all, now that we three have met again, and this island is small and tragedy is at our doors, don't you think your daughter should be told the truth. It will end everything for me. But it would be better so. It is now only cruelty to hide the truth, harsh to continue a friendship which will only appal her in the end. If we had not met again like this, then silence might have been best; but as she is not cured of her tender friendship made upon the hills at Playmore, isn't it well to end it all? Your conscience will be clearer, and so will mine. We shall have done the right thing at last. Why did you not tell her who her father was? Then why blame me! You held your peace to save your daughter, as you

thought. I held my tongue for the same reason; but she is so much a woman now, that she will understand, as she could not have understood years ago in Limerick. In God's name, let us speak. One of us should tell her, and I think it should be you. And see, though I know I did right in withholding the facts about the quarrel with Erris Boyne, yet I favour telling her that he was a traitor. The whole truth now, or nothing. That is my view."

He saw how lined and sunken was her face, he noted the weakness of her carriage, he realized the task he was putting on her, and his heart relented. "No, I will do it," he added, with sudden will, "and I will do it now, if I may."

"Oh, not to-day-not to-day!" she said with a piteous look. "Let it not be to-day. It is our first day here, and we are due at King's House to-night, even in an hour from now."

"You want her at her glorious best, is that it?" It seemed too strange that the pure feminine should show at a time of crisis like this, but there it was. It was this woman's way. But he added presently: "When she asks you what we have talked about, what will you say?"

"Is it not easy? I am a mother," she said meaningly.

"And I am an ex-convict, and a mutineer--is that it?"

She inclined her head. "It should not be difficult to explain. When you came I was speaking as I felt, and she will not think it strange if I give that as my reason."

"But is it wise? Isn't it better to end it all now? Suppose Lord Mallow tells her."

"He did not before. He is not likely now," was the vexed reply. "Is it a thing a gentleman will speak of to a lady?"

"But you do not know Mallow. If he thought she had seen me to-day, he would not hesitate. What would you do if you were Lord Mallow?"

"No, not to-day," she persisted. "It is all so many years ago. It can hurt naught to wait a little longer."

"When and where shall it be?" he asked gloomily. "At Salem--at Salem. We shall be settled then--and steady. There is every reason why you should consider me. I have suffered as few women have suffered, and I do not hate you. I am only sorry."

Far down at the other end of the garden he saw Sheila. Her face was in profile--an exquisite silhouette. She moved slowly among the pimento bushes.

"As you wish," he said with a heavy sigh. The sight of the girl anguished his soul.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT SALEM

The plantation of Salem was in a region below the Pedro Plains in the parish of St. Elizabeth, where grow the aloe, and torch-thistle, and clumps of wood which alter the appearance of the plain from the South Downs of England, but where thousands of cattle and horses even in those days were maintained. The air of the district was dry and elastic, and it filtered down to the valleys near like that where Salem was with its clusters of negro huts and offices, its mills and distilleries where sugar and rum were made. Salem was situated on the Black River, accessible by boats and canoes. The huts of negro slaves were near the sugar mills, without regard to order, but in clusters of banana, avocado-pear, limes and oranges, and with the cultivated land round their huts made an effective picture.

One day every fortnight was allowed the negroes to cultivate their crops, and give them a chance to manufacture mats for beds, bark-ropes, wicker-chairs and baskets, earthen jars, pans, and that kind of thing. The huts themselves were primitive to a degree, the floor being earth, the roof, of palm-thatch or the leaves of the cocoa-nut tree, the sides hard-posts driven in the ground and interlaced with wattle and plaster, and inside scarcely high enough for its owner to walk upright. The furniture was scant--a quatre, or bed, made of a platform of boards, with a mat and a blanket, some low stools, a small table, an earthen water-jar, and some smaller ones, a pail and an iron pot, and calabashes which did duty for plates, dishes and bowls. In one of the two rooms making the hut, there were always the ashes of the night-fire, without which negroes could not sleep in comfort.

These were the huts of the lowest grade of negro-slaves of the fields. The small merchants and the domestics had larger houses with boarded floors, some even with linen sheets and mosquito nets, and shelves with plates and dishes of good ware. Every negro received a yearly allowance of Osnaburgh linen, woollen, baize and checks for clothes, and some planters also gave them hats and handkerchiefs, knives, needles and thread, and so on.

Every plantation had a surgeon who received a small sum for attendance on every slave, while special cases of midwifery, inoculation, etc., had a particular allowance. The surgeon had to attend to about four hundred to five hundred negroes, on an income of L150 per annum, and board and lodging and washing, besides what he made from his practice with the whites.

Salem was no worse than some other plantations on the island, but it was far behind such plantations as that owned by Dyck Calhoun, and had been notorious for the cruelties committed on it. To such an estate a lady

like Sheila Llyn would be a boon. She was not on the place a day before she started reforms which would turn the plantation into a model scheme. Houses, food, treatment of the negroes, became at once a study to her, and her experience in Virginia was invaluable. She had learned there not to work the slaves too hard in the warm period of the day; and she showed her interest by having served at her own table the favourite olio the slaves made of plantains, bananas, yams, calaloe, eddoes, cassavi, and sweet potatoes boiled with salt fish and flavoured with cayenne pepper. This, with the unripe roasted plantain as bread, was a native relish and health-giving food.

Ever since the day when she had seen Dyck Calhoun at Spanish Town she had been disturbed in mind. Dyck had shown a reserve which she felt was not wholly due to his having been imprisoned for manslaughter. In one way he looked little older. His physique was as good, or better than when she first saw him on the hills of Playmore. It was athletic, strenuous, elastic. Yet there was about it the abandonment of despair--at least of recklessness. The face was older, the head more powerful, the hair slightly touched with grey--rather there was one spot in the hair almost pure white; a strand of winter in the foliage of summer. It gave a touch of the bizarre to a distinguished head, it lent an air of the singular to a personality which had flare and force--an almost devilish force. That much was to be said for him, that he had not sought to influence her to his own advantage. She was so surrounded in America by men who knew her wealth and prized her beauty, she was so much a figure in Virginia, that any reserve with regard to herself was noticeable. She was enough feminine to have pleasure in the fact that she was thought desirable by men; yet it played an insignificant part in her life.

It did not give her conceit. It was only like a frill on the skirts of life. It did not play any part in her character. Certainly Dyck Calhoun had not flattered her. That one to whom she had written, as she had done, should remove himself so from the place of the deserving friend, one whom she had not deserted while he was in jail as a criminal--that he should treat her so, gave every nerve a thrill of protest. Sometimes she trembled in indignation, and then afterwards gave herself to the work on the estate or in the household--its reform and its rearrangement; though the house was like most in Jamaica, had adequate plate, linen, glass and furniture. At the lodgings in Spanish Town, after Dyck Calhoun had left, her mother had briefly said that she had told Dyck he could not expect the conditions of the Playmore friendship should be renewed; that, in effect, she had warned him off. To this Sheila had said that the killing of a man whose life was bad might be punishable. In any case, that was in another land, under abnormal conditions; and, with lack of logic, she saw no reason why he should be socially punished in Jamaica for what he had been legally punished for in Ireland. As for the mutiny, he had done what any honest man of spirit would do; also, he had by great bravery and skill brought victory to the king's fleet in West Indian waters.

Then it was she told her mother how she had always disobeyed her commands where Dyck was concerned, that she had written to him while he was in jail; that she had come to Jamaica more to see him than to reform Salem;

that she had the old Celtic spirit of brotherhood, and she would not be driven from it. In a sudden burst of anger her mother had charged her with deceit; but the girl said she had followed her conscience, and she dismissed it all with a gesture as emphatic as her mother's anger.

That night they had dined with Lord Mallow, and she saw that his attentions had behind them the deep purpose of marriage. She had not been overcome by the splendour of his retinue and table, or by the magnificence of his guests; though the military commander-in-chief and the temporary admiral on the station did their utmost to entertain her, and some of the local big-wigs were pompous. Lord Mallow had ability and knew how to use it; and he was never so brilliant as on this afternoon, for they dined while it was still daylight and hardly evening. He told her of the customs of the country, of the people; and slyly and effectively he satirized some of his grandiloquent guests. Not unduly, for one of them, the most renowned in the island, came to him after dinner as he sat talking to Sheila, and said: "I'm very sorry, your honour, but good Almighty God, I must go home and cool coppers." Then he gave Sheila a hot yet clammy hand, and bade her welcome as a citizen to the island, "alien but respected, beautiful but capable!" Sheila had seen a few of the Creole ladies present at their best-large-eyed, simple, not to say primitive in speech, and very unaffected in manner. She had learned also that the way to the Jamaican heart was by a full table and a little flattery.

One incident at dinner had impressed her greatly. Not far away from her was a young lady, beautiful in face and person, and she had seen a scorpion suddenly shoot into her sleeve and ruthlessly strike and strike the arm of the girl, who gave one cry only and then was still. Sheila saw the man next to the girl--he was a native officer--secure the scorpion, and then whip from his pocket a little bag of indigo, dip it in water, and apply the bag to the wounded arm, immediately easing the wound. This had all been done so quickly that it was over before the table had been upset, almost.

"That is the kind of thing we have here," said Lord Mallow. "There is a lady present who has seen in one day a favourite black child bitten by a congereel, a large centipede in her nursery, a snake crawl from under her child's pillow, and her son nearly die from a bite of the black spider with the red spot on its tail. It is a life that has its trials--and its compensations."

"I saw a man's head on a pole on my way to King's House. You have to use firm methods here," Sheila said in reply. "It is not all a rose-garden. You have to apply force."

Lord Mallow smiled grimly. "C'est la force morale toujours."

"Ah, I should not have thought it was moral force always," was the ironical reply.

"We have criminals here," declared the governor with aplomb, "and they need some handling, I assure you. We have in this island one of the

worst criminals in the British Empire."

"Ah, I thought he was in the United States!" answered the girl sedately.

"You mean General George Washington," remarked the governor. "No, it is one who was a friend and fellow-countryman of yours before he took to killing unarmed men."

"You refer to Mr. Dyck Calhoun, I doubt not, sir? Well, he is still a friend of mine, and I saw him today--this afternoon, before I came here. I understood that the Crown had pardoned his mutiny."

The governor started. He was plainly annoyed.

"The crime is there just the same," he replied. "He mutinied, and he stole a king's ship, and took command of it, and brought it out here."

"And saved you and your island, I understand."

"Ah, he said that, did he?"

"He said nothing at all to me about it. I have been reading the Jamaica Cornwall Chronicle the last three years."

"He is ever a source of anxiety to me," declared the governor.

"I knew he was once in Phoenix Park years ago," was the demure yet sharp reply, "but I thought he was a good citizen here--a good and well-to-do citizen."

Lord Mallow flushed slightly. "Phoenix Park--ah, he was a capable fellow with the sword! I said so always, and I'd back him now against a champion; but many a bad man has been a good swordsman."

"So, that's what good swordsmanship does, is it? I wondered what it was that did it. I hear you fight him still--but with a bludgeon, and he dodges it."

"I do not understand," declared Lord Mallow tartly. "Ah, wasn't there some difference over his going for the treasure to Haiti? Some one told me, I think, that you were not in favour of his getting his ticket-of-leave, or whatever it is called, and that the provost-marshal gave it to him, as he had the right to do."

"You have wide sources of information in this case. I wonder--"

"No, your honour need not wonder. I was told that by a gentleman on the steamer coming here. He was a native of the island, I think--or perhaps it was the captain, or the mate, or the boatswain. I can't recall. Or maybe it came to me from my manager, Darius Boland, who hears things wherever he is, one doesn't know how; but he hears them. He is to me what your aide-de-camp is to you," she nodded towards a young man near by at the table.

"And do you dress your Darius Boland as I dress my aide in scarlet, with blue facings and golden embroidery, and put a stiff hat with a feather on his head?"

"But no, he does not need such things. I am a Republican now. I am a citizen of the United States, where men have no need of uniform to tell the world what they are. You shall see my Darius Boland--indeed, you have seen him. He was there to-day when you gave me the distinction of your presence."

"That dry, lean, cartridge of a fellow, that pair of pincers with a face!"

"And a tongue, your honour. If you did not hear it yet, you will hear it. He is to be my manager here. So he will be under your control--if I permit him."

"If you permit him, mistress?"

"If I permit him, yes. You are a power, but you are not stronger than the laws and rules you make. For instance, there was the case of Mr. Dyck Calhoun. When he came, you were for tying him up in one little corner of this island--the hottest part, I know, near to Kingston, where it averages ninety degrees in the shade at any time of the year. But the King you represent had not restricted his liberties so, and you being the King, that is, yourself, were forced to abide by your own regulations. So it may be the same with Darius Boland. He may want something, and you, high up, looking down, will say, "What devilry is here!" and decline. He will then turn to your chief-justice or provost-marshal-general, or a deputy of the provost-marshal, and they will say that Darius Boland shall have what he wants, because it is the will of the will you represent."

Almost the last words the governor used to her were these: "Those only live at peace here who are at peace with me"; and her reply had been: "But Mr. Dyck Calhoun lives at peace, does he not, your honour?"

To that he had replied: "No man is at peace while he has yet desires." He paused a minute and then added: "That Erris Boyne killed by Dyck Calhoun--did you ever see him that you remember?"

"Not that I remember," she replied quickly. "I never lived in Dublin."

"That may be. But did you never know his history?" She shook her head in negation. His eyes searched her face carefully, and he was astonished when he saw no sign of confusion there. "Good God, she doesn't know. She's never been told!" he said to himself. "This is too startling. I'll speak to the mother."

A little later he turned from the mother with astonishment. "It's madness," he remarked to himself. "She will find out. Some one will tell her. . . . By heaven, I'll tell her first," he hastily said.

"When she knows the truth, Calhoun will have no chance on earth. Yes, I'll tell her myself. But I'll tell no one else," he added; for he felt that Sheila, once she knew the truth, would resent his having told abroad the true story of the Erris Boyne affair.

So Sheila and her mother had gone to their lodgings with depression, but each with a clear purpose in her mind. Mrs. Llyn was determined to tell her daughter what she ought to have known long before; and Sheila was firm to make the one man who had ever interested her understand that he was losing much that was worth while keeping.

Then had followed the journey to Salem. Yet all the while for Sheila one dark thought kept hovering over everything. Why should life be so complicated? Why should this one man who seemed capable and had the temperament of the Irish hills and vales be the victim of punishment and shame--why should he shame her?

Suddenly, without her mother's knowledge, she sent Darius Boland through the hills in the early morning to Enniskillen, Dyck Calhoun's place, with a letter which said only this: "Is it not time that you came to wish us well in our new home? We shall expect you to-morrow."

When Dyck read this note he thought it was written by Sheila, but inspired by the mother; and he lost no time in making his way down across the country to Salem, which he reached a few hours after sunrise. At the doorway of the house he met Mrs. Llyn.

"Have you told her?" he asked in anxiety. Astonished at his presence she could make no reply for a moment. "I have told her nothing," she answered. "I meant to do so this morning. I meant to do it--I must."

"She sent me a letter asking if it was not time I came to wish you well in your house, and you and she would expect me to-day."

"I knew naught of her writing you," was the reply--"naught at all. But now that you are here, will you not tell her all?"

Dyck smiled grimly. "Where is she?" he asked. "I will tell her."

The mother pointed down the garden. "Yonder by the clump of palms I saw her a moment ago. If you go that way you will find her."

In another moment Dyck Calhoun was on his way to the clump of palms, and before he reached it, the girl came out into the path. She was dressed in a black silk skirt with a white bodice and lace, as he had seen her on her arrival in Kingston, and at her throat was a sprig of the wild pear-tree. When she saw him, she gave a slight start, then stood still, and he came to her.

"I have your letter," he said, "and I came to say what I ought to say about your living here: you will bring blessings to the place."

She looked at him steadfastly. "Shall we talk here," she said,

"or inside the house? There is a little shelter here in the trees"-- pointing to the right--"a shelter built by the late manager. It has the covering of a hut, but it is open at two sides. Will you come?" As she went on ahead, he could not fail to notice how slim and trim she was, how perfectly her figure seemed to fit her gown-as though she had been poured into it; and yet the folds of her skirt waved and floated like silky clouds around her! Under cover of the shelter, she turned and smiled at him.

"You have seen my mother?"

"I have just come from her," he answered. "She bade me tell you what ought to have been told long ago, and you were not, for there seemed no reason that you should. You were young and ignorant and happy. You had no cares, no sorrows. The sorrows that had come to your mother belonged to days when you were scarce out of the cradle. But you did not know. You were not aware that your mother had divorced your father for crime against marital fidelity and great cruelty. You did not know even who that father was. Well, I must tell you. Your father was a handsome man, a friend of mine until I knew the truth about him, and then he died--I killed him, so the court said."

Her face became ghastly pale. After a moment of anguished bewilderment, she said: "You mean that Erris Boyne was my father?"

"Yes, I mean that. They say I killed him. They say that he was found with no sword drawn, but that my open sword lay on the table beside me while I was asleep, and that it had let out his life-blood."

"Why was he killed?" she asked, horror-stricken and with pale lips.

"I do not know, but if I killed him, it was because I revolted from the proposals he made to me. I--" He paused, for the look on her face was painful to see, and her body was as that of one who had been struck by lightning. It had a crumpled, stricken look, and all force seemed to be driven from it. It had the look of crushed vitality. Her face was set in paleness, her eyes were frightened, her whole person was, as it were, in ghastly captivity. His heart smote him, and he pulled himself together to tell her all.

"Go on," she said. "I want to hear. I want--to know all. I ought to have known--long ago; but that can't be helped now. Continue--please."

Her words had come slowly, in gasps almost, and her voice was so frayed he could scarcely recognize it. All the pride of her nature seemed shattered.

"If I killed him," he said presently, "it was because he tried to tempt me from my allegiance to the Crown to become a servant of France, to--"

He stopped short, for a cry came from her lips which appalled him.

"My God--my God!" she said with bloodless lips, her eyes fastened on his

face, her every look and motion the inflection of despair. "Go on--tell all," she added presently with more composure.

Swiftly he described what happened in the little room at the traitor's tavern, of the momentary reconciliation and the wine that he drank, drugged wine poured out but not drunk by Erris Boyne, and of his later unconsciousness. At last he paused.

"Why did these things not come out at the trial?" she asked in hushed tones.

He made a helpless gesture. "I did not speak of them because I thought of you. I hid it--I did not want you to know what your father was."

Something like a smile gathered at her pale lips. "You saved me for the moment, and condemned yourself for ever," she said in a voice of torture. "If you had told what he was--if you had told that, the jury would not have condemned you, they would not have sent you to prison."

"I believe I did the right thing," he said. "If I killed your father, prison was my proper punishment. But I can't remember. There was no other clue, no other guide to judgment. So the law said I killed him, and--he had evidently not drawn his sword. It was clear he was killed defenceless."

"You killed a defenceless man!" Her voice was sharp with agony. "That was mentioned at the trial--but I did not believe it then--in that long ago." She trembled to her feet from the bench where she was sitting. "And I do not believe it now--no, on my soul, I do not."

"But it makes no difference, you see. I was condemned for killing your father, and the world knows that Erris Boyne was your father, and here Lord Mallow, the governor, knows it; and there is no chance of friendship between you and me. Since the day he was found dead in the room, there was no hope for our friendship, for anything at all between us that I had wished to be there. You dare not be friends with me--"

Her face suddenly suffused and she held herself upright with an effort. She was about to say, "I dare, Dyck--I do dare!" but he stopped her with a reproving gesture.

"No, no, you dare not, and I would not let you if you would. I am an ex-convict. They say I killed your father, and the way to understanding between us is closed."

She made a protesting gesture. "Closed! Closed!--But is it closed? No, no, some one else killed him, not you. You couldn't have done it. You would have fought him--fought him as you did Lord Mallow, and in fighting you might have killed him, but your sword never let out his life when he was defenceless--never."

A look of intense relief, almost of happiness, came to Dyck's face. "That is like you, Sheila, but it does not cure the trouble. You and I

are as far apart as noon and midnight. The law has said the only thing that can be said upon it."

She sank down again upon the wooden bench. "Oh, how mad you were, not to tell the whole truth long ago! You would not have been condemned, and then--"

She paused overcome, and his self-control almost deserted him. With strong feeling he burst out: "And then, we might have come together? No, your mother--your friends, myself, could not have let that be. See, Sheila, I will tell you the whole truth now--aye, the whole absolute truth. I have loved you since the first day I saw you on the hills when you and I rescued Christopher Dogan. Not a day has passed since then when you were not more to me than any other woman in all the world."

A new light came into her face, the shadows left her eyes, and the pallor fled from her lips. "You loved me?" she said in a voice grown soft-husky still, but soft as the light in a summer heaven. "You loved me --and have always loved me since we first met?"

Her look was so appealing, so passionate and so womanly, that he longed to reach out his arms to her, and say, "Come--come home, Sheila," but the situation did not permit that, and only his eyes told the story of what was in his mind.

"I have always loved you, Sheila, and shall do so while I have breath and life. I have always given you the best that is in me, tried to do what was good for us both, since my misfortune--crime, Lord Mallow calls it, as does the world. Never a sunrise that does not find you in the forefront of all the lighted world; never a flower have I seen that does not seem sweeter--it brings thoughts of you; never a crime that does not deepen its shame because you are in the world. In prison, when I used to mop my floor and clean down the walls; when I swept the dust from the corners; when I folded up my convict clothes; when I ate the prison food and sang the prison hymns; when I placed myself beside the bench in the workshop to make things that would bring cash to my fellow-prisoners in their need; when I saw a minister of religion or heard the Litany; when I counted up the days, first that I had spent in jail and then the days I had still to spend in jail; when I read the books from the prison library of the land where you had gone, and of the struggle there; when I saw you, in my mind's eye, in the cotton-fields or on the verandah of your house in Virginia--I had but one thought, and that was the look in your face at Playmore and Limerick, the sound of your voice as you came singing up the hill just before I first met you, the joyous beauty of your body."

"And at sea?" she whispered with a gesture at once beautiful and pathetic, for it had the motion of helplessness and hopelessness. What she had heard had stirred her soul, and she wanted to hear more--or was it that she wished to drain the cup now that it was held to her lips? --drain it to the last drop of feeling.

"At sea," he answered, with his eyes full of intense feeling--"at sea, I

was free at last, doomed as I thought, anguished in spirit, and yet with a wild hope that out of it would come deliverance. I expected to lose my life, and I lived each day as though it would be my last. I was chief rogue in a shipful of rogues, chief sinner in a hell of sinners, and yet I had no remorse and no regret. I had done all with an honest purpose, with the good of the sailors in my mind; and so I lived in daily touch with death, honour, and dishonour. Yet I never saw a sailor in the shrouds, or heard the night watch call 'All's well!' in the midst of night and mutiny, that I did not long for a word from you that would take away the sting of death. Those days at sea for ten long weeks were never free from anxiety, not anxiety for myself, only for the men who had put me where I was, had given me captain's rank, had--"

Suddenly he stopped, and took from his pocket the letter he was writing on the very day she landed in Jamaica. He opened it and studied it for a moment with a dark look in his face.

"This I wrote even as you were landing in Jamaica, and I knew naught of your coming. It was an outbreak of my soul. It was the truth written to you and for you, and yet with the feeling that you would never see it. I was still writing it when Michael Clones came up the drive to tell me you and your mother were here. Now, I know not what Christopher Dogan would say of it, but I say it is amazing that in the hour you were first come to this land I should be moved to tell you the story of my life since I left prison; since, on receiving your letter in London, forwarded from Dublin, I joined the navy. But here it is with all the truth and terror in it.--Aye, there was terror, for it gave the soul of my life to one I never thought to see again; and, if seeing, should be compelled to do what I have done--tell her the whole truth at once and so have it over.

"But do not think that in telling it now I repent of my secrecy. I repent of nothing; I would not alter anything. What was to be is, and what is has its place in the book of destiny. No, I repent nothing, yet here now I give you this to read while still my story of the days of which you know is in your ears. Here it is. It will tell the whole story; for when you have read it and do understand, then we part to meet no more as friends. You will go back to Virginia, and I will stay here. You will forgive the unwilling wrong I have done you, but you will make your place in life without thought of me. You will marry some one--not worthy of you, for that could not be; but you will take to yourself some man from among the men of this world. You will set him apart from all other men as yours, and he will be happy, having been blessed beyond deserving. You will not regret coming here; but you will desire our friendship to cease; and what has been to be no more, while the tincture of life is in your veins. Sheila, read this thing, for it is the rest of the story until now."

He handed her the papers, and she took them with an inclination of the head which said: "Give it to me. I will read it now while my eyes can still bear to read it. I have laid on my heart the nettle of shame, and while it is still burning there I will read all that you have to teach me."

"I will go out in the garden while you read it," he said. "In a half-hour I will come back, and then we can say good-bye," he added, with pain in his voice, but firmly.

"No, do not go," she urged. "Sit here on the bench--at the end of it here," she said, motioning with her hand.

He shook his head in negation. "No, I will go and say to your mother that I have told you, and ease her mind, for I know she herself meant to tell you."

As he went he looked at her face closely. It was so young, so pathetic, so pale, yet so strangely beautiful, and her forehead was serene. That was one of her characteristics. In all her life, her forehead remained untroubled and unlined. Only at her mouth and in her eyes did misery or sorrow show. He looked into her eyes now, and he was pleased with what he saw; for they had in them the glow of understanding and the note of will which said: "You and I are parted, but I believe in you, and I will not show I am a weak woman by futile horror. We shall meet no more, but I shall remember you."

That was what he saw, and it was what he wished to see. He knew her character would stand the test of any trial, and it had done so. Horror had struck her, but had not overwhelmed her. She had cried out in her agony, but she had not been swept out into chaos. She had no weak passions and no futilities. But as he turned away now, it was with the sharp conviction that he had dealt a blow from which the girl would recover, but would never be the same again. She was rich "beyond the dreams of avarice," but that would not console her. She had resources within herself, had what would keep her steady. Her real power and force, her real hope, were in her regnant soul which was not to be cajoled by life's subterfuges. Her lips opened now, as though she would say something, but nothing came from them. She only shook her head sadly, as if to say: "You understand. Go, and when you come again, it will be for us to part in peace--at least in peace."

Out in the garden he found her mother. After the first agitated greeting--agitated on her part, he said: "The story has been told, and she is now reading--"

He told her the story of the manuscript, and added that Sheila had carried herself with courage. Presently the woman said to him: "She never believed you killed Erris Boyne. Well, it may not help the situation, but I say too, that I do not believe you did. I cannot understand why you did not deny having killed him."

"I could not deny. In any case, the law punished me for it, and the book is closed for ever."

"Have you never thought that some one--"

"Yes, I have thought, but who is there? The crowd at the Dublin hotel

where the thing was done were secret, and they would lie the apron off a bishop. No, there is no light, and, to tell the truth, I care not now."

"But if you are not guilty--it is not too late; there is my girl! If the real criminal should appear--can you not see?"

The poor woman, distressedly pale, her hair still abundant, her eyes still bright, her pulses aglow, as they had ever been, made a gesture of appeal with hands that were worn and thin. She had charm still, in a way as great as her daughter's.

"I can see--but, Mrs. Llyn, I have no hope. I am a man whom some men fear--"

"Lord Mallow!" she interjected.

"He does not fear me. Why do you say that?"

"I speak with a woman's intuition. I don't know what he fears, but he does fear you. You are a son of history; you had a duel with him, and beat him; you have always beaten him, even here where he has been supreme as governor--from first to last, you have beaten him."

"I hope I shall be even with him at the last--at the very last," was Dyck Calhoun's reply. "We were made to be foes. We were from the first. I felt it when I saw him at Playmore. Nothing has changed since then. He will try to destroy me here, but I will see it through. I will try and turn his rapier-points. I will not be the target of his arrows without making some play against him. The man is a fool. I could help him here, but he will have none of it, and he is running great risks. He has been warned that the Maroons are restive, that the black slaves will rise if the Maroons have any initial success, and he will listen to no advice. He would not listen to me, but, knowing that, I got the provost-marshal to approach him, and when he knew my hand was in it, he stiffened. He would have naught to do with it, and so no preparations are made. And up there"--he turned and pointed--"up there in Trelawney the Maroons are plotting and planning, and any day an explosion may occur. If it occurs no one will be safe, especially if the blacks rise too--I mean the black slaves. There will be no safety then for any one."

"For us as well, you mean?"

"For you as well as all others, and you are nearer to Trelawney than most others. You are in their path. So be wise, Mrs. Llyn, and get back to Virginia as soon as may be. It is a better place than this."

"My daughter is mistress here," was the sorrowful reply. "She will have her own way."

"Your daughter will not care to stay here now," he answered firmly.

"She will do what she thinks her duty in spite of her own feelings, or yours, or mine. It is her way, and it has always been her way."

"I will tell her what I fear, and she may change her mind."

"But the governor may want her to stay," answered Mrs. Llyn none too sagely, but with that in her mind which seemed to justify her.

"Lord Mallow--oh, if you think there is any influence in him to keep her, that is another question," said Dyck with a grim smile. "But, nevertheless, I think you should leave here and go back to Virginia. It is no safe place for two ladies, in all senses. Whatever Lord Mallow thinks or does, this is no place for you. This place is your daughter's for her to do what she chooses with it, and I think she ought to sell it. There would be no trouble in getting a purchaser. It is a fine property."

"But the governor might not think as you do; he might not wish it sold."

Mrs. Llyn was playing a bold, indeed a reckless game. She wanted to show Dyck there were others who would interest themselves in Sheila even if he, Dyck, were blotted from the equation; that the girl could look high, if her mind turned towards marriage. Also she felt that Dyck should know the facts before any one else, so that he would not be shocked in the future, if anything happened. Yet in her deepest heart she wished him well. She liked him as she had never liked any of Sheila's admirers, and if the problem of Erris Boyne had been solved, she would gladly have seen him wedded to Sheila.

"What has the governor to do with it!" he declared. "It is your daughter's own property, and she is free to hold or to part with it. There is no Crown consent to ask, no vice-regal approval needed."

Suddenly he became angry, almost excited. His blood pounded in his veins. Was this man, Mallow, to come between his and her fate always, come into his problem at the most critical moment? "God in heaven!" he said in a burst of passion, "is this a land of the British Empire or is it not? Why should that man break in on every crisis? Why should he do this or that--say yea or nay, give or take away! He is the king's representative, but he is bound by laws as rigid as any that bind you or me. What has he to do with your daughter or what concerns her? Is there not enough trouble in the world without bringing in Lord Mallow? If he--"

He stopped short, for he saw coming from the summerhouse, Sheila with his paper in her hand. She walked slowly and with dignity. She carried her head high and firmly, and the skin of her face was shining with light as she came on. Dyck noticed how her wide skirts flicked against the flowers that bordered the path, and how her feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as she walked--a spirit, a regnant spirit of summer she seemed. But in her face there was no summer, there was only autumn and winter, only the bright frost of purpose. As she came, her mother turned as though to leave Dyck Calhoun. She called to her to wait, and Mrs. Llyn stood still, anxious. As Sheila came near she kept her eyes fixed on Dyck. When she reached them, she held out the paper to him.

"It is wonderful," she said quietly, "that which you have written, but it does not tell all; it does not say that you did not kill my father. You are punished for the crime, and we must abide by it, even though you did not kill Erris Boyne. It is the law that has done it, and we cannot abash the law."

"We shall meet no more then!" said Dyck with decision.

Her lips tightened, her face paled. "There are some things one may not do, and one of them is to be openly your friend--at present."

He put the letter carefully away in his pocket, his hand shaking, then flicking an insect from the collar of his coat, he said gently, yet with an air of warning: "I have been telling Mrs. Llyn about the Maroons up there"--he pointed towards Trelawney--"and I have advised your going back to Virginia. The Maroons may rise at any moment, and no care is being taken by Lord Mallow to meet the danger. If they rise, you, here, would be in their way, and I could not guarantee your safety. Besides, Virginia is a better place--a safer place than this," he added with meaning.

"You wish to frighten me out of Jamaica," she replied with pain in her voice. "Well, I will not go till I have put this place in order and brought discipline and good living here. I shall stay here in Jamaica till I have done my task. There is no reason why we should meet. This place is not so large as Ireland or America, but it is large enough to give assurance we shall not meet. And if we meet, there is no reason why we should talk. As for the Maroons, when the trouble comes, I shall not be unprepared." She smiled sadly. "The governor may not take your advice, but I shall. And remember that I come from a land not without its dangers. We have Red Indians and black men there, and I can shoot."

He waved a hand abruptly and then made a gesture--such as an ascetic might make--of reflection, of submission. "I shall remember every word you have said, and every note of your voice will be with me in all the lonely years to come. Good-bye--but no, let me say this before I go: I did not know that Erris Boyne was your father until after he was dead. So, if I killed him, it was in complete ignorance. I did not know. But we have outlived our friendship, and we must put strangeness in its place. Good-bye--God protect you!" he added, looking into Sheila's eyes.

She looked at him with sorrow. Her lips opened but no words came forth. He passed on out of the garden, and presently they heard his horse's hoofs on the sand.

"He is a great gentleman," said Mrs. Llyn.

Her daughter's eyes were dry and fevered. Her lips were drawn. "We must begin the world again," she said brokenly. Then suddenly she sank upon the ground. "My God--oh, my God!" she said.

CHAPTER XIX

LORD MALLOW INTERVENES

Two months went by. In that time Sheila and Dyck did not meet, though Dyck saw her more than once in the distance at Kingston. Yet they had never met since that wonderful day at Salem, when they had parted, as it might seem, for ever. Dyck had had news of her, however, for Darius Boland had come and gone between the two plantations, and had won Michael Clones' confidence. He knew more perhaps than he ever conveyed to Dyck, who saw him and talked with him, gave him advice as to the customs of Jamaica, and let him see the details in the management of Enniskillen.

Yet Dyck made no inquiries as to how Mrs. Llyn and Sheila were; first because he chose not to do so, and also because Darius Boland, at one time or another, would of his own accord tell what Mrs. Llyn and Sheila were doing. One day Boland brought word that the governor had, more than once, visited Salem with his suite; that he had sat in judgment on a case in Kingston concerning the estate of Salem, and had given decision in its favour; and that Mrs. Llyn and Sheila visited him at Spanish Town and were entertained at King's House at second breakfast and dinner--in short, that Lord Mallow was making hay in Salem Plantation. This was no surprise to Dyck. He had full intuition of the foray the governor would make on Sheila, her estate and wealth.

Lord Mallow had acted with discretion, and yet with sufficient passion to warrant some success. He was trying to make for himself a future which might mean the control of a greater colony even. If he had wealth, that would be almost a certainty, and he counted Sheila's gold as a guarantee of power. He knew well how great effect could be produced at Westminster and at the Royal Palace by a discreet display of wealth. He was also aware that no scandal could be made through an alliance with Sheila, for she had inherited long after the revolutionary war and with her skirts free from responsibility. England certainly would welcome wealth got through an Irish girl inheriting her American uncle's estates. So, steadily and happily, he pressed his suit. At his dinner-parties he gave her first place nearly always, and even broke the code controlling precedence when his secretary could be overruled. Thus Sheila was given honour when she did not covet it, and so it was that one day at Salem when the governor came to court her she was able to help Dyck Calhoun.

"Then you go to Enniskillen?" Lord Mallow said to Darius Boland, as he entered the plantation, being met by the astute American.

"Sometimes, your honour," was the careful reply. "I suppose you know what Mr. Calhoun's career has been, eh?"

"Oh, in a way, your honour. They tell me he is a good swordsman."

The governor flushed. "He told you that, did he?"

"No, no, your honour, never. He told me naught. He does not boast. He's as modest as a man from Virginia. He does not brag at all."

"Who told you, then?"

"Ah, well, I heard it in the town! They speak of him there. They all know that Kingston and Spanish Town, and all the other places, would have been French by now, if it hadn't been for him. Oh, they talk a lot about him in Kingston and thereabouts!"

"What swordsmanship do they speak of that was remarkable?"

"Has your honour forgotten, then? Sure, seven years is a poor limit for a good memory." The blow was a shrewd one, for Darius Boland knew that Phoenix Park must be a galling memory to his honour. But Darius did not care. He guessed why the governor was coming to Salem, and he could not shirk having his hand in it. He had no fear of the results.

"Aye, seven years is a poor limit," he repeated.

The governor showed no feeling. He had been hit, and he took it as part of the game. "Ah, you mean the affair in Phoenix Park?" he said with no apparent feeling.

Darius tossed his head a little. "Wasn't it a clever bit of work? Didn't he get fame there by defeating one of the best swordsmen--in Ireland?"

Lord Mallow nodded. "He got fame, which he lost in time," he answered.

"You mean he put the sword that had done such good work against a champion into a man's bowels, without 'by your leave,' or 'will you draw and fight'?"

"Something like that," answered the governor sagely.

"Is it true you believed he'd strike a man that wasn't armed, sir?"

The governor winced, but showed nothing. "He'd been drinking--he is a heavy drinker. Do you never drink with him?"

Darius Boland's face took on a strange look. Here was an intended insult to Dyck Calhoun. Right well the governor knew their relative social positions. Darius pulled at the hair on his chin reflectively. "Yes, I've drunk his liquor, but not as you mean, your honour. He'd drink with any man at all: he has no nasty pride. But he doesn't drink with me." "Modest enough he is to be a good republican, eh, Boland?"

"Since your honour puts it so, it must stand. I'll not dispute it, me being what I am and employed by whom I am."

Darius Boland had a gift of saying the right thing in the right way, and

he had said it now. The governor was not so dense as to put this man against him, for women were curious folk. They often attach importance to the opinion of a faithful servant and let it weigh against great men. He had once lost a possible fortune by spurning a little terrier of the daughter of the Earl of Shallow, and the lesson had sunk deep into his mind. He was high-placed, but not so high as to be sure of success where a woman was concerned, and he had made up his mind to capture Sheila Llyn, if so be she could be caught flying, or settled, or sleeping.

"Ah, well, he has drunk with worse men than republicans. Boland. He was a common sailor. He drank what was given him with whom it chanced in the fo'castle."

Darius sniffed a little, and kept his head. "But he changed all that, your honour, and gave sailormen better drink than they ever had, I hear. In Jamaica he treats his slaves as though they were men and not Mohicans."

"Well, he'll have less freedom in future, Boland, for word has come from London that he's to keep to his estate and never leave it."

Darius looked concerned, and his dry face wrinkled still more. "Ah, and when was this word come, your honour?"

"But yesterday, Boland, and he'll do well to obey, for I have no choice but to take him in hand if he goes gallivanting."

"Gallivanting--here, in Jamaica! Does your honour remember where we are?"

"Not in a bishop's close, Boland."

"No, not in a bishop's close, nor in an archdeacon's garden. For of all places on earth where they defy religion, this is the worst, your honour. There's as much religion here as you'll find in a last year's bird's-nest. Gallivanting--where should he gallivant?"

The governor waved a contemptuous hand. "It doesn't need ingenuity to find a place, for some do it on their own estate. I have seen it."

Darius spoke sharply. "Your honour, there's naught on Mr. Calhoun's estate that's got the taint, and he's not the man to go hunting for it. Drink--well, suppose a gentleman does take his quartern, is it a crime? I ask your honour, is that a crime in Jamaica?"

"It's no crime, Boland; nevertheless, your Mr. Calhoun will have to take his fill on his own land from the day I send him the command of the London Government."

"And what day will that be, your honour?"

To be questioned by one who had been a revolutionary was distasteful to the governor. "That day will be when I find the occasion opportune, my

brave Boland," he said sourly.

"Why 'brave,' your honour?" There was an ominous light in Darius' eye.

"Did you not fight with George Washington against the King of England--against King George? And if you did, was that not brave?"

"It was true, your honour," came the firm reply. "It was the one right good thing to do, as we proved it by the victory we had. We did what we set out to do. But see, if you will let a poor man speak his mind, if I were you I'd not impose the command on Mr. Calhoun."

"Why, Boland?"

Darius spoke courageously. "Your honour, he has many friends in Jamaica, and they won't stand it. Besides, he won't stand it. And if he contests your honour, the island will be with him."

"Is he popular here as all that?" asked the governor with a shrug of the shoulders.

"They don't give their faith and confidence to order, your honour," answered Darius with a dry inflection.

The burr in the voice did not escape the other's attentive ear. He swung a glance sharply at Darius. "What is the secret of his popularity--how has it been made?" he asked morosely.

Darius' face took on a caustic look. "He's only been in the island a short time, your honour, and I don't know that I'm a good judge, but I'll say the people here have great respect for bravery and character."

"Character! Character!" sniffed the governor. "Where did he get that?"

"Well, I don't know his age, but it's as old as he is--his character. Say, I'm afraid I'm talking too much, your honour. We speak our minds in Virginia; we never count the cost."

The governor waved a deprecating hand. "You'll find the measure of your speech in good time, Boland, I've no doubt. Meanwhile, you've got the pleasure of hunting it. Character, you say. Well, that isn't what the judge and jury said."

Darius took courage again. Couldn't Lord Mallow have any decency?

"Judge and jury be damned, your honour," he answered boldly. "It was an Irish verdict. It had no sense. It was a bit of ballyhack. He did not kill an unarmed man. It isn't his way. Why, he didn't kill you when he had you at his mercy in Phoenix Park, now, did he, governor?"

A flush stole up the governor's face from his chin. Then he turned to Boland and looked him straight in the eyes. "That's true. He had me at his mercy, and he did not take my life."

"Then, why do you head the cabal against him? Why do you take joy in commanding him to stay on his estate? Is that grateful, your honour?"

The governor winced, but he said: "It's what I am ordered to do, my man. I'm a servant of the Crown, and the Crown has ordained it."

Again Darius grew stronger in speech. "But why do you have pleasure in it? Is nothing left to your judgment? Do you say to me that if he keeps the freedom such as he has enjoyed, you'd punish him? Must the governor be as ruthless as his master? Look, your honour, I wouldn't impose that command--not till I'd taken his advice about the Maroons anyway. There's trouble brewing, and Mr. Calhoun knows it. He has warned you through the provost-marshal. I'd heed his warning, your honour, or it may injure your reputation as a ruler. No, I'd see myself in nethermost hell before I'd meddle with Mr. Calhoun. He's a dangerous man, when he's moved."

"Boland, you'll succeed as a schoolmaster, when all else fails. You teach persistently."

"Your honour is clever enough to know what's what, but I'd like to see the Maroons dealt with. This is not my country, but I've got interests here, or my mistress has, and that's the same to me. . . . Does your honour travel often without a suite?"

The governor waved a hand behind him. "I left them at the last plantation, and rode on alone. I felt safe enough till I saw you, Boland."

He smiled grimly, and a grimmer smile stole to the lean lips of the manager of Salem. "Fear is a good thing for forward minds, your honour," he said with respect in the tone of his voice and challenge in the words.

"I'll say this, Boland, your mistress has been fortunate in her staff. You have a ready tongue."

"Oh, I'm readier in other things, your honour, as you'd find on occasion. But I thank you for the compliment in a land where compliments are few. For a planter's country it has few who speak as well as they entertain. I'll say this for the land you govern, the hospitality is rich and rare."

"In what way, Boland?"

"Why, your honour, it is the custom for a man and his whole family to go on a visit to a neighbour, perhaps twenty or forty miles away, bring their servants--maybe a dozen or more--and sit down on their neighbour's hearthstone. There they eat his food, drink his wine, exhaust his fowl-yard and debilitate his cook--till all the resources of the place are played out; then with both hands round his friend's neck the man and his people will say adieu, and go back to their own accumulated larder and await the return visit. The wonder is Jamaica is so rich, for truly the waste is harmful. We have the door open in Virginia, but not in that way. We welcome, but we don't debauch."

The governor smiled. "As you haven't old friends here, you should make your life a success--ah, there is the open door, Boland, and your mistress standing in it. But I come without my family, and with no fell purposes. I will not debilitate the cook; I will not exhaust the fowl-yard. A roasted plantain is good enough for me."

Darius' looks quickened, and he jerked his chin up. "So, your honour, so. But might I ask that you weigh carefully the warning of Mr. Calhoun. There's trouble at Trelawny. I have it from good sources, and Mr. Calhoun has made preparations against the sure risings. I'd take heed of what he says. He knows. Your honour, it is not my mistress in the doorway, it is Mrs. Llyn; she is shorter than my mistress."

The governor shaded his brow with his hands. Then he touched up his horse. "Yes, you are right, Boland. It is Mrs. Llyn. And look you, Boland, I'll think over what you've said about the Maroons and Mr. Calhoun. He's doing no harm as he is, that's sure. So why shouldn't he go on as he is? That's your argument, isn't it?"

Boland nodded. "It's part of my argument, not all of it. Of course he's doing no harm; he's doing good every day. He's got a stiff hand for the shirker and the wanton, but he's a man that knows his mind, and that's a good thing in Jamaica."

"Does he come here-ever?"

"He has been here only once since our arrival. There are reasons why he does not come, as your honour kens, knowing the history of Erris Boyne."

A quarter of an hour later Darius Boland said to Sheila: "He's got an order from England to keep Mr. Calhoun to his estate and to punish him, if he infringes the order."

Sheila started. "He will infringe the order if it's made, Boland. But the governor will be unwise to try and impose it. I will tell him so."

"But, mistress, he should not be told that this news comes from me."

"No, he should not, Boland. I can tempt him to speak of it, I think. He hates Mr. Calhoun, and will not need much prompting."

Sheila had changed since she saw Dyck Calhoun last. Her face was thinner, but her form was even fuller than it was when she had bade him good-bye, as it seemed to him for ever, and as it at first seemed to her. Through anxious days and nights she had fought with the old passion; and at last it seemed the only way to escape from the torture was by making all thought of him impossible. How could this be done? Well, Lord Mallow would offer a way. Lord Mallow was a man of ancient Irish family, was a governor, had ability, was distinguished-looking in a curious lean way; and he had a real gift with his tongue. He stood high in the opinion of the big folk at Westminster, and had a future. He had a winning way with women--a subtle, perniciously attractive way with her

sex, and to herself he had been delicately persuasive. He had the ancient gift of picturesqueness without ornamentation. He had a strong will and a healthy imagination. He was a man of mettle and decision.

Of all who had entered her field outside of Dyck Calhoun he was the most attractive; he was the nearest to the possible husband which she must one day take. And if at any day at all, why not now when she needed a man as she had never done--when she needed to forget? The sardonic critic might ask why she did not seek forgetfulness in flight; why she remained in Jamaica where was what she wished to forget. There was no valid reason, save a business one, why she should remain in Jamaica, and she was in a quandary when she put the question. There were, however, other reasons which she used when all else failed to satisfy her exigent mind. There was the question of vessels to Virginia or New York. They were few and not good, and in any case they could have no comfortable journey to the United States for several weeks at least, for, since the revolutionary war, commerce with the United States was sparse.

Also, there was the question of Salem. She did not feel she ought to waste the property which her Uncle Bryan had nurtured with care. In justice to his memory, and in fairness to Darius Boland, she felt she ought to stay--for a time. It did not occur to her that these reasons would vanish like mist--that a wilful woman would sweep them into the basket of forgetfulness, and do what she wished in spite of reason: that all else would be sacrificed, if the spirit so possessed her. Truth was that, far back in her consciousness, there was a vision of better days and things. It was as though some angel touched the elbow of her spirit and said: "Stay on, for things will be better than they seem. You will find your destiny here. Stay on."

So she had stayed. She was deluding herself to believe that what she was doing was all for the best; that the clouds were rising; that her fate had fairer aspects than had seemed possible when Dyck Calhoun told her the terrible tale of the death of her father, Erris Boyne. Yet memory gave a touch of misery and bitterness to all she thought and did. For twenty-five years she had lived in ignorance as to her paternity. It surely was futile that her mother should have suffered all those years, with little to cheer her, while her daughter should be radiant in health and with a mind free from care or sadness. Yet the bitterest thing of all was the thought that her father was a traitor, and had died sacrificing another man. When Dyck had told her first, she had shivered with anger and shame--but anger and shame had gone. Only one thing gave her any comfort--the man who knew Erris Boyne was a traitor, and could profit by telling it, held his tongue for her own sake, kept his own counsel, and went to prison for four years as the price of his silence. He was now her neighbour and he loved her, and, if the shadow of a grave was not between them, would offer himself in marriage to her. This she knew beyond all doubt. He had given all a man can give--had saved her and killed her father--in ignorance had killed her father; in love had saved herself. What was to be done?

In a strange spirit Sheila entered the room where the governor sat with her mother. She had reached the limit of her powers of suffering. Soon

after her mother had left the room, the governor said:

"Why do you think I have come here to-day?"

He added to the words a note of sympathy, even of passion in his voice.

"It was to visit my mother and myself, and to see how Salem looks after our stay on it, was it not?"

"Yes, to see your mother and yourself, but chiefly the latter. As for Salem, it looks as though a mastermind had been at work, I see it in everything. The slaves are singing. Listen!"

He held up a finger as though to indicate attention and direction.

"One, two, three,
All de same;
Black, white, brown,
All de same;
All de same.
One, two, three--"

They could hear the words indistinctly.

"What do the words mean?" asked Sheila. "I don't understand them."

"No more do I, but I think they refer to the march of pestilence or plague. Numbers, colour, race, nothing matters, the plague sweeps all away. Ah, then, I was right," he added. "There is the story in other words. Listen again."

To clapping of hands in unison, the following words were sung:

"New-come buckra,
He get sick,
He tak fever,
He be die;
He be die.
New-come buckra--"

"Well, it may be a chant of the plague, but it's lacking in poetry," she remarked. "Doesn't it seem so to you?"

"No, I certainly shouldn't go so far as that. Think of how much of a story is crowded into those few words. No waste, nothing thrown away. It's all epic, or that's my view, anyhow," said the governor. "If you look out on those who are singing it, you'd see they are resting from their labours; that they are fighting the ennui which most of us feel when we rest from our labours. Let us look at them."

The governor stood up and came to the open French windows that faced the fields of sugar-cane. In the near distance were clumps of fruit trees, of hedges of lime and flowering shrubs, rows of orange trees, mangoes,

red and purple, forbidden-fruit and grapefruit, the large scarlet fruit of the acqui, the avocado-pear, the feathering bamboo, and the Jack-fruit tree, with its enormous fruit like pumpkins. Parrots were chattering in the acacia and in the Otaheite plum tree, with its bright pink blossoms like tassels, and flanking the negro huts by the river were bowers of grenadilla fruit. Around the negro huts were small individual plantations kept by the slaves, for which they had one day a fortnight, besides Sundays, free to work on their own account. Here and there also were patches of "ground-fruit," as the underground vegetables were called, while there passed by on their way to the open road leading to Kingston wains loaded with sugar-casks, drawn by oxen, and in two cases by sumpter mules.

"Is there anything finer than that in Virginia?" asked the governor.

"I have never been in Virginia, but I take this to be in some ways like that state. Is it?"

"In some ways only. We have not the same profusion of wild fruits and trees, but we have our share--and it is not so hot as here. It is a better country, though."

"In what way is it better?" the governor asked almost acidly.

"It is better governed."

"What do you mean by that? Isn't Jamaica well governed?"

"Not so well that it couldn't be improved," was Sheila's reply.

"What improvements would you suggest?" Lord Mallow asked urbanely, for he was set to play his cards carefully to-day.

"More wisdom in the governor," was the cheerful and bright reply.

"Is he lacking in wisdom?"

"In some ways, yes."

"Will you mind specifying some of the things?"

"I think he is careless."

"Careless--as to what?"

Sheila smiled. "He is indifferent to good advice. He has been told of trouble among the Maroons, that they mean to rise; he has been advised to make preparations, and he makes none, and he is deceived by a show of loyalty on the part of the slaves. Lord Mallow, if the free Maroons rise, why should not the black slaves rise at the same time? Why do you not act?"

"Is everybody whose good opinion is worth having mad?" answered the governor. "I have sent my inspectors to Trelawney. I have had reports

from them. I have used every care--what would you have me do?"

"Used every care? Why don't you ensure the Maroons peaceableness by advancing on them? Why don't you take them prisoners? They are enraged that two of their herdsmen should be whipped by a negro-slave under the order of one of your captains. They are angry and disturbed and have ambushed the roads to Trelawney, so I'm told."

"Did Mr. Calhoun tell you that when he was here?"

"It was not that which Mr. Calhoun told me the only time he came here. But who Erris Boyne was. I never knew till, in his honour, he told me, coming here for that purpose. I never knew who my father was till he told me. My mother had kept it from me all my life."

The governor looked alert. "And you have not seen him since that day?"

"I have seen him, but I have not spoken to him. It was in the distance only."

"I understand your manager, Mr. Boland, sees him."

"My manager does not share my private interests--or troubles. He is free to go where he will, to speak to whom he chooses. He visits Enniskillen, I suppose--it is a well-managed plantation on Jamaican lines, and its owner is a man of mark."

Sheila spoke without agitation of any kind; her face was firm and calm, her manner composed, her voice even. As she talked, she seemed to be probing the centre of a flower which she had caught from a basket at the window, and her whole personality was alight and vivifying, her good temper and spirit complete. As he looked at her, he had an overmastering desire to make her his own--his wife. She was worth hundreds of thousands of pounds; she had beauty, ability and authority. She was the acme of charm and good bearing. With her he could climb high on the ladder of life. He might be a really great figure in the British world--if she gave her will to help him, to hold up his hands. It had never occurred to him that Dyck Calhoun could be a rival, till he had heard of Dyck's visit to Sheila and her mother, till he had heard Sheila praise him at the first dinner he had given to the two ladies on Christmas Day.

On that day it was clear Sheila did not know who her father was; but stranger things had happened than that she should take up with, and even marry, a man imprisoned for killing another, even one who had been condemned as a mutineer, and had won freedom by saving the king's navy. But now that Sheila knew the truth there could be no danger! Dyck Calhoun would be relegated to his proper place in the scheme of things. Who was there to stand between him and his desire? What was there to stay the great event? He himself was a peer and high-placed, for it was a time when the West Indian Islands were a centre of the world's fighting, where men like Rodney had made everlasting fame; where the currents of world-controversy challenged, met and fought for control.

The West Indies was as much a cock-pit of the fighting powers as ever Belgium was; and in those islands there was wealth and the power which wealth buys; the clash of white and black and coloured peoples; the naval contests on the sea; the horrible massacres and enslavement of free white peoples, as in St. Domingo and Grenada; the dominating attacks of people fighting for control--peoples of old empires like France and Spain, and new empires like that of Britain. These were a centre of colonial life as important as had been the life in Virginia and New York and the New England States and Canada--indeed, more important than Canada in one sense, for the West Indies brought wealth to the British Isles, and had a big export trade. He lost no time in bringing matters to an issue.

He got to his feet and came near to her. His eyes were inflamed with passion, his manner was impressive. He had a distinguished face, become more distinguished since his assumption of governorship, and authority had increased his personality.

"A man of mark!" he said. "You mean a marked man. Let me tell you I have an order from the British Government to confine him to his estate; not to permit him to leave it; and, if he does, to arrest him. That is my commanded duty. You approve, do you not? Or are you like most women, soft at heart to bold criminals?"

Sheila did not reply at once. The news was no news to her, for Darius Boland had told her; but she thought it well to let the governor think he had made a new, sensational statement.

"No," she said at last, looking him calmly in the eyes. "I have no soft feelings for criminals as criminals, none at all. And there is every reason why I should be adamant to this man, Dyck Calhoun. But, Lord Mallow, I would go carefully about this, if I were you. He is a man who takes no heed of people, high or low, and has no fear of consequences. Have you thought of the consequences to yourself? Suppose he resists, what will you do?"

"If he resists I will attack him with due force."

"You mean you will send your military and police to attack him?" The gibe was covered, but it found the governor's breast. He knew what she was meaning.

"You would not expect me to do police work, would you? Is that what your president does? What your great George Washington does? Does he make the state arrests with his own hand?"

"I have no doubt he would if the circumstances were such as to warrant it. He has no small vices, and no false feelings. He has proved himself," she answered boldly.

"Well, in that case," responded Lord Mallow irritably, "the event will be as is due. The man is condemned by my masters, and he must submit to my authority. He is twice a criminal, and--"

"And yet a hero and a good swordsman, and as honest as men are made in a dishonest world. Your Admiralty and your government first pardoned the man, and then gave him freedom on the island which you tried to prevent; and now they turn round and confine him to his acres. Is that pardon in a real sense? Did you write to the government and say he ought not to be free to roam, lest he should discover more treasure-chests and buy another estate? Was it you?"

The governor shook his head. "No, not I. I told the government in careful and unrhetoical language the incident of his coming here, and what I did, and my reasons for doing it--that was all."

"And you being governor they took your advice. See, my lord, if this thing is done to him it will be to your own discomfiture. It will hurt you in the public service."

"Why, to hear you speak, mistress, it would almost seem you had a fondness for the man who killed your father, who went to jail for it, and--"

"And became a mutineer," intervened the girl flushing. "Why not say all? Why not catalogue his offences? Fondness for the man who killed my father, you say! Yes, I had a deep and sincere fondness for him ever since I met him at Playmore over seven years ago. Yes, a fondness which only his crime makes impossible. But in all that really matters I am still his friend. He did not know he was killing my father, who had no claims upon me, none at all, except that through him I have life and being; but it is enough to separate us for ever in the eyes of the world, and in my eyes. Not morally, of course, but legally and actually. He and I are as far apart as winter and summer; we are parted for ever and ever and ever."

Now at last she was inflamed. Every nerve in her was alive. All she had ever felt for Dyck Calhoun came rushing to the surface, demanding recognition, reasserting itself. As she used the words, "ever and ever and ever," it was like a Cordelia bidding farewell to Lear, her father, for ever, for there was that in her voice which said: "It is final separation, it is the judgment of Jehovah, and I must submit. It is the last word."

Lord Mallow saw his opportunity, and did not hesitate. "No, you are wrong, wholly wrong," he said. "I did not bias what I said in my report --a report I was bound to make--by any covert prejudice against Mr. Calhoun. I guarded myself especially"--there he lied, but he was an incomparable liar--"lest it should be used against him. It would appear, however, that the new admiral's report with mine were laid together, and the government came to its conclusion accordingly. So I am bound to do my duty."

"If you--oh, if you did your duty, you would not obey the command of the government. Are there not times when to obey is a crime, and is not this one of them? Lord Mallow, you would be doing as great a crime as Mr. Dyck Calhoun ever committed, or could commit, if you put this order into

actual fact. You are governor here, and your judgment would be accepted --remember it is an eight weeks' journey to London at the least, and what might not happen in that time! Are you not given discretion?"

The governor nodded. "Yes, I am given discretion, but this is an order."

"An order!" she commented. "Then if it should not be fulfilled, break it and take the consequences. The principle should be--Do what is right, and have no fear."

"I will think it over," answered the governor. "What you say has immense weight with me--more even than I have words to say. Yes, I will think it over--I promise you. You are a genius--you prevail."

Her face softened, a new something came into her manner. "You do truly mean it?" she asked with lips that almost trembled.

It seemed to her that to do this thing for Dyck Calhoun was the least that was possible, and it was perhaps the last thing she might ever be able to do. She realized how terrible it would be for him to be shorn of the liberty he had always had; how dangerous it might be in many ways; and how the people of the island might become excited by it--and troublesome.

"Yes, I mean it," answered Lord Mallow. "I mean it exactly as I say it."

She smiled. "Well, that should recommend you for promotion," she said happily. "I am sure you will decide not to enforce the order, if you think about it. You shall be promoted, your honour, to a better place," she repeated, half-satirically.

"Shall I then?" he asked with a warm smile and drawing close to her. "Shall I? Then it can only be by your recommendation. Ah, my dear, my beautiful dear one," he hastened to add, "my life is possible henceforward only through you. You have taught me by your life and person, by your beauty and truth, by your nobility of mind and character how life should be lived. I have not always deserved your good opinion nor that of others. I have fought duels and killed men; I have aspired to place; I have connived at appointment; I have been vain, overbearing and insistent on my rights or privileges; I have played the dictator here in Jamaica; I have not been satisfied save to get my own way; but you have altered all that. Your coming here has given me a new outlook. Sheila, you have changed me, and you can change me infinitely more. I who have been a master wish to become your slave. I want you--beloved, I want you for my wife."

He reached out as though to take her hand, but she drew back from him. His thrilling words had touched her, as she had seldom been touched, as she had never been touched by any one save the man that must never be hers; she was submerged for the moment in the flood of his eloquence, and his yielding to her on the point of Dyck's imprisonment gave fresh accent to his words. Yet she could not, she dared not yet say yes to his demand.

"My lord," she said, "oh, you have stirred me! Yet I dare not reply to you as you wish. Life is hard as it is, and you have suddenly made it harder. What is more, I do not, I cannot, believe you. You have loved many. Your life has been a covert menace. Oh, I know what they said of you in Ireland. I know not of your life here. I suppose it is circumspect now; but in Ireland it was declared you were notorious with women."

"It is a lie," he answered. "I was not notorious. I was no better and no worse than many another man. I played, I danced attendance, I said soft nothings, but I was tied to no woman in all Ireland. I was frolicsome and adventurous, but no more. There is no woman who can say I used her ill or took from her what I did not--"

"Atone for, Lord Mallow?"

"Atone--no. What I did not give return for, was what I was going to say."

The situation was intense. She was in a place from which there was no escape except by flight or refusal. She did not really wish to refuse. Somehow, there had come upon her the desire to put all thought of Dyck Calhoun out of her mind by making it impossible for her to think of him; and marriage was the one sure and complete way--marriage with this man, was it possible? He held high position, he was her fellow countryman and an Irish peer, and she was the daughter of an evil man, who was, above all else, a traitor to his country, though Lord Mallow did not know that. The only one she knew possessed of the facts was the man she desired to save herself from in final way--Dyck Calhoun. Her heart was for the moment soft to Lord Mallow, in spite of his hatred of Dyck Calhoun. The governor was a man of charm in conversation. He was born with rare faculties. Besides, he had knowledge of humanity and of women. He knew how women could be touched. He had appealed to Sheila more by ability than by aught else. His concessions to her were discretion in a way. They opened the route to her affections, as his place and title could not do.

"No, no, no, believe me, Sheila, I was a man who had too many temptations--that was all. But I did not spoil my life by them, and I am here a trusted servant of the government. I am a better governor than your first words to me would make you seem to think."

Her eyes were shining, her face was troubled, her tongue was silent. She knew not what to say. She felt she could not say yes--yet she wanted to escape from him. Her good fortune did not desert her. Suddenly the door of the room opened and her mother entered.

"There is a member of your suite here, your honour, asking for you. It is of most grave importance. It is urgent. What shall I say?"

"Say nothing. I am coming," said the governor. "I am coming now."

CHAPTER XX

OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES

That night the Maroons broke loose upon Jamaica, and began murder and depredation against which the governor's activities were no check. Estates were invaded, and men, women and children killed, or carried into the mountains and held as hostages. In the middle and western part of the island the ruinous movements went on without being stayed; planters and people generally railed at the governor, and said that through his neglect these dark things were happening. It was said he had failed to punish offences by the Maroons, and this had given them confidence, filling them with defiance. They had one advantage not possessed by the government troops and militia--they were masters of every square rod of land in the middle and west of the island. Their plan was to raid, to ambush, to kill and to excite the slaves to rebel.

The first assault and repulse took place not far from Enniskillen, Dyck Calhoun's plantation, and Michael Clones captured a Maroon who was slightly wounded.

Michael challenged him thus: "Come now, my blitherin' friend, tell us your trouble--why are you risin'? You don't do this without cause--what's the cause?"

The black man, naked except for a cloth about his loins, and with a small bag at his hip, slung from a cord over his shoulder, showed his teeth in a stark grimace.

"You're a newcomer here, massa, or you'd know we're treated bad," he answered. "We're robbed and trod on and there's no word kept with us. We asked the governor for more land and he moved us off. We warned him against having one of our head young men flogged by a slave in the presence of slaves--for we are free men, and he laughs. So, knowing a few strong men can bring many weak men to their knees, we rose. I say this--there's plenty weak men in Jamaica, men who don't know right when they see it. So we rose, massa, and we'll make Jamaica sick before we've done. They can't beat us, for we can ambush here, and shoot those that come after us. We hide, one behind this rock and one behind that, two or three together, and we're safe. But the white soldiers come all together and beat drums and blow horns, and we know where they are, and so we catch 'em and kill 'em. You'll see, we'll capture captains and generals, and we'll cut their heads off and bury them in their own guts."

He made an ugly grimace, and a loathsome gesture, and Michael Clones felt the man ought to die. He half drew his sword, but, thinking better of it, he took the Maroon to the Castle and locked him up in a slave's hut, having first bound him and put him in the charge of one he could trust. But as he put the man away, he said:

"You talk of your people hiding, and men not being able to find you; but did you never hear of bloodhounds, that can hunt you down, and chew you up? Did you never hear of them?"

The man's face wrinkled like a rag, for there is one thing the native fears more than all else, and that is the tooth of the hound. But he gathered courage, and said: "The governor has no hounds. There ain't none in Jamaica. We know dat--all of us know dat--all of us know dat, massa."

Michael Clones laughed, and it was not pleasant to hear. "It may be the governor has no bloodhounds, and would not permit their being brought into the island, but my master is bringing them in himself--a lot with their drivers from Cuba, and you Maroons will have all you can do to hide. Sure, d'ye think every wan in the island is as foolish as the governor? If you do, y'are mistaken, and that's all there is to say."

"The hounds not here--in de island, massa!" declared the Maroon questioningly.

"They'll be here within the next few hours, and then where will you and your pals be? You'll be caught between sharp teeth--nice, red, sharp, bloody teeth; and you'll make good steak-better than your best olio."

The native gave a moan--it was the lament of one whose crime was come tete-a-tete with its own punishment.

"That's the game to play," said Michael to himself as he fastened the door tight. "The hounds will settle this fool-rebellion quicker than aught else. Mr. Calhoun's a wise man, and he ought to be governor here. Criminal? As much as the angel Gabriel! He must put down this rebellion--no wan else can. They're stronger, the Maroons, than ever they've been. They've planned this with skill, and they'll need a lot of handlin'. We're safe enough here, but down there at Salem--well, they may be caught in the bloody net. Bedad, that's sure."

A few moments afterwards he met Dyck Calhoun. "Michael," said Dyck, "things are safe enough here, but we've prepared! The overseers, bookkeepers and drivers are loyal enough. But there are others not so safe. I'm going to Salem-riding as hard as I can, with six of our best men. They're not so daft at Salem as we are, Michael. They won't know how to act or what to do. Darius Boland is a good man, but he's only had Virginian experience, and this is different. A hundred Maroons are as good as a thousand white soldiers in the way the Maroons fight. There are a thousand of them, and they can lay waste this island, if they get going. So I shall stop them. The hounds are outside the harbour now, Michael. The ship Vincent, bringing them, was sighted by a sloop two days ago, making slowly for Kingston. She should be here before we've time to turn round. Michael, the game is in our hands, if we play it well. Do you go down to Kingston and--"

He detailed what Michael was to do on landing the hounds, and laid out plans for the immediate future. "They're in danger at Salem, Michael, so

we must help them. The hounds will settle this whole wretched business."

Michael told him of his prisoner, and what effect the threat about the hounds had had. A look of purpose came into Dyck's face.

"A hound is as fair as a gun, and hounds shall be used here in Jamaica. The governor can't refuse their landing now. The people would kill him if he did. It was I proposed it all."

"Look, sir--who's that?" asked Michael, as they saw a figure riding under the palms not far away.

It was very early morning, and the light was dim yet, but there was sufficient to make even far sight easy. Dyck shaded his forehead with his hand.

"It's not one of our people, Michael. It's a stranger."

As the rider came on he was stopped by two of the drivers of the estate. Dyck and Michael saw him hold up a letter, and a moment later he was on his way to Dyck, galloping hard. Arrived, he dropped to the ground, and saluted Dyck.

"A letter from Salem, sir," he said, and handed it over to Dyck.

Dyck nodded, broke the seal of the letter and read it quickly. Then he nodded again and bade the man eat a hearty breakfast and return with him on one of the Enniskillen horses, as his own would be exhausted. "We'll help protect Salem, my man," said Dyck.

The man grinned. "That's good," he answered. "They knew naught of the rising when I left. But the governor was there yesterday, and he'd protect us."

"Nonsense, fellow, the governor would go straight to Spanish Town where he belongs, when there is trouble."

When the man had gone, Dyck turned to his servant. "Michael," he said, "the news in the letter came from Darius Boland. He says the governor told him he had orders from England to confine me here at Enniskillen, and he meant to do it. We'll see how he does it. If he sends his marshals, we'll make Gadarene swine of them."

There was a smile at his lips, and it was contemptuous, and the lines of his forehead told of resolve. "Michael," he added, "we'll hunt Lord Mallow with the hounds of our good fortune, for this war is our war. They can't win it without me, and they shan't. Without the hounds it may be a two years' war--with the hounds it can't go beyond a week or so."

"If the hounds get here, sir! But if they don't?"

Dyck laid his hand upon the sword at his side. "If they don't get here, Michael, still the war will be ours, for we understand fighting, and the

governor does not. Confine me here, will he? If he does, he'll be a better man than I have ever known him, Michael. In a few hours I shall be at Salem, to do what he could not, and would not, do if he could. His love is as deep as water on a roof, no deeper. He'll think first of himself, and afterwards of the owner of Salem or any other. Let me show you what I mean to do once we've Salem free from danger. Come and have a look at my chart."

Some hours later Dyck Calhoun, with his six horsemen, was within a mile or so of Salem. They had ridden hard in the heat and were tired, but there was high spirit in the men, for they were behind a trusted leader --a man who ate little, but who did not disdain a bottle of Madeira or a glass of brandy, and who made good every step of the way he went-- watchful, alert, careful, determined. They cared little what his past had been. Jamaica was not a heaven for the good, but it was a haven for many who had been ill-used elsewhere; where each man, as though he were really in a new world, was judged by his daily actions and not by any history of a hidden or an open past. As they came across country, Dyck always ahead, they saw how he responded to every sign of life in the bush, how he moved always with discretion where ambush seemed possible. They knew how on his own estate he never made mistakes of judgment; that he held the balance carefully, and that his violences, rare and tremendous, were not outbursts of an unregulated nature. "You can't fool Calhoun," was a common phrase in the language of Enniskillen, and there were few in the surrounding country who would not have upheld its truth.

Now, to-day, he was almost moodily silent, reserved and watchful. None knew the eddies of life which struggled for mastery in him, nor of his horrible disappointments. None knew of his love for Sheila. Yet all knew that he had killed--or was punished for killing--Erris Boyne. None of them had seen Sheila, but all had heard of her, and the governor's courtship of her, and all wondered why Dyck Calhoun should be doing what clearly the governor should do.

Somehow, in spite of the criminal record with which Calhoun's life was stained, they had a respect for him they did not have for Lord Mallow. Dyck's life in Jamaica was clean; and his progress as a planter had been free from black spots. He even kept no mistress, and none had ever known him to have to do with women, black, brown, or white. He had never gone a-Maying, as the saying was, and his only weakness or fault--if it was a fault--was a fondness for the bottle of good wine which was ever open on his table, and for tobacco in the smoking-leaf. To-day he smoked incessantly and carefully. He threw no loose ends of burning tobacco from cigar or pipe into the loose dry leaves and stiff-cut ground. Yet they knew the small clouds floating away from his head did not check his observation. That was proved beyond peradventure when they were within sight of the homestead of Salem on an upland well-wooded. It was in apparently happy circumstances, for they could see no commotion about the homestead; they saw men with muskets, evidently keeping guard--yet too openly keeping guard, and so some said to each other.

Presently Dyck reined his horse. Each man listened attentively, and eyed the wood ahead of them, for it was clear Dyck suspected danger there.

For a moment there seemed doubt in Dyck's mind what to do, but presently he had decided.

"Ride slow for Salem," he said. "It's Maroons there in the bush. They are waiting for night. They won't attack us now. They're in ambush--of that I'm sure. If they want to capture Salem, they'll not give alarm by firing on us, so if we ride on they'll think we haven't sensed them. If they do attack us, we'll know they are in good numbers, for they'll be facing us as well as the garrison of Salem. But keep your muskets ready. Have a drink," he added, and handed his horn of liquor. "If they see us drink, and they will, they'll think we've only stopped to refresh, and we'll be safe. In any case, if they attack, fire your muskets at them and ride like the devil. Don't dismount and don't try to find them in the rocks. They'll catch us that way, as they've caught others. It's a poor game fighting hidden men. I want to get them into the open down below, and that's where they'll be before we're many hours older."

With this he rode on slightly ahead, and presently put his horse at a gentle canter which he did not increase as they neared the place where the black men ambushed. Every man of the group behaved well. None showed nervousness, even when one of the horses, conscious of hidden Maroons in the wood, gave a snort and made a sharp movement out of the track, in an attempt to get greater speed.

That was only for an instant, however. Yet every man's heart beat faster as they came to the place where the ambush was. Indeed, Dyck saw a bush move, and had a glimpse of a black, hideous face which quickly disappeared. Dyck's imperturbable coolness kept them steady. They even gossiped of idle things loud enough for the hidden Maroons to hear. No face showed suspicion or alarm, as they passed, while all felt the presence of many men in the underbrush. Only when they had passed the place, did they realize the fulness of the danger through which they had gone. Dyck talked to them presently without turning round, for that might have roused suspicion, and while they were out of danger now, there was the future and Dyck's plan which he now unfolded.

"They'll come down into the open before it's dark," he said quietly, "and when they do that, we'll have 'em. They've no chance to ambush in the cane-fields now. We'll get them in the open, and wipe them out. Don't look round. Keep steady, and we'll ride a little more quickly soon."

A little later they cantered to the front door of the Salem homestead.

The first face they saw there was that of Darius Boland. It had a look of trouble. Dyck explained. "We thought you might not have heard of the rise of the Maroons. We have no ladies at Enniskillen. We prepared, and we're safe enough there, as things are. Your ladies must go at once to Spanish Town, unless--"

"Unless they stay here! Well, they would not be unwise, for though the slaves under the old management might have joined the Maroons, they will not do so now. We have got them that far. But, Mr. Calhoun, the ladies

aren't here. They rode away into the hills this morning, and they've not come back.

"I was just sending a search party for them. I did not know of the rise of the Maroons."

"In what direction did they go?" asked Dyck with anxiety, though his tone was even.

Darius Boland pointed. "They went slightly northwest, and if they go as I think they meant to do, they would come back the way you came in."

"They were armed?" Dyck asked sharply.

"Yes, they were armed," was the reply. "Miss Llyn had a small pistol. She learned to carry one in Virginia, and she has done so ever since we came here."

"Listen, Boland," said Dyck with anxiety. "Up there in the hills by which we came are Maroons hidden, and they will invade this place tonight. We were ready to fight them, of course, as we came, but it's a risky business, and we wanted to get them all if possible. We couldn't if we had charged them there, for they were well-ambushed. My idea was to let them get into the open between there and here, and catch them as they came. It would save our own men, and it would probably do for them. If Mrs. and Miss Llyn come back that way, they will be in greater danger than were we, for the Maroons were coming here to capture the ladies and hold them as hostages; and they would not let them pass. In any case, the risk is immense. The ladies must be got to Spanish Town, for the Maroons are desperate. They know we have no ships of the navy here now, and they rely on their raiding powers and the governor's weakness. They have placed their men in every part of the middle and western country, and they came upon my place last evening and were defeated. Several were killed and one taken prisoner. They can't be marched upon like an army. Their powers of ambush are too great. They must be run down by bloodhounds. It's the only way."

"Bloodhounds--there are no bloodhounds here!" said Darius Boland. "And if there were, wouldn't pious England make a fuss?"

Dyck Calhoun was about to speak sharply, but he caught sarcasm in Darius Boland's face, and he said: "I have the bloodhounds. They're outside the harbour now, and I intend to use them."

"If the governor allows you!" remarked Darius Boland ironically. "He does not like you or your bloodhounds. He has his orders, so he says."

Dyck made an impatient gesture. "I will not submit to his orders. I have earned my place in this is land, and he shall not have his way. The ladies must be brought to Spanish Town, and placed where the governor's men can protect them."

"The governor's men! Indeed. They might as well stay here; we can

surely protect them."

"Perhaps, for you have skill, Boland, and you are cautious, but is it fair for ladies to stay in this isolated spot with murderers about? When the ladies come back, they must be sent at once to Spanish Town. Can't you see?"

Darius Boland bowed. "What you say goes always," he remarked, "but tell me, sir, who will take the ladies to Spanish Town?"

Dyck Calhoun read the inner meaning of Darius Boland's words. They did not put him out of self-control. It was not a time to dwell on such things. It was his primary duty to save the ladies.

"Come, Boland," he said sharply, "I shall start now. We must find the ladies. What sort of a country is it through which they pass?" He pointed.

"Bad enough in some ways. There's an old monastery of the days of the Spaniards up there"--he pointed to the ruins of one, and it is a pleasant place to rest. I doubt not they rested there, if--"

"If they reached it!" remarked Dyck with crisp inflection. "Yes, they would rest there--and it would be a good place for ambush by the Maroons, eh?"

"Good enough from the standpoint of the Maroons," was the reply, the voice slightly choked.

"Then we must go there. It's a damnable predicament--no, you must not come with me! You must keep command here."

He hastily described the course to be followed by those of his own men who stayed to defend, and then said: "Our horses are fagged. If you loan us four I'll see they are well cared for, and returned in kind or cash. I'll take three of my men only, and loan you three of the best. We'll fill our knapsacks and get away, Boland."

A few moments later, Calhoun and his three men, with a guide added by Boland, had started away up the road which had been ridden by Mrs. Llyn and Sheila. One thing was clear, the Maroons on the hill did not know of the absence of Sheila and her mother, or they would not be waiting. He did not like the long absence of the ladies. It was ominous at such a time.

Dyck and his small escort got away by a road unseen from where the Maroons were, and when well away put their horses to a canter and got into the hills. Once in the woods, however, they rode alertly, and Dyck's eyes were everywhere. He was quick to see a bush move, to observe the flick of a branch, to catch the faintest sound of an animal origin. He was obsessed with anxiety, for he had a dark fear that some ill had happened to the two. His blood almost dried in his veins when he thought of the fate which had followed the capture of ladies in other islands

like Haiti or Grenada.

It did not seem possible that these beautiful women should have fallen into the outrageous hands of savages. He knew the girl was armed, and that before harm might come to her she would end her own life and her mother's also; but if she was caught from behind, and the opportunity of suicide should not be hers--what then?

Yet he showed no agitation to his followers. His eyes were, however, intensely busy, and every nerve was keen to feel. Life in the open had developed in him the physical astuteness of the wild man, and he had all the gifts that make a supreme open-air fighter. He sensed things; but with him it was feeling, and not scent or hearing; his senses were such perfect listeners. He had the intense perception of a delicate plant, those wonderful warnings which only come to those who live close to nature, who study from feeling the thousand moods and tenses of living vegetables and animal life. He was a born hunter, and it was not easy to surprise him when every nerve was sharp with premonition. He saw the marks of the hoofs of Sheila's and her mother's horses in the road, knowing them by the freshness of the indentations. An hour, two hours passed, and they then approached the monasterial ruin of which Boland had spoken. Here, suddenly, Dyck dropped to the ground, for he saw unmistakable signs of fright or flurry in the hoofmarks.

He quickly made examination, and there were signs of women's feet and also a bare native foot, but no signs of struggle or disturbance. The footprints, both native and white, were firmly placed, but the horses' hoof-prints showed agitation. Presently the hoofmarks became more composed again. Suddenly one of Dyck's supporters exclaimed he had picked up a small piece of ribbon, evidently dropped to guide those who might come searching. Presently another token was found in a loose bit of buckle from a shoe. Then, suddenly, upon the middle of the road was a little pool of blood and signs that a body had lain in the dust.

"She shot a native here," said Dyck to his men coolly. "There are no signs of a struggle," remarked the most observant.

"We must go carefully here, for they may have been imprisoned in the ruin. You stay here, and I'll go forward," he added, with a hand on his sword. "I've an idea they're here. We have one chance, my lads, and let's keep our heads. If anything should happen to me, have a try yourselves, and see what you can do. The ladies must be freed, if they're there. There's not one of you that won't stand by to the last, but I want your oath upon it. By the heads or graves of your mothers, lads, you'll see it through? Up with your hands!"

Their hands went up. "By our mothers' heads or graves!" they said in low tones.

"Good!" he replied. "I'll go on ahead. If you hear a call, or a shot fired, forward swiftly."

An instant later he plunged into the woods to the right of the road, by

which he would come upon the ruins from the rear. He held a pistol as he stole carefully yet quickly forward. He was anxious there should be no delay, but he must not be rash. Without meeting anyone he came near the ruins. They showed serene in the shade of the trees.

Then suddenly came from the ruin a Maroon of fierce, yet not cruel appearance, who laid a hand behind his ear, and looked steadfastly towards that part of the wood where Dyck was. It was clear he had heard something. Dyck did not know how many Maroons there might be in the ruins, or near it, and he did not attack. It was essential he should know the strength of his foe; and he remained quiet. Presently the native turned as though to go back into the ruins, but changed his mind, and began to tour the stony, ruined building. Dyck waited, and presently saw more natives come from the ruins, and after a moment another three. These last were having an argument of some stress, for they pulled at each other's arms and even caught at the long cloths of their headdresses.

"They've got the ladies there," thought Dyck, "but they've done them no harm yet." He waited moments longer to see if more natives were coming out, then said to himself: "I'll make a try for it now. It won't do to run the risk of going back to bring my fellows up. It's a fair risk, but it's worth taking."

With that he ran softly to the entrance from which he had seen the men emerge. Looking in he saw only darkness. Then suddenly he gave a soft call, the call of an Irish bird-note which all people in Ireland--in the west and south of Ireland--know. If Sheila was alive and in the place she would answer it, he was sure. He waited a moment, and there was no answer. Then he called again, and in an instant, as though from a great distance, there came the reply of the same note, clearer and more bell-like than his own.

"She's there!" he said, and boldly entered the place. It was dark and damp, but ahead was a break in the solid monotony of ruined wall, and he saw a clear stream of light beyond. He stole ahead, got over the stone obstructions, and came on to a biggish room which once had been a refectory. Looking round it he saw three doors--one evidently led into the kitchen, one into a pantry, and one into a hall. It was clear the women were alone, or some one would have come in answer to his call. Who could tell when they would come? There was no time to be lost. With an instinct, which proved correct, he opened the door leading into the old kitchen, and there, tied, and with pale faces, but in no other sense disordered, were Sheila and her mother. He put his fingers to his lips, then hastily cut them loose from the ropes of bamboo, and helped them to their feet.

"Can you walk?" he whispered to Mrs. Llyn. She nodded assent, and braced herself. "Then here," he said, "is a pistol. Come quickly. We may have to fight our way out. Don't be afraid to fire, but take good aim first. I have some men in the wood beyond where you shot the native," he added to Sheila. "They'll come at once if I call, or a shot is fired. Keep your heads, and we shall be all right. They're a

dangerous crew, but we'll beat them this time. Come quickly."

Presently they were in the refectory, and a moment after that they were over the stones, and near the entrance, and then a native appeared, armed. Without an instant's hesitation Dyck ran forward, and as he entered, put his sword into the man's vitals, and he fell, calling out as he fell.

"The rest will be on us now," said Dyck, "and we must keep going."

Three more natives appeared, and he shot two.

Catching a pistol from Sheila he aimed at the third native and wounded him, but did not kill him. The man ran into the wood. Presently more Maroons came--a dozen or more, and rushed for the entrance. They were met by Dyck's fire, and now also Sheila fired and brought down her man. Dyck wounded another, and in great skill loaded again, but at that moment three of the Maroons rushed down into the ruins.

They were astonished to see Dyck there, and more astonished to receive--first one and then another--his iron in their bowels. The third man made a stroke at Dyck with his lance, and only gashed Dyck's left arm. Then he turned and fled out into the open, and was met by a half-dozen others. They all were about to rush the entrance when suddenly four shots behind them brought three of them down, and the rest fled into the wood shouting. In another moment Dyck and the ladies were in the open, and making for the woods, the women in front, the men behind, loading their muskets as they ran, and alive to the risks of the moment.

The dresses of the ladies were stained and soiled with dust and damp, but otherwise they seemed little the worse for the adventure, save that Mrs. Llyn was shaken, and her face was pale.

"How did you know where we were, and why did you come?" she said, after they had got under way, having secured the horses which Sheila and her mother had ridden.

Briefly Dyck explained how as soon as he had dealt with the revolt of the Maroons at his own place he came straight to Salem.

"I knew you were unused to the ways of the country and to our sort of native here, and I felt sure you would not refuse to take help--even mine at a pinch. But what happened to you?" he added, turning to Sheila.

It was only yesterday Sheila had determined to cut him wholly out of her life by assenting to marry Lord Mallow. Yet here he was, and she could scarcely bear to look into his face. He was shut off from her by every fact of human reason. These were days when the traditions of family life were more intense than now; when to kill one's own father was not so bad as to embrace, as it were, him or her who had killed that father. Sheila felt if she were normal she ought to feel abhorrence against Dyck; yet she felt none at all, and his saving them had given a new colour to their relations. If he had killed her father, the traitor, he had saved

themselves from death or freed them from a shameful captivity which might have ended in black disaster. She kept herself in hand, and did not show confusion.

"We had not heard of the rising of the Maroons," she said. "The governor was at Salem yesterday and a message came from his staff to say would he come at once. His staff were not at Salem, but at the next plantation nearer to Spanish Town. Lord Mallow went. If he suspected the real trouble he said naught, but was gone before you could realize it. The hours went by, night came and passed, then my mother and I, this morning, resolved to ride to the monastery, and then round by the road you travelled back to Salem."

"There are Maroons now on that hill above your place. They were in ambush when we passed, but we took no notice. It was not wise to invite trouble. Some of us would have been killed, but--"

He then told what had been in his mind, and what might be the outcome--the killing or capture of the whole group, and safety for all at Salem.

When he had finished, she continued her story. "We rode for an hour unchallenged, and then came the Maroons. At first I knew not what to do. We were surrounded before we could act. I had my pistol ready, and there was the chance of escape--the faint chance--if we drove our horses on; but there was also the danger of being fired at from behind! So we sat still on our horses, and I asked them how they dared attack white ladies. I asked them if they had never thought what vengeance the governor would take. They did not understand my words, but they grasped the meaning, and one of them, the leader, who understood English, was inclined to have reason. As it was, we stopped what might have been our murder by saying it would be wiser to hold us as hostages, and that we were Americans. That man was killed--by you. A shot from your pistol brought him down as he rushed forward to enter the ruins. But he took care of us as we went forward, and when I shot one of his followers for laying his hand upon me in the saddle--he caught me by the leg under my skirt--he would allow no retaliation. I knew boldness was the safe part to play.

"But in the end we were bound with ropes as you found us, while they waited for more of their people to come, those, no doubt, you found ambushed on the hill. As we lay, bound as you saw us, the leader said to us we should be safe if he could have his way, but there were bad elements among the Maroons, and he could not guarantee it. Yet he knew the government would pay for our release, would perhaps give the land for which they had asked with no avail. We must, therefore, remain prisoners. If we made no efforts to escape, it would be better in the end. "Keep your head steady, missy, try no tricks, and all may go well; but I have bad lot, and they may fly at you." That was the way he spoke. It made our blood run cold, for he was one man, with fair mind, and he had around him men, savage and irresponsible. Black and ruthless, they would stop at nothing except the sword at their throats or the teeth in their flesh."

"The teeth in their flesh!" said Dyck with a grim smile. "Yes, that is

the only way with them. Naught can put the fear of God into them except bloodhounds, and that Lord Mallow will not have. He has been set against it until now. But this business will teach him. He may change his mind now, since what he cares for is in danger--his place and his ladies!"

Mrs. Llyn roused herself to say: "No, no, Mr. Calhoun, you must not say that of him. His place may be in danger, but not his ladies. He has no promise of that. . . . And see, Mr. Calhoun, I want to say that, in any case, you have paid your debt, if you owe one to us. For a life taken you have given two lives--to me and my girl. I speak as one who has a right to say it! Erris Boyne was naught to me at all, but he was my daughter's father, and that made everything difficult. I could make him cease to be my husband, and I did; but I could not make him cease to be her father."

"I had no love for Erris Boyne," said Sheila. Misery was heavy on her. "None at all, but he was my father."

"See, all's well still at Salem," said Dyck waving a hand as though to change the talk. "All's as we left it."

There in the near distance lay Salem, serene. All tropical life about seemed throbbing with life and soaking with leisure.

"We were in time," he added. "The Maroons are still in ambush. The sun is beginning to set though, and the trouble may begin. We shall get there about sundown--safe, thank God!"

"Safe, thank God--and you," said Sheila's mother.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLASH OF RACE

In the King's House at Spanish Town the governor was troubled. All his plans and prophecies had come to naught. He had been sure there would be no rebellion of the Maroons, and he was equally sure that his career would be made hugely successful by marriage with Sheila Llyn--but the Maroons had revolted, and the marriage was not settled!

Messages had been coming from the provost-marshal-general of reports from the counties of Middlesex and Cornwall, that the Maroons were ravaging everywhere and that bands of slaves had joined them with serious disasters to the plantation people. Planters, their wives and children had been murdered, and in some districts the natives were in full possession and had destroyed, robbed and ravaged. He had summoned his commander of the militia forces, had created special constables, and armed them, and had sent a ship to the Bahamas to summon a small British fleet there. He had also mapped out a campaign against the Maroons, which had one grave demerit--it was planned on a basis of ordinary

warfare and not with Jamaica conditions in mind. The provost-marshal warned him of the futility of these plans, but he had persisted in them. He had later been shocked, however, by news that the best of his colonels had been ambushed and killed, and that others had been made prisoners and treated with barbarity. From everywhere, except one, had come either news of defeat or set-back.

One good thing he immediately did: he threw open King's House to the wounded, and set the surgeons to work, thereby checking bitter criticism and blocking the movement rising against him. For it was well known he had rejected all warnings, had persisted in his view that trust in the Maroons and fair treatment of themselves and the slaves were all that was needed.

As he walked in the great salon or hall of audience where the wounded lay--over seventy feet long and thirty wide, with great height, to which beds and conveniences had been hastily brought--it seemed to him that he was saving, if barely saving, his name and career. Standing beside one of the Doric pillars which divided the salon from an upper and lower gallery of communications, he received the Custos of Kingston. As the Custos told his news the governor's eyes were running along the line of busts of ancient and modern philosophers on the gilt brackets between the Doric pilasters. They were all in bronze, and his mind had the doleful imagination of brown slave heroes placed there in honour for services given to the country. The doors at the south end of the great salon opened now and then into the council chambers beyond, and he could see the surgeons operating on the cases returned from the plantations.

"Your honour," said the Custos, "things have suddenly improved. The hounds have come from Cuba and in the charge of ten men--ten men with sixty hounds. That is the situation at the moment. All the people at Kingston are overjoyed. They see the end of the revolt."

"The hounds!" exclaimed the governor. "What hounds?"

"The hounds sent for by Dyck Calhoun--surely your honour remembers!"

Surely his honour did, and recalled also that he forbade the importation of the hounds; but he could not press that prohibition now. "The mutineer and murderer, Dyck Calhoun!" he exclaimed. "And they have come!"

"Yes, your honour, and gone with Calhoun's man, Michael Clones, to Salem."

"To Salem--why Salem?"

"Because Calhoun is there fighting the Maroons in that district. The Maroons first captured the ladies of Salem as they rode in the woods. They were beaten at that game by Calhoun and four men; the ladies then were freed and taken back to Salem. Then the storm burst on Salem--burst, but did not overwhelm. Calhoun saved the situation there; and when his hounds arrive at Salem he will range over the whole country.

It is against the ideas of the people of England, but it does our work in Jamaica as nothing else could. It was a stroke of genius, the hounds, your honour!"

Lord Mallow was at once relieved and nonplussed. No doubt the policy of the hounds was useful, and it might save his own goose, but it was, in a sense, un-English to hunt the wild man with hounds. Yet was it un-English? What was the difference between a sword and a good sharp tooth save that the sword struck and let go and the tooth struck and held on? It had been said in England that to hunt negroes with hounds was barbarous and cowardly; but criminals were hunted with bloodhounds in all civilized countries; and as for cowardice, the man who had sent for these hounds was as brave as any old crusader! No, Dyck Calhoun could not be charged with cowardice, and his policy of the hounds might save the island and the administration in the end. They had arrived in the very hour of Jamaica's and Lord Mallow's greatest peril. They had gone on to the man who had been sane enough to send for them.

"Tell me about the landing of the hounds," said Lord Mallow.

"It was last night about dusk that word came from the pilot's station at Port Royal that the vessel Vincent was making for port, and that she came from Cuba. Presently Michael Clones, the servant of Dyck Calhoun, came also to say that the Vincent was the ship bringing Calhoun's hounds from Cuba, and asking permit for delivery. This he did because he thought you were opposed to the landing. In the light of our position here, we granted the delivery.

"When the vessel came to anchor, the hounds with their drivers were landed. The landing was the signal for a great display on the part of the people and the militia--yes, the militia shared in the applause, your honour! They had had a taste of war with the Maroons and the slaves, and they were well inclined to let the hounds have their chance. Resolutions were then passed to approach your honour and ask that full powers be given to Calhoun to pursue the war without thought of military precedent or of Calhoun's position. He has no official place in the public life here, but he is powerful with the masses. It is rumoured you have an order to confine him to his plantation; but to apply it would bring revolution in Jamaica. There are great numbers of people who love his courage, what he did for the King's navy, and for his commercial success here, and they would resent harsh treatment of him. They are aware, your honour, that he and you knew each other in Ireland, and they think you are hard on him. People judge not from all the facts, but from what they see and hear."

During the Custos' narrative, Lord Mallow was perturbed. He had the common sense to know that Dyck Calhoun, ex-convict and mutineer as he was, had personal power in the island, which he as governor had not been able to get, and Dyck had not abused that power. He realized that Dyck's premonition of an outbreak and sending for the hounds was a stroke of genius. He recalled with anger Dyck's appearance, in spite of regulations, in trousers at the King's ball and his dancing with a black woman, and he also realized that it was a cool insult to himself. It was

then he had given the home authorities information which would poison their mind against Dyck, and from that had come the order to confine him to his plantation.

Yet he felt the time had come when he might use Dyck for his own purposes. That Dyck should be at Salem was a bitter dose, but that could amount to nothing, for Sheila could never marry the man who had killed her father, however bad and mad her father was. Yet it gruelled his soul that Dyck should be doing service for the lady to whom he had offered his own hand and heart, and from whom he had had no word of assent. It angered him against himself that he had not at once sent soldiers to Salem to protect it. He wished to set himself right with Sheila and with the island people, and how to do so was the question.

First, clearly, he must not apply the order to confine Dyck to his plantation; also he must give Dyck authority to use the hounds in hunting down the Maroons and slaves who were committing awful crimes. He forthwith decided to write, asking Dyck to send him outline of his scheme against the rebels. That he must do, for the game was with Dyck.

"How long will it take the hounds to get to Salem?" he asked the Custos presently in his office, with deepset lines in his face and a determined look in his eyes. He was an arrogant man, but he was not insane, and he wished to succeed. It could only be success if he dragged Jamaica out of this rebellion with flying colours, and his one possible weapon was the man whom he detested.

"Why, your honour, as we sent them by wagons and good horses they should be in Dyck Calhoun's hands this evening. They should be there by now almost, for they've been going for hours, and the distance is not great."

The governor nodded, and began to write. A halfhour later he handed to the Custos what he had written.

"See what you think of that, Custos," he said. "Does it, in your mind, cover the ground as it should?"

The Custos read it all over slowly and carefully, weighing every word. Presently he handed back the paper. "Your honour, it is complete and masterly," he said. "It puts the crushing of the revolt into the hands of Mr. Calhoun, and nothing could be wiser. He has the gifts of a leader, and he will do the job with no mistake, and in a time of crisis like this, that is essential. You have given him the right to order the militia to obey him, and nothing could be better. He will organize like a master. We haven't forgotten his fight on the Ariadne. Didn't the admiral tell the story at the dinner we gave him of how this ex-convict and mutineer, by sheer genius, broke the power of the French at the critical moment and saved our fleet, though it was only three-fourths that of the French?"

"You don't think the French will get us some day?" asked the governor with a smile.

"I certainly don't since our defences have been improved. Look at the sixty big cannon on Fort Augusta! They'd be knocked to smithereens before they could get into the quiet waters of the harbour. Don't forget the narrows, your honour. Then there's the Apostle's Battery with its huge shot, and the guns of Fort Royal would give them a cross-fire that would make them sick. Besides, we could stop them within the shoals and reefs and narrow channels before they got near the inner circle. It would only be the hand of God that would get them in, and it doesn't work for Frenchmen these days, I observe. No, this place is safe, and King's House will be the home of British governors for many a century."

"Ah, that's your gallant faith, and no doubt you are right, but go on with your tale of the hounds," said Lord Mallow.

"Your honour, as the hounds went away with Michael Clones there was greater applause than I have ever seen in the island except when Rodney defeated De Grasse. Imagine a little sloop in the wash of the seas and the buccaneers piling down on him, and no chance of escape, and then a great British battleship appearing, and the situation saved--that was how we were placed here till the hounds arrived.

"Your honour, this morning's--this early morning's exit of the hounds was like a procession of veterans to Walhalla. There was the sun breaking over the tops of the hills, a crimsonish, greyish, opaline touch of soft sprays or mists breaking away from the onset of the sunrise; and all the trees with night-lips wet sucking in the sun and drinking up the light like an overseer at a Christmas breakfast; and you know what that is. And all the shore, rocky and sandy, rough and smooth, happy and homely, shimmering in the radiance. And hundreds of Creoles and coloured folk beating the ground in agitation, and slaves a-plenty carrying boxes to the ships that are leaving, and white folk crowding the streets, and bugles blowing, and the tramp of the militia, and the rattle of carts on the cobble-stones, and the voices of the officers giving orders, and turmoil everywhere.

"Then, suddenly, the sharp sound of a long whip and a voice calling, and there rises out of the landing place the procession--the sixty dogs in three wagons, their ten drivers with their whips, but keeping order by the sound of their voices, low, soft, and peculiar, and then the horses starting into a quick trot which presently would become a canter--and the hounds were off to Salem! There could be no fear with the hounds loose to do the hunting."

"But suppose when they get to Salem their owner is no more."

The Custos laughed. "Him, your honour--him no more! Isn't he the man of whom the black folk say: "Lucky buckra--morning, lucky new-comer!" If that's his reputation, and the coming of his hounds just when the island most needed them is good proof of it, do you think he'll be killed by a lot of dirty Maroons! Ah, Calhoun's a man with the luck of the devil, your honour! He has the pull--as sure as heaven's above he'll make success. If you command your staff to have this posted as a proclamation throughout the island, it will do as much good as a thousand

soldiers. The military officers will not object, they know how big a man he is, and they have had enough. The news is not good from all over the island, for there are bad planters and bad overseers, and they've poisoned large fields of men in many quarters of the island, and things are wrong.

"But this proclamation will put things right. It will stop the slaves from revolting; it will squelch the Maroons, and I'm certain sure Calhoun will have Maroons ready to fight for us, not against us, before this thing is over. I tell you, your honour, it means the way out--that's what it means. So, if you'll give me your order, keeping a copy of it for the provost-marshal, I'll see it's delivered to Dyck Calhoun before morning--perhaps by midnight. It's not more than a six hours' journey in the ordinary way."

At that moment an aide-de-camp entered, and with grave face presented to the governor the last report from the provost-marshal-general. Then he watched the governor read the report.

"Ten more killed and twenty wounded!" said the governor. "It must be stopped."

He gave the Custos the letter to Dyck Calhoun, and a few moments later handed the proclamation to his aide-de-camp.

"That will settle the business, your honour," said the aide-de-camp as he read the proclamation.

CHAPTER XXII

SHEILA HAS HER SAY

"Then, tell me please, what you know of the story," said the governor to Sheila at King's House one afternoon two weeks later. "I only get meagre reports from the general commanding. But you close to the intimate source of the events must know all."

Sheila shrank at the suggestion in the governor's voice, but she did not resent it. She had purposes which she must carry out, and she steeled herself. She wanted to get from Lord Mallow a pledge concerning Dyck Calhoun, and she must be patient.

"I know nothing direct from Mr. Calhoun, your honour!" she said, "but only through his servant, Michael Clones, who is a friend of my Darius Boland, and they have met often since the first outbreak. You know, of course, what happened at Port Louise--how the Maroons seized and murdered the garrison, how families were butchered when they armed first, how barbarism broke loose and made all men combine to fight the rebels. Even before Mr. Calhoun came they had had record of a sack of human ears, cut from the dead rebel-slaves, when they had been killed by faithful slaves,

and good progress was made. But the revolted fixed their camps on high rocks, and by blowing of shells brought many fresh recruits to the struggle. It was only when Mr. Calhoun came with his hounds that anything decisive was done. For the rebels--Maroons and slaves--were hid, well entrenched and cautious, and the danger was becoming greater every day. On Mr. Calhoun's arrival, he was almost caught in ambush, being misled, and saved himself only by splendid marksmanship. He was attacked by six rebels of whom he killed four, and riding his wounded horse over the other two he escaped. Then he set the hounds to work and the rebellion in that district was soon over."

"It was gathering strength with increasing tragedy elsewhere," remarked the governor. "Some took refuge in hidden places, and came out only to steal, rob, and murder--and worse. In one place, after a noted slave, well known for his treachery, had been killed--Khoftet was his name--his head was cut off by slaves friendly to us and his heart roasted and eaten. There is but one way to deal with these people. No gaming or drinking must be allowed, blowing of shells or beating of drums must be forbidden, and every free negro or mulatto must wear on his arm a sign--perhaps a cross in blue or red."

"Slavery is doomed," said Sheila firmly. "Its end is not far off."

"Well, they still keep slaves in the land of Washington and Alexander Hamilton. They are better off here at any rate than in their own country, where they were like animals among whom they lived. Here they are safe from poverty, cared for in sickness, and have no fear of being handed over to the keepers of carrion, or being the food of the gallinuso. They can feed their fill on fricasees of macaca worms and steal without punishment teal or ring-tailed pigeons and black crabs from the massa."

"But they are not free. They are atoms in heaps of dust. They have no rights--no liberties."

Sheila was agitated, but she showed no excitement.

She seemed to Lord Mallow like one who had perfect control of herself, and was not the victim of anticipation. She seemed, save for her dark searching eyes, like one who had gone through experience which had disciplined her to control. Only her hands were demonstrative--yet quietly so. Any one watching her closely would have seen that her hands were sensitive, expressed even more markedly than her eyes or lips what were her feelings. Her tragedy had altered her in one sense. She was paler and thinner than ever she had been, but there was enough of her, and that delicately made, which gave the governor a thrill of desire to make her his own for the rest of his life or hers. He had also gone through much since they had last met, and he had seen his own position in the balance--uncertain, troubled, insecure. He realized that he had lost reputation, which had scarcely been regained by his consent to the use of the hounds and giving Dyck Calhoun a free hand, as temporary head of the militia. He could not put him over the regular troops, but as the general commanding was, in effect, the slave of Dyck Calhoun, there was

no need for anxiety.

Dyck Calhoun had smashed the rebellion, had quieted the island, had risen above all the dark disturbances of revolt like a master. He had established barracks and forts at many points in the island, and had stationed troops in them; he had subdued Maroons and slaves by the hounds. Yet he had punished only the chief of those who had been in actual rebellion, and had repressed the violent punishments of the earlier part of the conflict. He had forbidden any one to be burned alive, and had ordered that no one should be executed without his first judging--with the consent of the governor!--the facts of the case.

Dyck had built up for himself a reputation as no one in all the history of the island had been able to do. He commanded by more than official authority--by personality and achievement. There was no one in the island but knew they had been saved by his prudence, foresight and skill. It was to their minds stupendous and romantic. Fortunately they showed no strong feeling against Lord Mallow. By placing King's House at disposal as a hospital, and by gifts of food and money to wives and children of soldiers and civilians, the governor had a little eradicated his record of neglect.

Lord Mallow had a way with him when he chose to use it. He was not without the gift for popularity, and he saw now that he could best attain it by treating Dyck Calhoun well. He saw troops come and go, he listened to grievances, he corrected abuses, he devised a scheme for nursing, he planned security for the future, he gave permission for buccaneer trading with the United States, he had by legislative order given the Creoles a better place in the civic organism. This was a time for broad policy--for distribution of cassavi bread, yams and papaws, for big, and maybe rough, display of power and generosity. He was not blind to the fact that he might by discreet courses impress favourably his visitor. All he did was affected by that thought. He could not but think that Sheila would judge of him by what he did as much as by what he said.

He looked at her now with interest and longing. He loved to hear her talk, and she had information which was no doubt truer than most he received--was closer to the brine, as it were.

"What more can you tell me of Mr. Calhoun and his doings?" he asked presently. "He is lucky in having so perfect a narrator of his histories--yet so unexpected a narrator."

A flush stole slowly up Sheila's face, and gave a glow even to the roots of her hair. She could not endure these references to the dark gulf between her and Dyck Calhoun.

"My lord," she said sharply, "it is not meet that you should say such things. Mr. Calhoun was jailed for killing my father--let it be at that. The last time you saw me you offered me your hand and heart. Well, do you know I had almost made up my mind to accept your hand, when the news of this trouble was brought to you, and you left us--to ourselves and our dangers!"

The governor started. "You are as unfriendly as a 'terral garmighty,' you make me draw my breath thick as the blackamoors, as they say. I did what I thought best," he said. "I did not think you would be in any danger. I had not heard of the Maroons being so far south as Salem."

"Yet it is the man who foresees chances that succeeds, as you should know by now, your honour. I was greatly touched by the offer you made me--indeed, yes," she added, seeing the rapt eager look in his face. "I had been told what had upset me, that Dyck Calhoun was guilty of killing my father, and all the world seemed dreadful. Yes, in the reaction, it was almost on my tongue to say yes to you, for you are a good talker, you had skill in much that you did, and with honest advice from a wife might do much more. So I was in a mind to say yes. I had had much to try me, indeed, so very much. Ever since I first saw Dyck Calhoun he had been the one man who had ever influenced me. He was for ever in my mind even when he was in prison--oh, what is prison, what is guilt even to a girl when she loves! Yes, I loved him. There it was. He was ever in my mind, and I came here to Jamaica--he was here--for what else? Salem could have been restored by Darius Boland or others, or I could have sold it. I came to Jamaica to find him here--unwomanly, perhaps, you will say."

"Unusual only with a genius--like you."

"Then you do not speak what is in your mind, your honour. You say what you feel is the right thing to say--the slave of circumstances. I will be wholly frank with you. I came here to see Dyck Calhoun, for I knew he would not come to see me. Yes, there it was, a real thing in his heart. If he had been a lesser man than he is, he would have come to America when he was freed from prison. But he did not, would not, come. He knew he had been found guilty of killing my father, and that for him and me there could be no marriage--indeed he never asked me to marry him.

"Yet I know he would have done so if he could. When I came to know what he was jailed for doing, I felt there was no place for him and me together in the world. Yet my heart kept crying out to him, and I felt there was but one thing left for me to do, and that was to make it impossible for me to think of him even, or for him to think of me. Then you came and offered me your hand. It was a hand most women might have been glad to accept from the standpoint of material things. And you were Irish like myself, and like the boy I loved. I was sick of the robberies of life and time, and I wanted to be out of it all in some secure place. What place so secure from the sorrow that was eating at my heart as marriage! It said no to every stir of feeling that was vexing me, to every show of love or remembrance. So I listened to you. It was not because you were a governor or a peer--no, not that! For even in Virginia I had offers from one higher than yourself--and younger, and a peer also. No, it was not material things that influenced me, but your own intellectual eminence; for you have more brains than most men, as you know so well."

The governor interrupted her with a gesture. "No, no, I am not so vain

as you think. If I were I should have seen at Salem that you meant to say yes."

"Yet you know well you have gifts, though you have made sad mistakes here. Do not think it was your personality, your looks that induced me to think of you, to listen to you. When Mr. Calhoun told me the truth, and gave me a letter he had written to me--"

"A letter--to you?"

There was surprise in the governor's voice--surprise and chagrin, for the thing had moved him powerfully. "Yes, a letter to me which he never meant me to have. It was a kind of diary of his heart, and it was written even while I was landing on the island on Christmas Day. It was the most terribly truthful thing, opening his whole soul to the girl whom he had always loved, but from whom he was separated by a thing not the less tragical because it was merely technical. He gave it me to read, and when I read it I saw there was no place for me in the world except a convent or marriage. The convent could not be, for I was no Catholic, and marriage seemed the only thing possible. That day you came I saw only one thing to do--one mad, hopeless thing to do."

"Mad and hopeless!" burst out Lord Mallow. "How so? Your very reason shows that it was sane, well founded in the philosophy of the heart."

He was eager to win her yet, and he did not see the end at which she aimed. He felt he must tell her all the passion and love he felt. But her look gave no encouragement, her eyes were uninviting.

Sheila smiled painfully. "Yes, mad and hopeless, for be sure of this: we cannot kill in one day the growth of years. I could not cure myself of loving him by marrying you. There had to be some other cure for that. I never knew and never loved my father. But he was my father, and if Mr. Calhoun killed him, I could not marry him. But at last I came to know that your love and affection could not make me forget him--no, never. I realize that now. He and I can never come together, but I owe him so much--I owe him my life, for he saved it; he must ever have a place in my heart, be to me more than any one else can be. I want you to do something for him."

"What do you wish?"

"I want you to have removed from him the sentence of the British Government. I want him to be free to come and go anywhere in the world --to return to England if he wishes it, to be a free man, and not a victim Off Outlawry. I want that, and you ought to give it to him."

"Why?"

Indignation filled her eyes. "You ask why. He has saved your administration and the island from defeat and horrible loss. He has prevented most of the slaves from revolting, and he conquered the Maroons. The empire is his debtor. Will you do this for one who has

done so much for you?"

Lord Mallow was disconcerted, but he did not show it. "I can do no more than I have done. I have not confined him to his plantation as the Government commanded; I cannot go beyond that."

"You can put his case from the standpoint of a patriot."

For a moment the governor hesitated, then he said: "Because you ask me--"

"I want it done for his sake, not for mine," she returned with decision.

"You owe it to yourself to see that it is done. Gratitude is not dead in you, is it?"

Lord Mallow flushed. "You press his case too hard. You forget what he is--a mutineer and a murderer, and no one should remember that as you should."

"He has atoned for both, and you know it well. Besides, he was not a murderer. Even the courts did not say he was. They only said he was guilty of manslaughter. Oh, your honour, be as gallant as your name and place warrant."

He looked at her for a moment with strange feelings in his heart. Then he said: "I will give you an answer in twenty-four hours. Will that do, sweet persuader?"

"It might do," she answered, and, strange to say, she had a sure feeling that he would say yes, in spite of her knowledge that, in his heart of hearts, he hated Calhoun.

As she left the room, Lord Mallow stood for a moment looking after her.

"She loves the rogue in spite of all!" he said bitterly. "But she must come with me. They are apart as the poles. Yet I shall do as she wishes if I am to win her."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE COMING OF NOREEN

The next day came a new element in the situation: a ship arrived from England. On it was one who had come to Jamaica to act as governess to two children of the officer commanding the regular troops in the island. She had been ill for a week before nearing Kingston, and when the Regent reached the harbour she was in a bad way. The ship's doctor was despondent about her; but he was a second-rate man, and felt that perhaps an island doctor might give her some hope. When she was carried ashore she was at once removed to the home of the general commanding at Spanish Town, and there a local doctor saw her.

"What is her history?" he asked, after he had seen the haggard face of the woman.

The ship's doctor did not know; and the general commanding was in the interior at the head of his troops. There was no wife in the general's house, as he was a widower; and his daughters, of twelve and fourteen, under a faithful old housekeeper, had no knowledge of the woman's life.

When she was taken to the general's house she was in great dejection, and her face had a look of ennui and despair. She was thin and worn, and her eyes only told of the struggle going on between life and death.

"What is her name?" asked the resident doctor. "Noreen Balfe," was the reply of the ship's doctor.

"A good old Irish name, though you can see she comes of the lower ranks of life."

"Married?"

The ship's doctor pointed to her hand which had a wedding-ring. "Ah, yes, certainly . . . what hope have you of her?"

"I don't know what to say. The fever is high. She isn't trying to live; she's got some mental trouble, I believe. But you and I would be of no use in that kind of thing."

"I don't take to new-fangled ideas of mental cure," said the ship's doctor. "Cure the body and the mind will cure itself."

A cold smile stole to the lips of the resident doctor. Those were days of little scientific medical skill, and no West Indian doctor had knowledge enough to control a discussion of the kind. "But I'd like to see some one with brains take an interest in her," he remarked.

"I leave her in your hands," was the reply. "I'm a ship's medico, and she's now ashore."

"It's a pity," said the resident doctor reflectively, as he watched a servant doing necessary work at the bedside. "She hasn't long to go as she is, yet I've seen such cases recover."

As they left the room together they met Sheila and one of the daughters of the house. "I've come to see the sick woman from the ship, if I may," Sheila said. "I've just heard about her, and I'd like to be of use."

The resident doctor looked at her with admiration. She was the most conspicuous figure in the island, and her beauty was a fine support to her wealth and reputation. It was like her to be kind in this frank way.

"You can be of great use if you will," he said. "The fever is not infectious, I'm glad to say. So you need have no fear of being with her

--on account of others."

"I have no fear," responded Sheila with a friendly smile, "and I will go to her now--no, if you don't mind, I'd prefer to go alone," she added as she saw the doctor was coming with her.

The other bowed and nodded approvingly. "The fewer the better," he said. "I think you ought to go in alone--quite alone," he said with gentle firmness, for he saw the girl with Sheila was also going with her.

So it was that Sheila entered alone, and came to the bed and looked at the woman in the extreme depression of fever. "Prepare some lime-juice, please," she said to the servant on the other side of the bed. "Keep it always beside the bed--I know what these cases are."

The servant disappeared, and the eyes of the sick woman opened and looked at Sheila. There shot into them a look of horror and relief in one, if such a thing might be. A sudden energy inspired her, and she drew herself up in bed, her face gone ghastly.

"You are Sheila Boyne, aren't you?" she asked in a low half-guttural note.

"I am Sheila Llyn," was the astonished reply. "It's the same thing," came the response. "You are the daughter of Erris Boyne."

Sheila turned pale. Who was this woman that knew her and her history?

"What is your name?" she asked--"your real name--what is it?"

"My name is Noreen Balfe; it was Noreen Boyne." For a moment Sheila could not get her bearings. The heavy scent of the flowers coming in at the window almost suffocated her. She seemed to lose a grip of herself. Presently she made an effort at composure. "Noreen Boyne! You were then the second wife of Erris Boyne?"

"I was his second wife. His first wife was your mother--you are like your mother!" Noreen said in agitation.

The meaning was clear. Sheila laid a sharp hand on herself. "Don't get excited," she urged with kindly feeling. "He is dead and gone."

"Yes, he is dead and gone."

For a moment Noreen seemed to fight for mastery of her emotion, and Sheila said: "Lie still. It is all over. He cannot hurt us now."

The other shook her head in protest. "I came here to forget, and I find you--his daughter."

"You find more than his daughter; you find his first wife, and you find the one that killed him."

"The one that killed him!" said the woman greatly troubled. "How did you know that?"

"All the world knows it. He was in prison four years, and since then he has been a mutineer, a treasure-hunter, a planter, and a saviour of these islands!"

The sick woman fell back in exhaustion. At that moment the servant entered with a pitcher of lime-juice. Sheila took it from her and motioned her out of the room; then she held a glass of the liquid to the stark lips.

"Drink," she said in a low, kind voice, and she poured slowly into the patient's mouth the cooling draught. A moment later Noreen raised herself up again.

"Mr. Dyck Calhoun is here?" she asked.

"He is here, and none to-day holds so high a place in the minds of all who live here. He has saved the island."

"All are here that matter," said Noreen. "And I came to forget!"

"What do you remember?" asked Sheila. "I remember all--how he died!"

Suddenly Sheila had a desire to shriek aloud. This woman--did this woman then see Erris Boyne die? Was she present when the deed was done? If so, why was she not called to give evidence at the trial. But yes, she was called to give evidence. She remembered it now, and the evidence had been that she was in her own home when the killing took place.

"How did he die?" she asked in a whisper.

"One stroke did it--only one, and he fell like a log." She made a motion as of striking, and shuddered, covering her eyes with trembling hands.

"You tell me you saw Dyck Calhoun do this to an undefended man--you tell me this!"

Sheila's anger was justified in her mind. That Dyck Calhoun should

"I did not see Dyck Calhoun strike him," gasped the woman. "I did not say that. Dyck Calhoun did not kill Erris Boyne!"

"My God!--oh, my God!" said Sheila with ashen lips, but a great light breaking in her eyes. "Dyck Calhoun did not kill Erris Boyne! Then who killed him?"

There was a moment's pause, then--"I killed him," said the woman in agony. "I killed him."

A terrible repugnance seized Sheila. After a moment she said in agitation: "You killed him--you struck him down! Yet you let an innocent

man go to prison, and be kept there for years, and his father go to his grave with shame, with estates ruined and home lost--and you were the guilty one--you--all the time."

"It was part of my madness. I was a coward and I thought then there were reasons why I should feel no pity for Dyck Calhoun. His father injured mine--oh, badly! But I was a coward, and I've paid the price."

A kinder feeling now took hold of Sheila. After all, what this woman had done gave happiness into her--Sheila's-hands. It relieved Dyck Calhoun of shame and disgrace. A jail-bird he was still, but an innocent jail-bird. He had not killed Erris Boyne. Besides, it wiped out forever the barrier between them. All her blind devotion to the man was now justified. His name and fame were clear. Her repugnance of the woman was as nothing beside her splendid feeling of relief. It was as though the gates of hell had been closed and the curtains of heaven drawn for the eyes to see. Six years of horrible shame wiped out, and a new world was before her eyes.

This woman who had killed Erris Boyne must now suffer. She must bear the ignominy which had been heaped upon Dyck Calhoun's head. Yet all at once there came to her mind a softening feeling. Erris Boyne had been rightly killed by a woman he had wronged, for he was a traitor as well as an adulterer--one who could use no woman well, who broke faith with all civilized tradition, and reverted to the savage. Surely the woman's crime was not a dark one; it was injured innocence smiting depravity, tyranny and lust.

Suddenly, as she looked at the woman who had done this thing, she, whose hand had rid the world of a traitor and a beast, fell back on the pillow in a faint. With an exclamation Sheila lifted up the head. If the woman was dead, then there was no hope for Dyck Calhoun; any story that she--Sheila--might tell would be of no use. Yet she was no longer agitated in her body. Hands and fingers were steady, and she felt for the heart with firm fingers. Yes, the heart was still beating, and the pulse was slightly drumming. Thank God, the woman was alive! She rang a bell and lifted up the head of the sick woman.

A moment later the servant was in the room. Sheila gave her orders quickly, and snatched up a pencil from the table. Then, on a piece of paper, she wrote the words: "I, not Dyck Calhoun, killed Erris Boyne."

A few moments later, Noreen's eyes opened, and Sheila spoke to her. "I have written these words. Here they are--see them. Sign them."

She read the words, and put a pencil in the trembling fingers, and, on the cover of a book Noreen's fingers traced her name slowly but clearly. Then Sheila thrust the paper in her bosom, and an instant later a nurse, sent by the resident doctor, entered.

"They cannot hang me or banish me, for my end has come," whispered Noreen before Sheila left.

In the street of Spanish Town almost the first person Sheila saw was Dyck Calhoun. With pale, radiant look she went to him. He gazed at her strangely, for there was that in her face he could not understand. There was in it all the faith of years, all the truth of womanhood, all the splendour of discovery, all that which a man can see but once in a human face and be himself.

"Come with me," she said, and she moved towards King's House. He obeyed. For some moments they walked in silence, then all at once under a magnolia tree she stopped.

"I want you to read what a woman wrote who has just arrived in the island from England. She is ill at the house of the general commanding."

Taking from her breast the slip of paper, she handed it to him. He read it with eyes and senses that at first could hardly understand.

"God in heaven--oh, merciful God!" he said in great emotion, yet with a strange physical quiet.

"This woman was his wife," Sheila said.

He handed the paper back. He conquered his agitation. The years of suffering rolled away. "They'll put her in jail," he said with a strange regret. He had a great heart.

"No, I think not," was the reply. Yet she was touched by his compassion and thoughtfulness.

"Why?"

"Because she is going to die--and there is no time to lose. Come, we will go to Lord Mallow."

"Mallow!" A look of bitter triumph came into Dyck's face. "Mallow--at last!" he said.

CHAPTER XXIV

WITH THE GOVERNOR

Lord Mallow frowned on his secretary. "Mr. Calhoun to see me! What's his business?"

"One can guess, your honour. He's been fighting for the island."

"Why should he see me? There is the general commanding."

The secretary did not reply, he knew his chief; and, after a moment, Lord Mallow said: "Show him in." When Dyck Calhoun entered the governor gave

him a wintry smile of welcome, but did not offer to shake hands. "Will you sit down?" he said, with a slow gesture.

Calhoun made a dissenting motion. "I prefer to stand, your honour."

This was the first time the two men had met alone since Dyck had arrived in Jamaica, or since his trial. Calhoun was dressed in planter's costume, and the governor was in an officer's uniform. They were in striking contrast in face and figure--the governor long, lanky, ascetic in appearance, very intellectual save for the riotous mouth, and very spick and span--as though he had just stepped out of Almack's; while Calhoun was tough and virile, and with the air of a thorough outdoor man. There was in his face the firm fighting look of one who had done things and could tackle big affairs--and something more; there was in it quiet exultation. Here he was now at last alone with the man who had done him great harm, and for whom he had done so much; who had sought to wipe him off the slate of life and being; who had tried to win the girl from whom he himself had been parted.

In spite of it all--of his life in jail, of his stark mutiny, of the oppression of the governor, he had not been beaten down, but had prospered in spite of all. He had by his will, wisdom and military skill, saved the island in its hour of peril, saved its governor from condemnation; and here he was facing the worst enemy of his life with the cards of success in his hands.

"You have done the island and England great service, Mr. Calhoun," said the governor at last.

"It is the least I could do for the land where I have made my home, where I have reaped more than I have sown."

"We know your merit, sir."

A sharp satirical look came into Calhoun's face and his voice rang out with vigour. "And because you knew my merit you advised the crown to confine me to my estate, and you would have had me shot if you could. I am what I am because there was a juster man than yourself in Jamaica. Through him I got away and found treasure, and I bought land and have helped to save this island and your place. What do I owe you, your honour? Nothing that I can see--nothing at all."

"You are a mutineer, and but that you showed your courage would have been hung at the yard-arm, as many of your comrades in England were."

A cold smile played at Calhoun's lips. "My luck was as great as my courage, I know. I have the luck of Enniscorthy!"

At the last words the governor winced, for it was by that touch Calhoun had defeated him in the duel long ago. It galled him that this man whom he detested could say such things to him with truth. Yet in his heart of hearts he had for Calhoun a great respect. Calhoun's invincible will had conquered the worst in Mallow's nature, had, in spite of himself, created

a new feeling in him. There was in Mallow the glimmer of greatness, and only his supreme selfishness had made him what he was. He laid a hand on himself now, though it was not easy to do so.

"It was not the luck of Enniscorthy that sent Erris Boyne to his doom," he said, however, with anger in his mind, for Dyck's calm boldness stirred the worst in him. He thought he saw in him an exultancy which could only come from his late experiences in the field. It was as though he had come to triumph over the governor. Mallow said what he had said with malice. He looked to see rage in the face of Dyck Calhoun, and was nonplussed to find that it had only a stern sort of pleasure. The eyes of Calhoun met his with no trace of gloom, but with a valour worthy of a high cause--their clear blue facing his own with a constant penetration. Their intense sincerity gave him a feeling which did not belong to authority. It was not the look of a criminal, whatever the man might be--mutineer and murderer. As for mutineer, all that Calhoun had fought for had been at last admitted by the British Government, and reforms had been made that were due to the mutiny at the Nore. Only the technical crime had been done by Calhoun, and he had won pardon by his bravery in the battle at sea. Yes, he was a man of mark, even though a murderer.

Calhoun spoke slowly. "Your honour, you have said what you have a right to say to a man who killed Erris Boyne. But this man you accuse did not do it." The governor smiled, for the assumption was ridiculous. He shrugged a shoulder and a sardonic curl came to his lip.

"Who did it then?"

"If you will come to the house of the general commanding you will see."

The governor was in a great quandary. He gasped. "The general commanding--did he kill Erris Boyne, then?"

"Not he, yet the person that did it is in this house. Listen, your honour. I have borne the name of killing Erris Boyne, and I ought to have killed him, for he was a traitor. I had proofs of it; but I did not kill him, and I did not betray him, for he had alive a wife and daughter, and something was due to them. He was a traitor, and was in league with the French. It does not matter that I tell you now, for his daughter knows the truth. I ought to have told it long ago, and if I had I should not have been imprisoned."

"You were a brave man, but a fool--always a fool," said the governor sharply.

"Not so great a fool that I can't recover from it," was the calm reply.

"Perhaps it was the best thing that ever happened to me, for now I can look the world in the face. It's made a man of me. It was a woman killed him," was Calhoun's added comment. "Will your honour come with me and see her?"

The governor was thunderstruck. "Where is she?"

"As I have told you-in the house of the general commanding."

The governor rose abashed. "Well, I can go there now. Come."

"Perhaps you would prefer I should not go with you in the street. The world knows me as a mutineer, thinks of me as a murderer! Is it fair to your honour?"

Something in Calhoun's voice roused the rage of Lord Mallow, but he controlled it, and said calmly: "Don't talk nonsense, sir; we shall walk together, if you will."

At the entrance to the house of the general, the man to whom this visit meant so much stopped and took a piece of paper from his pocket. "Your honour, here is the name of the slayer of Erris Boyne. I give it to you now to see, so you may not be astonished when you see her."

The governor stared at the paper. "Boyne's wife, eh?" he said in a strange mood. "Boyne's wife--what is she doing here?"

Calhoun told him briefly as he took the paper back, and added: "It was accident that brought us all together here, your honour, but the hand of God is in it."

"Is she very ill?"

"She will not live, I think."

"To whom did she tell her story?"

"To Miss Sheila Llyn."

The governor was nettled.

"Oh, to Miss Llyn When did you see her?"

"Just before I came to you."

"What did the woman look like--this Noreen Boyne?"

"I do not know; I have not seen her."

"Then how came you by the paper with her signature?"

"Miss Llyn gave it to me."

Anger filled Lord Mallow's mind. Sheila--why now the way would be open to Calhoun to win--to marry her! It angered him, but he held himself steadily.

"Where is Miss Llyn?"

"She is here, I think. She came back when she left me at your door."

"Oh, she left you at my door, did she? . . . But let me see the woman that's come so far to put the world right."

A few moments later they stood in the bedroom of Noreen Boyne, they two and Sheila Llyn, the nurse having been sent out.

Lord Mallow looked down on the haggard, dying woman with no emotion. Only a sense of duty moved him.

"What is it you wished to say to me?" he asked the patient.

"Who are you?" came the response in a frayed tone.

"I am the governor of the island--Lord Mallow."

"Then I want to tell you that I killed Erris Boyne--with this hand I killed him." She raised her skinny hand up, and her eyes became glazed. "He had used me vilely and I struck him down. He was a bad man."

"You let an innocent man bear punishment, you struck at one who did you no harm, and you spoiled his life for him. You can see that, can't you?"

The woman's eyes sought the face of Dyck Calhoun, and Calhoun said: "No, you did not spoil my life, Noreen Boyne. You have made it. Not that I should have chosen the way of making it, but there it is, as God's in heaven, I forgive you."

Noreen's face lost some of its gloom. "That makes it easier," she said brokenly. "I can't atone by any word or act, but I'm sorry. I've kept you from being happy, and you were born to be happy. Your father had hurt mine, had turned him out of our house for debt, and I tried to pay it all back. When they suspected you I held my peace. I was a coward; I could not say you were innocent without telling the truth, and that I could not do then. But now I'll tell it--I think I'd have told it whether I was dying or not, though. Yes, if I'd seen you here I'd have told it, I'm sure. I'm not all bad."

Sheila leaned over the bed. "Never mind about the past. You can help a man back to the good opinion of the world now."

"I hurt you too," said Noreen with hopeless pain. "You were his friend."

"I believed in him always--even when he did not deny the crime," was the quiet reply.

"There's no good going on with that," said the governor sharply. "We must take down her statement in writing, and then--"

"Look, she is sinking!" said Calhoun sharply. The woman's head had dropped forward, her chin was on her breast, and her hands became clenched.

"The doctor at once-bring in the nurse," said Calhoun. "She's dying."

An instant later, the nurse entered with Sheila, and in a short time the doctor came.

When later the doctor saw Lord Mallow alone he said: "She can't live more than two days."

"That's good for her in a way," answered the governor, and in reply to the doctor's question why, he said: "Because she'd be in prison."

"In prison--has she broken the law?"

"She is now under arrest, though she doesn't know it.

"What was her crime, your honour?"

"She killed a man."

"What man?"

"Him for whom Dyck Calhoun was sent to prison--Erris Boyne."

"Mr. Calhoun was not guilty, then?"

"No. As soon as the woman is dead, I mean to announce the truth."

"Not till then, your honour?"

"Not till then."

"It's hard on Calhoun."

"Is it? It's years since he was tried and condemned. Two days cannot matter now."

"Perhaps not. Last night the woman said to me: 'I'm glad I'm going to die.'" Then he added: "Calhoun will be more popular than ever now."

The governor winced.

CHAPTER XXV

THEN WHAT HAPPENED

An hour after Noreen Boyne had been laid in her grave, there was a special issue of the principal paper telling all the true facts of the death of Erris Boyne. Thus the people of Jamaica came to know that Dyck Calhoun was innocent of the crime of killing Erris Boyne, and he was made the object of splashing admiration, and was almost mobbed by admirers in

the street. It all vexed Lord Mallow; but he steeled himself to urbanity, and he played his part well. He was clever enough to see it would pay him to be outwardly gracious to Calhoun. So it was he made a speech in the capital on the return of the general commanding and the troops from subduing the Maroons, in which he said: "No one in all the King's dominions had showed greater patriotism and military skill than their friend Mr. Dyck Calhoun, who had been harshly treated by a mistaken Government."

A few hours later, in the sweet garden of the house where Sheila and her mother lodged, Calhoun came upon the girl whose gentle dignity and beauty seemed to glow.

At first all she said to him was, "Welcome, old friend," and at last she said, "Now you can come to the United States, Dyck, and make a new life there."

Presently he said: "I ought to go where you wish me to go, for you came to me here when I was rejected of men. I owe you whatever I am that's worth while, if anything I am is worth while. Your faith kept me alive in my darkest days--even when I thought I had wronged you."

"Then you will come to Virginia with me--as my husband, Dyck?" She blushed and laughed. "You see I have to propose to you, for you've never asked me to marry you. I'm throwing myself at your head, sir, you observe!"

He gave an honest smile of adoration. "I came to-day to ask you to be my wife--for that reason only. I could not do it till the governor had declared my innocence. The earth is sweeter to-day than it has been since time began."

He held out his arms, and an instant later the flowers she carried were crushed to her breast, with her lips given to his.

A little later she drew from her pocket a letter. "You must read that," she said. "It is from the great Alexander Hamilton--yes, he will be great, he will play a wondrous part in the life of my new country. Read it Dyck."

After he had read it, he said: "He was born a British subject here in these islands, and he goes to help Americans live according to British principles. With all my sane fellow-countrymen I am glad the Americans succeeded. Do you go to your Virginia, and I will come as soon as I have put my affairs in order."

"I will not go without you--no, I will not go," she persisted.

"Then we shall be married at once," he declared. And so it was, and all the island was en fete, and when Sheila came to Dyck's plantation the very earth seemed to rejoice. The slaves went wild with joy, and ate and drank their fill, and from every field there came the song:

"Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands,
Bress de Lord for de milk and honey!
De big bees is a singin',
My heart is held up and de bells is a ringin';
Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands!"

And sweetly solitary the two lived their lives, till one day, three months later, there came to the plantation the governor and his suite.

When they had dismounted, Lord Mallow said: "I bring you the pay of the British Government for something of what you have suffered, sir, and what will give your lady pleasure too, I hope. I come with a baronetcy given by the King. News of it came to me only this morning."

Calhoun smiled. "Your honour, I can take no title, receive no honour. I have ended my life under the British flag. I go to live under the Stars and Stripes."

The governor was astounded. "Your lady, sir, do you forget your lady?"

But Sheila answered: "The life of the new world has honours which have naught to do with titles."

"I sail for Virginia by the first ship that goes," said Calhoun. "It is good here, but I shall go to a place where things are better, and where I shall have work to do. I must decline the baronetcy, your honour. I go to a land where the field of life is larger, where Britain shall remake herself."

"It will take some time," said the governor tartly. "They'll be long apart."

"But they will come together at last--for the world's sake."

There was silence for a moment, and through it came the joy-chant from the fields:

"Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands,
Bress de Lord for de milk and honey."

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