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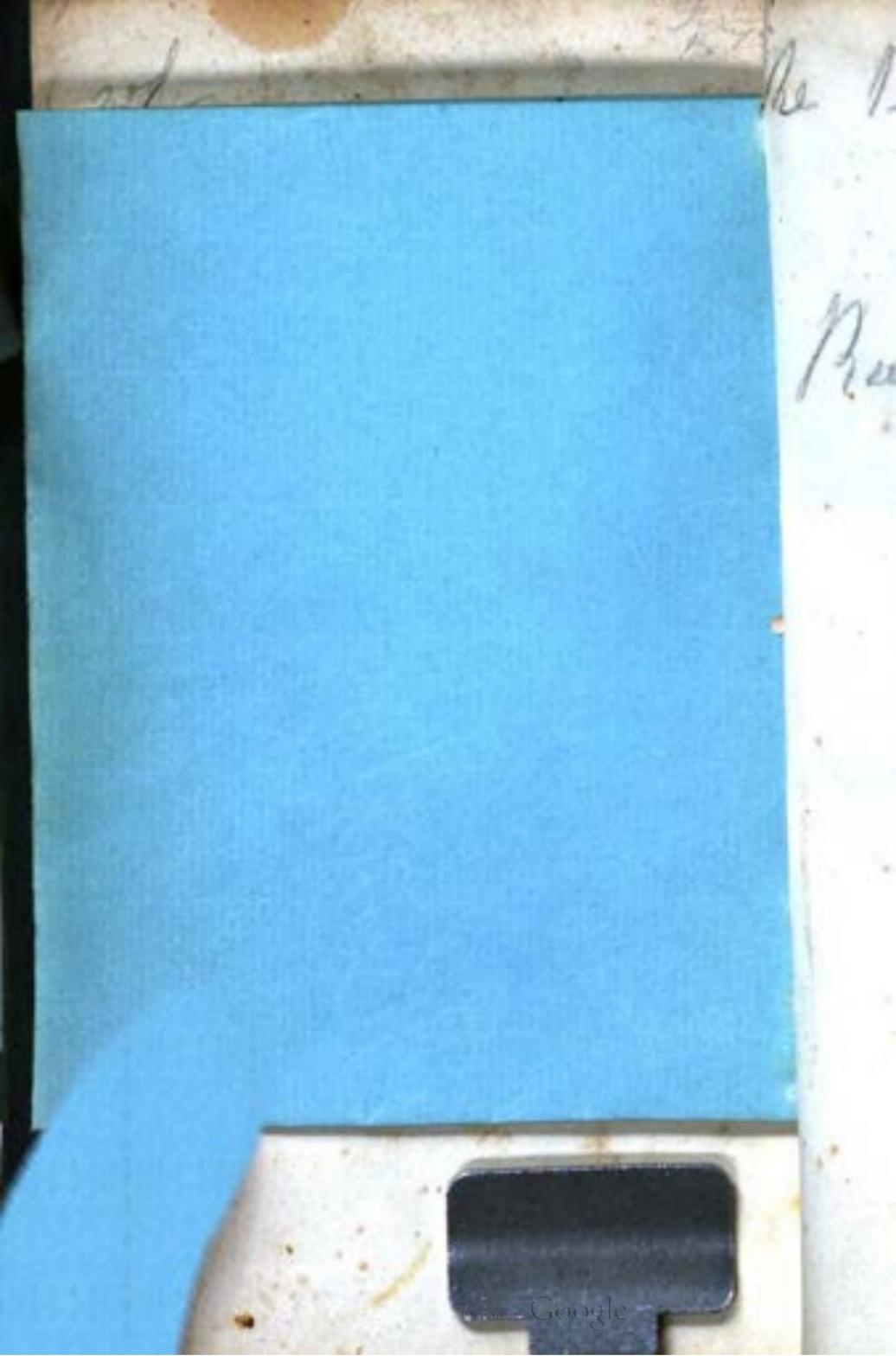
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LEA AND BLANCHARD,

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HAVE JUST PUBLISHED

A NAVAL HISTORY

OF

THE UNITED STATES.

BY J. FENIMORE COOPER, ESQ.

IN TWO HANDSOME VOLUMES, BOUND IN EMBROSSED CLOTH.

The History of the Navy of the United States from the earliest period of its existence, in the dawn of the Revolution, through all its discouragements, reverses, trials and glory, was a task worthy of the author who had established a reputation as a describer of nautical events, superior to that of any other living writer. The task has been so performed as to leave nothing to desire. No work of higher interest has been published in the United States for many years. The theme is one which Mr. Cooper seems to treat *con amore* and for which his early life and education fitted him, above all other men. If we are not mistaken, the publication of this book is calculated to heighten the already exalted estimate in which the Navy is held, and to render it still more, if possible, a favourite with the nation. Whilst Mr. Cooper has, at all times, given full credit to the officers and crews of the vessels whose victories, during the late war, shed so much renown upon our arms, he has not been guilty of the bad taste, which a writer of less discrimination would scarcely have avoided, of indulging a vainglorious spirit and a disparaging tone in reference to our great rival upon the ocean. The glories of American victories are fully portrayed, whilst, at the same time, care is taken, in every case, to exhibit a fair and impartial estimate of the strength and appointments of antagonist's vessels or fleets. In this way the work acquires the credit due to a grave and impartial history. The book is splendidly published by Lea and Blanchard.—*Baltimore Chronicle*.

If there was one man before all others, whom we could have selected for this task, that man was Mr. Cooper. The history of the Navy has been written *con amore*. Mr. Cooper in all things relative to the Navy writes with enthusiasm. The ocean is his element. With the glorious career of the service in which his youth was passed, he takes a laudable pride, and he betrays in every page the earnest desire of his heart to make its merits known to the world. In the satisfaction with which he dwells upon the high-toned discipline of a man-of-war, and the extraordinary efficiency of many of our frigates during the war, we discover the *esprit de corps* of the trained officer; and in

dwelling upon the achievements of our young Navy, the pure American fire of his genius once more blazes out as brightly as ever.

But in all his enthusiasm for his own country, he never forgets the claims of a gallant enemy. His fairness and impartiality are as conspicuous as his patriotism; and in his generous appreciation of the prowess of the English, we find an additional compliment to our own Navy. Mr. Cooper's talents and acquirements particularly well qualified him for the work he had undertaken. He has meted out justice with a cool and impartial hand. Understanding all the feelings, prejudices, traditions and customs of the service; being upon terms of intimate acquaintance with most of the older officers, and having all the records that are to be found in the libraries of the country, or in the offices of Government, connected with the subject, at his disposal, he enjoyed unlimited means of procuring the best and most authentic *data*—and, describing every thing with the clear intelligence of a seaman, in his work we meet with none of those errors of detail, unseamanlike expressions, and other similar mistakes, which in naval histories so often shock the professional reader. In the interest which he has thrown around the cruises and combats of our ships of war, we trace the master hand which drew the Pilot; nor will many chapters in this work yield in point of romantic interest to any of his sea-novels. Many of the naval actions of the Revolution, and especially the cruising of Paul Jones, and the desperate fight between the Bon-Homme Richard and the Serapis, have all the richness of romance, with the method and accuracy of strict history.—*American Traveller*.

We have perused this history with no little curiosity and with great interest. Considering the brief existence of the American marine, its annals are more eventful, more romantic, and more various, than any in existence. Nothing can surpass the energy which enabled the United States to form an effective navy, at a time when they could hardly be said to have had a political existence, and when they were beset by greater difficulties than any which an infant nation had ever yet to encounter. This consideration has animated the present historian, whose enthusiasm seems to be kindled by his office of chronicler, even more than when he formerly sought inspiration from the same source in constructing his famous stories of the sea. His national pride has, however, not tempted him to be, after the manner of his countrymen, vainglorious as regards his own nation, and abusive towards others. His work, accordingly, is more fair and candid than could have been expected on such a theme from an American pen. Altogether this history is a valuable one, and cannot fail to pass into universal circulation. The incidents which took place in the naval war with Tripoli, are grander and more heroic than any thing in the circle of romance, and are detailed with all the vigour and animation of Mr. Cooper's genius.—*British Naval and Military Magazine*.

THE  
DAMSEL OF DARIEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS,"  
"MELlichAMPE," &c.

"Què te hice vil fortuna,  
Porque te quieras mudar,  
Y quitarme de mi silla,  
En que el Rey me fue à sentar."

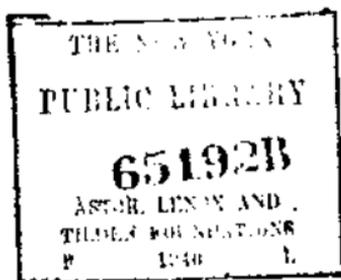
EL CONDE GRIMALDOS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:  
LEA AND BLANCHARD,  
SUCCESSORS TO CAREY AND CO.

1839,  
N<sup>o</sup> 25



Entered, according to Act of Congress, by **LXA AND BLANCHARD**,  
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TO THE  
HON. JAMES K. PAULDING,

As one of the earliest pioneers in the fields of American letters, as one of the ablest and most patriotic, who, though conscious of the few rewards and thousand discouragements of literature in our country, has never made any concessions to that foreign sway,—a relic of the old colonial tyranny,—the insolent exactions of which, seen in all our relations, social and national, will, it is feared, never entirely cease, until, in the accumulating and unquestionable harvests of our own soil, we shall become as obviously independent of the mind and money of other and hostile nations, as we have shown ourselves to be of their political protection,—this story of the New World—of the perils and privations of early discovery—of its bold adventures, wondrous triumphs, and inadequate rewards,—is most respectfully inscribed by his fellow-labourer and friend,

THE AUTHOR.

Ms. Robert Coleman Taylor  
9 April 1940



## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE proof-sheets of the first hundred pages of this work were not read by the author. This must account to the reader, if it does not excuse, the numberless errors which will be found within those limits. A few of these may be referred to here, though it would be impossible, in so small a space, to correct the greater number; most of which, it is, perhaps, fortunate, will be sufficiently obvious to render a special notice unnecessary. The name of the accomplished courtier, Diego de Nicuesa, is printed "Nienesa" repeatedly in the first few chapters; at page 22, line 16, "imaging" is printed "in caging;" at page 24, line 25, "parted" appears "painted;" page 27, line 25, for "~~from~~ the precipice" read "*to* the precipice;" for "Diego Colon," on the next page, read "Christovallo Colon;" at 31, for "*areyto*" read "*areyto*;" at 33, for "coaled shell" read "coated shell;" at 34, line 34, for "out the truth" read "but the truth;" at 37, for "Gomez Davila" read "Felipe Davila;" at 49, omit the word "not" from line 18; at 50, line 5, for "unexpected" read "unexpressed;" same page, line 23, for "hand" read "heart;" next page, in two places, read "Christovallo" for "Diego;" at 61, make the same correction; at 67, for "*departimiento*" read "*repartimiento*;" at 68, for "Buru" read "Azuma;" at 69, line 33, for "Buru" read "Azuma;" line 35, for "Azuma" read "Buru," and wherever on the same page the same names occur, they are required to change places; so, also, on pages 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, and 77. At page 73, line 36, for "girl" read "tribe;" same page, line 39, for "next" read "most;" at 77, line 6, for "continued" read "contrived;" same page, line 8, for "hauled" read "hurled;" same page, last line, for "fist" read "fool." At 84, for "Azuma" read "Buru;" same page, for "Hawaie" read "Zemi." These are sufficient samples—the rest, more numerous, if less important than these, must be left to the keen eyes and tender charities of the reader; who is solicited to be no less indulgent than critical, and to ascribe to circumstances, rather than wilfulness or neglect, the appearance in this volume of so many blunders, which are the regret equally of publisher and author.



THE  
DAMSEL OF DARIEN.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—THE SCENE—THE TIME—THE PERSONS.

"NOTHING," remarks a distinguished modern writer of our own country, "could be more chivalrous, urbane and charitable; nothing more pregnant with noble sacrifices of passion and interest, with magnanimous instances of forgiveness of injuries, and noble contests of generosity, than the transactions of the Spanish discoverers of America with each other:—" he adds—"it was with the Indians alone that they were vindictive, blood-thirsty, and implacable." In other words, when dealing with their equals—with those who could strike hard and avenge,—they forbore offence and injury; to the feeble and unoffending, alone, they were cruel and unforgiving. Such being the case, according to the writer's own showing, the eulogium upon their chivalry, charity, and urbanity, is in very doubtful propriety, coming from the lips of a Christian historian; and our charity would be as singularly misplaced as his, were we to suffer its utterance unquestioned. But the alleged characteristics of these Spanish adventurers in regard to their dealings with each other, are any thing but true, according to our readings of history; and with all deference to the urbane and usually excellent authority referred to, we must be permitted, in this place, to record our dissent from his conclusions. It will not diminish, perhaps, but rather elevate the character of these discoverers, to show that their transactions with each other were, with a few generous exceptions, distinguished by a baseness and

vindictiveness quite as shameless and unequivocal as marked their treatment of the Indians:—that nearly every departure from their usual faithlessness of conduct, was induced by fear, by favour, or the hope of ultimate reward;—that, devouring the Indians for their treasure, they scrupled not to exhibit a like rapacity towards their own comrades, in its attainment, or upon its division; and that, in short, a more inhuman, faithless, blood-thirsty and unmitigated gang of savages never yet dishonoured the name of man or debased his nature. The very volume which contains the eulogy upon which we comment—Irving's "Companions of Columbus,"—a misnomer, by the way, since none of them were, or could be, properly speaking, his companions—abounds in testimonies which refute and falsify it. The history of these "companions" is a history of crime and perfidy from the beginning; of professions made without sincerity, and pledges violated without scruple; of crimes committed without hesitation, and, seemingly, without remorse; of frauds perpetrated upon the confiding, and injuries inflicted without number upon the defenceless; and these, too, not in their dealings merely with the natives, for these they only destroyed, but in their intercourse with their own comrades; with those countrymen to whom nature and a common interest should have bound them, to the fullest extent of their best abilities and strongest sympathies; but whom they did not scruple to plunder and abuse, at the instance of motives the most mercenary and dishonourable. With but a few, and those not very remarkable exceptions, all the doings of this "ocean chivalry" are obnoxious to these reproaches. It is enough, in proof, to instance the fortunes of Cortes, Ojeda, Ponce de Leon, Balboa, Niñesa, Pizarro, Almagro, and the "great admiral" himself; most of them hostile to each other, and all of them victims to the slavish, selfish hates and festering jealousies, the base avarice, and scarcely less base ambition of the followers whom they led to wealth, and victory, and fame. Like most fanatics, who are generally the creatures of vexing and variable moods, rather than of principle and a just desire for renown, none of them, with the single exception of Columbus, seem to have been above the force of circumstances, which moved them hourly, as easily to a disregard of right, as to a fearlessness of danger. At such periods they invariably proved themselves indif-

ferent to all the ties of country, to all the sentiments of affection, to all the laws of God: a mere blood-thirsty soldiery, drunk with the frequent indulgence of a morbid appetite, and as utterly indifferent, in their frenzy, to their sworn fellowships as to the common cause. Of the whole chivalry of this period and nation, but little that is favourable can be said. That they were brave and fearless, daring and elastic, cannot be denied. But here eulogium must cease. From the bigot monarch upon the throne, to the lowest soldier serving under his banner, they seem all to have been without faith. The sovereign had no scruple, when interest moved him and occasion served, to break the pledges which he might not so easily evade; and the morals of his people furnished no reproachful commentary upon the laxity of his own. Let us but once close our eyes upon the bold deeds and uncalculating courage of these warriors, and the picture of their performances becomes one loaded with infamy and shame. The mind revolts from the loathsome spectacle of perfidy and brute-baseness which every where remains; and it is even a relief, though but a momentary one, once more to look upon the scene of strife, and forget, as we are but too apt to do, in the gallant passage of arms, the meanness and the malice of him who delights us with his froward valour, and astounds us with admiration of his skill and strength. The relief is but transient, however, and the next moment reveals to us a re-enactment of the sin and the shame, from which the bravest and the boldest among them could not long maintain the "whiteness of their souls."

The tale which follows will be found to illustrate some of these opinions. Its hero was one of the most gallant and great among the discoverers:—a man no less thoughtful than valorous; having all the virtues, and but very few, and those in small degree, of the vices of his comrades: one who led his companions to fame and victory—who won the greatest advantages in the New World, next to Columbus; and perished through the ingratitude of his sovereign and the miserable baseness of his fellows. With far greater merits, his fate was, nevertheless, the fate of all of those who shared his companion's, and served under the same sway. It was, and must be, the fate of all who toil in behalf of a time which has just enough of ambition to foster envy into rankness, and too little of gratitude to be

even just. What should be the growth and product of such a period? What should be the people controlled by such dominion? What but the heartless tyranny that destroys where it cannot enslave, until, consuming itself with its own conquests, it lies a mere wreck upon the world's bosom, like the mammoth relics of our own forests, the remains of a monster which a world has failed to feed.

The reader is now requested to recall to his recollection the history of Spanish discovery and adventure, about the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and nine, a period particularly fruitful of events in the invasion and discovery of the then but recently found continent. At this time, dazzled with the idea of finding the Aurea Chersonesus of the ancients, and of drawing gold from mines which had supplied the treasures of Solomon the Magnificent, and crowned Jerusalem with the ineffable glories of the temple, King Ferdinand projected the conquest of the hostile shores of Veragua. To find adventurers sufficiently numerous and bold for such peril was not a difficult task, at a time when so many thousand valiant men, trained to battle in the conquest of the Moors, pined in inactivity, and wasted for lack of employment. To discover leaders equal to such an enterprise, was a far less easy matter. It is not certain, indeed, that the monarch ever found them. There were always candidates enough from whom to choose, but real merit stands aloof on most of these occasions; and even where it desires, under the spur of an honourable ambition, to serve and to adventure, the lot of the great and the brave who had gone forth on these paths of peril had been too uniformly disastrous, and was too universally known, not of itself, to discourage many who, conscious of like merits, were not without their just apprehensions of like treatment. The "admiral" was dead, and many of the valiant and trusty men who had been trained by him were dead likewise, or had been set aside in the scuffle which necessarily followed every addition to the number of those aspirants for royal favour, who thronged around the steps of authority. The avarice and judgment of Ferdinand were continually at issue in the selection of those whom he designed to serve him; and it was now his policy to find, for the proposed adventure, such as could combine with the necessary qualities of mind and education the credit to procure the means without drawing upon

the resources of the crown. Ferdinand desired glory ; but the Jew clothesman predominated in his nature, and it was no less his desire, always, to obtain it as a great bargain. From among the numerous adventurers who clamoured for commissions and employment, he found two who seemed to meet his wishes in every respect. The first and most distinguished of these warriors was Alonzo de Ojeda, a brave, rash, headstrong cavalier, who had a faith in his sword, which he yielded to scarcely any other influence. He is described as small of stature, but well made ; of great strength and wonderful activity ; a fearless horseman, dexterous with every weapon, and noted in combat for extraordinary adroitness. These martial qualities, however admirable, were somewhat impaired by a rashness of temper which led him into a thousand unnecessary risks, involved him in frequent difficulties, and served to diminish the value, in great part, of his heroic achievements.

The other warrior chosen by Ferdinand to lead in the conquest of Veragua, was Diego de Nienesa, an accomplished gentleman, of noble birth, and one who had been long accustomed to high station in Spain. Like Ojeda, he was also of small stature, and like him, equally remarkable for the symmetry, strength, and activity of his person. He, too, was master of his weapon—of all weapons—and had the additional merit of being skilled in all those graceful exercises of chivalry, which, if not so absolutely necessary to the actual business of war, certainly contribute, in no small degree, to set off and distinguish the warrior in the eyes of those who look only upon its pageantries. He was noted for his vigour and address in jousts and tilting-matches, was unsurpassed in feats of horsemanship, and—an accomplishment not less attractive among his admirers,—a most capital musician. With little of the rashness of Ojeda, he, perhaps, lacked something of that tenacious and constant resolution which, in the other, looked like obstinacy. In most respects they were no unequal rivals, and Ferdinand, having chosen them to represent his arms in the savage regions of Veragua, did well to bestow upon them equal titles, and to divide that country between them. Their governments lay along the Isthmus of Darien, the boundary-line passing through the Gulf of Uraba. The eastern part extending to Cape de la Vela, was given to Ojeda, and called New Andalusia ; the western, including

Veragua, and reaching to Cape Gracias á Dios, was assigned to Nienesa. The island of Jamaica, as a place of supplies, was given to them in common. Ojeda, who was poor and without resources himself, was provided with means by a sturdy seaman named Juan de la Cosa, who had formed an attachment for him, and freely gave him all his little earnings, gleaned from former voyages; besides bestowing upon him what was far more valuable, his personal help, for he was a good soldier and able pilot. His fleet consisted of but three vessels, the whole of which carried little more than two hundred men. That of Nienesa was far more imposing. He set forth from Spain for Santo Domingo, where both fleets were appointed to rendezvous, with six stout vessels; and the rival governors, helped on by mutually favouring winds, reached the island at the same time. The reader may imagine for himself the buzz and confusion, the stir and strife, so like to follow, in a small community, the sudden appearance of two rival chieftains such as we have described; both highly popular, and each seeking, by exercise of all his qualifications, to win the favour of the multitude, and increase, thereby, the resources in men and money of his little armament, to which, in both cases, much was still wanting to render them fit for the daring enterprises for which they were designed. The little but growing city was, at this time, crowded with people of all sorts and conditions. There came the lounging but haughty cavalier, thirsting for strife, to which the long wars with the Moors had but too well accustomed him; there rolled the vaunting and swelling seaman, whom the wondrous discoveries of the New World had filled with hopes and fancies of discoveries still more wonderful yet in store for the adventurous; there, sly and insinuating, came the artful lawyer, ever following the spoil, even as the vulture, urged by the unerring scent, flies to the desired carrion; and there, restless ever, and pushing through the crowd, the cunning tradesman, holding his gaudy wares and foolish toys on high, persuading the vain and the presumptuous to the miserable barter, in which they give—the constant trade of vanity—the solid gold of their possessions for false glares and useless counterfeits. Such was the motley population of Santo Domingo, not to speak of the thousand modifications of character, condition, and employment, which are made of, and which follow

these. The vices of old Spain had been among the first of her possessions, which she gave, in exchange for its gold, to the New World; and the pander and the pimp, the profligate and the prostitute, were not wanting to the community, the mass of whose population was composed of the worn-out soldier and the wandering seaman. The natives were also still numerous, but they were daily undergoing diminution, and cannot well be said to have formed at any time a portion of the people. Twenty years, the period which had elapsed from the discovery of Columbus, and the time when this story begins, had effected a wondrous and melancholy change in the fortunes of Hispaniola. The island of Bohio, or of "The Cottages," as it was called by the natives, was no longer what it had been ere the coming of the Spaniards, the abode of happiness. With its nakedness its peace had departed. Crime soon usurped the dwelling of contentment, and the simple savages, who, in that bland and seductive climate, where nature yields her fruits without exacting the dues of labour, had no wants of their own, were now fettered to destructive toils, that they might supply the artificial wants of strangers. A thousand task-masters were set above them, who directed the labours of the slave, not with reference to his capacities and customs, but with regard only to the greedy avarice which filled their own booms. The gentle race which in the oppressive noonday found shelter beneath the palm, and slept securely in its shade, was driven from its resting-places for ever. The symmetrical and slender limbs of the Haytian, which gentle sports and the exercises of an innocent play, had made graceful as erect, were now bent and deformed beneath the weight of unwonted burdens: his blood mingled like rain with the earth upon whose bosom he had slept with the happy confidence of the child that murmurs and sinks on the mother's breast; and the life which ease had made no less delightful than liberty had made it confident and proud, was now rendered burdensome if not hateful, by reason of those cruel toils for which he saw no purpose, and from which he derived no fruits. His cottages became the possession of the Spaniard, and, in no long time, his presence ceased to upbraid the usurper with that grinding tyranny to which he could offer no resistance. The conquerors strode over the graves of victims so gentle in their nature, that they had seldom given them the pro-

vocation—so little needed by the Spaniard—to slay them by the sword.

But they did not perish until they had proved to their invaders the fatal fertility of their island. The gold which they perished to procure, invited hourly new oppressors. The pearls which their seas cast up, in a profusion heretofore unnoted, upon their shores, dazzled the eyes and warmed the enterprise daily of fresh adventurers. Bohio groaned with the martial tread of the hidalgo, impatient of the restraining seas, and lifting an unsheathed blade that hourly pointed toward the undiscovered countries. Already, too, had the less adventurous and more wise begun those more solid labours of civilization which make her stationary. The simple cane and rush cottages of the Indians were beginning to give way to the massive habitation of stone; and the clink of the mason's hammer mingled with the many and discordant sounds that rang from morn till midnight through the vast plain of the scattered city. Speculators had in hand already the sale of favourite lots; public places were laid out, hills levelled, groves planted, baths of stone prepared for the luxurious, and the Spanish damsels, of whom Santo Domingo by this time had her store, already began to plan those places of delicious retreat, the fame of which, brought home by the warriors who had conquered the splendid city of Grenada, had run through Spain, and wrought a change in the taste of the formal Spaniard no less sudden than surprising. The poor Indian looked with wonder upon the growth of a city, the dwellings of which were cemented with his blood.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE KNIGHT AND THE ASTROLOGER. •

It was a quiet but cloudy morning in the beginning of November, and the city of Santo Domingo, or as the Admiral always preferred to call it, New Isabella, sitting at the foot of her hills and mountains, looked forth upon the noble river of Ozama, with an air of melancholy if not gloomy apprehension. The season of the so much dreaded hurricane was nearly or quite over, and many were the wrecks lying around her on rock, valley, and headland, distinguishing its path of devastation. But, in that world of various phenomena and capricious climate, where a few hours work the most surprising changes in the atmosphere and sea, there could be no reasonable certainty that all danger from this fruitful source of apprehension had gone by. From the middle of the preceding August the diurnal breezes had begun to intermit, and the atmosphere grew dry, close, and suffocating. No genial showers came to freshen the earth and sweeten and relieve the air. Faint zephyrs and protracted calms succeeded to the steady and life-giving sea-breezes of June; and in the towering clouds of fleece, discoloured with a dun and reddish hue, that rose with the morning, and hung high in the southern and south-western heavens, there were manifest tokens of the annual terrors of the approaching autumn. The blue mountains seemed to approach the spectator, rising out, and standing forth in unembarrassed relief, utterly unencumbered with the vast accumulations of threatening vapour, which yet continued to roll towards them, growling in fitful volumes of thunder as they came, which found reverberating voices from all their peaks. Throughout the whole month of October these masses of wind and vapour had poured forth cataracts of storm upon the city, and

three several hurricanes, of different degrees of power, but all of them destructive, had passed over the island, rending in its progress with equal recklessness the bohio of the native and the proudest trees of its dense and mighty forests. And still the clouds hung high, silent, and ominous above the south-western mountains; the north wind had not yet acquired sufficient force to purge and clear the atmosphere, and though the sea upon the northern coasts had begun that peculiar roaring which announces and prepares the approach of the serene winter of December, it was yet evident that the dispersion of the vapours which were still congregating above the higher peaks of the mountains, would bring with it other hurricanes, more terrible, perhaps, than all the past. Gloomily, and with sufficient reason, therefore, might the little but powerful city look forth upon the sky and waters, incaging in her own aspect, reflected from the dense dull vapours hanging above her, the many anxieties which filled the bosoms of her people. But these anxieties, though general, were yet not sufficient to discourage that adventure and impede those enterprises which had made her what she was, the connecting link between two worlds; receiving and sending forth the pioneers of the old, and transmitting back, in requital, the wondrous and ill-gotten treasures of the new. The lovely waters of the Ozama, now broken by short, chopping billows, were covered with barques, whose white sails and gaudy streamers helped to cheer a prospect otherwise sufficiently discouraging. There, on one hand, lay the gallant fleet of the accomplished cavalier, Nienesá, consisting of four ships and two brigantines; and there, within short cannon-shot distance, rode the humbler armament of the stout Alonzo de Ojeda. The interval was filled up by a dozen vessels of smaller description, from the open caraval, whose sides seemed to yield to the pressure of the waves on every hand, to the gigantic canoe of the native, hollowed out from the towering ceiba, and sometimes equal in burden to the largest of those consecrated but frail vessels which had borne Columbus on his first voyage of fame and peril. There was one vessel beside, lying in the harbour of Santo Domingo, not less imposing in size and equipment than the proudest of those in the fleet of Nienesá. She lay at anchor aloof from all the rest, and while the two fleets of the rival commanders ex-

hibited the utmost animation, receiving momentarily on board the supplies essential to the voyage from a hundred little boats, but a single and small canoe was seen to ply between her and the shore at protracted intervals throughout the day. Yet the fortunes of one greater than either Ojeda or Nienea lay on board that solitary barque—one destined to achieve exploits and acquire glory to which even their fondest hopes, and wildest imaginings, and most daring toils, were but faint and fleeting shadows.

But if the stir of busy life gave a cheerful aspect to the vessels riding at anchor in that vexed and chafing bay, not less lively and stirring was the animation which now filled the streets of the small but swelling city. There the two commanders—busy in beating up recruits, buying stores, and borrowing money, the last not the least imposing necessity, nor the one most easily overcome—had contrived to set the people completely by the ears, and divide them into parties with respect to their rival merits and pretensions. The attractive and courtly accomplishments of Nienea, won to his side the younger portion of the citizens—those who were most easily taken by specious externals, and showy but unsubstantial attainments; while the friends of Ojeda were chiefly found among the veterans of the island—those old voyagers who had, from the first, been the followers of Columbus and Pinzon, and well knew the importance of something more than graceful accomplishments, in all encounters with the Indians. These parties had been gradually forming for some weeks previous to the opening of this narrative. Day after day added something to the life of the contest, which, after a while, derived much bitterness from the hourly collision to which in so small a community they were necessarily exposed. This bitterness was not a little increased in consequence of some misunderstanding among the rival leaders themselves. The island of Jamaica which had been granted to them in common by the king, furnished one of the grounds of contention; the province of Darien furnished another—neither of them being well satisfied with, or perhaps well able to discover the limits of his jurisdiction. Their disputes on these points filled the city, and more than once were on the point of bringing their parties to blows.

It was on the morning in November already described, when a man, pale in face and feeble in person, from years

rather than disease, was seen to enter a bohio, or cottage, on the very outskirts of the city. His person was small, and a slight irregularity in his movements indicated an infirmity in one of his limbs. He wore no armour, as was the common habit of the time and the people with whom he consorted, and his garb was rather Italian than Spanish. A loose robe of sable enveloped his limbs, and was secured by a belt of the same material which encompassed his waist. The bright silver head of a small stiletto protruded from his vest, and rested upon his bosom against a little circlet of gold, which hung medal-like from his neck, and on which a curious eye might detect the signs of the zodiac in connexion with other characters, the use of which was not so generally obvious. A foot remarkably small, and cased in sandals of sable and red, furnished the only other peculiarity of his costume upon which it is needful to remark. But if his dress was thus unimposing, and his person without command, it was not the case with those features of his pale face, in which stronger attributes might clearly be discerned by the most passing scrutiny. In connexion with a certain thoughtful mildness of expression, there was an eye full of intense anxiety, not unmixed with the consciousness of power, that seemed to demand instant acknowledgment and obedience. His lips were thin and pale; almost like his cheek, slightly painted when not engaged in speech, and showing beneath at all times a set of teeth unimpaired and of the most beautiful whiteness. His brow was exceedingly narrow and lofty, and covered with thin scattered locks of hair sprinkled with gray, that curled about his ears, and hung down in almost girlish luxuriance behind them. His whole appearance was that of one venerable from years and wisdom, and not less so from the continual control of benevolent thought and the gentlest of human sentiments. He approached the door of the bohio—a simple structure of lath, thatched with the broad leaves of the palm, which were overhung and protected in turn by a gigantic ceiba or wild cotton-tree, the lower branches of which actually grasped and rested upon the roof of the dwelling. A wild fig or banyan-tree, itself a forest, grew in the rear of the bohio, but did not confine itself to the simple spot from which it arose. Spreading its arms on every side, it completely covered with shadow

a circumference below of near a thousand feet, which, in the descriptive language of Milton,

"Branching so broad and long, that, in the ground,  
The bearded twigs take root, and daughters grow  
Above the mother trees; a pillar'd shade,  
High overarch'd, and echoing walks between."

Through one of these "overarched echoing walks," the path was pruned out to the door of the bohio, where the aged man, whom we have undertaken briefly to describe, was striving at entrance. His efforts were answered by the deep growl of a dog from within, and then the voice of one, seemingly his owner, commanding his subjection.

"Down, Leonchico, down; know you not the knock? would you show teeth to friends?—dog—for shame!—down—down!"

The door opened in the next moment and the old man entered, closing it carefully behind him. The tenant of the cottage, who had seemingly left his hammock which was suspended low, and barely above the mat-covered floor, now resumed it, while the dog, whose growl had first answered the knock of the applicant, and which seemed quite satisfied when he beheld him enter, sprang after his master into the hammock, and laid himself down in sluggish repose at his feet. The former was a man in the very prime of life. He was tall and muscular of person, well formed, and vigorous, with a dark, full, expressive blue eye, and hair of a light brown, inclining to auburn. Stretched at length upon the couch, it was yet evident that he was no sluggard. The ready speech, the quick gesture, the keen and searching glance, all denoted the possession of prompt decision, and the most ready and restless life. It may be added here, though as yet we see none of these qualities, that he was already known as affable, frank, generous, bold, and adventurous, a skilful swordsman and an able commander. Qualities admired beyond all others at a time when the conquest of a new world invited the arms of ambition, and whetted the appetites of national and individual avarice.

The dog which possessed so much of his master's regard as to be suffered to partake his bed, was no unworthy animal. In the peculiar nature of that warfare urged by the Spanish discoverers against the natives, he had arrived

at distinction for himself, and had acquired a reputation peculiarly his own. He was one of those famous blood-hounds whose unerring scent and furious onset inspired no less terror among the Indians than the fire-arms of their European enemies; and such was his renown, that he has been allotted a page in history, as respectfully worded and full of minute detail, as that of any of the favourite warriors of the period. He is described as of middle size, of a dusky yellow or tawny-reddish colour, with a black muzzle, loins remarkably narrow and round, small but sinewy legs, a neck scarcely less thick than his shoulders, and a tail short, massive, and having a bunch of long gray hairs at the extremity. He was covered with the scars of innumerable arrow-wounds, and known by name to the Indians, his very appearance on the field is said, in some instances, to have been sufficient to put a whole herd of them to flight. His pay, when hired, was never less, and sometimes much more than that of an armed soldier; and his ferocious hostility to the foe was only surpassed by his fidelity to the master who had trained him. Through many a field of danger, among the cannibal tribes of the Carribbees, the most valiant of all the natives of the New World; in nights of painful watch, and days of protracted peril, the master at whose feet he now lay, had known no other body-guard than himself. It cannot be a matter of wonder, therefore, that a feeling stronger than mere gratitude filled the bosom of the warrior for the dog, Leonchico. The affection of a brother would scarcely be too strong an epithet to describe his attachment.

"You have been successful, Codro," said the cavalier, while something like exultation sparkled in his eyes, as he saw the old man take his seat upon a mat, and draw forth a packet of papers from his bosom. "You have been successful, Codro; and our difficulties are at an end. You have obtained the loan required, and I am at length free. But at whose hands have you gotten the boon? What rascal notary has befriended us? What griping commissary? To what agent of Satan do we owe this service?"

The old man smiled benignantly as he listened to the vehement inquiries of his companion.

"You say well," he answered, after a moment's pause; "there is reason in your demand. All better agencies

having failed us, what other than those of Satan could have helped us at our need? I almost shame to tell you from whom this money is borrowed; for deep was my own humiliation when, in compliance with the solemn necessity, I felt compelled to make application to such as he."

"Such as he—who? You surely mean not to say that you got money from the base-souled bachelor Enciso."

"He! No! no!" exclaimed the old man with something like disgust in his manner, and no little haste in his voice. "No!—I thank God that we owe him nothing; though, I doubt not, that, at this moment, he greatly desires to befriend us. Know you not that he hath taken a venture with Ojeda?—that he hath paid two thousand castillanos in behalf of the present voyage, and hath even resolved to fit out a barque to follow upon his course when Ojeda hath made foothold in New Andalusia?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the answer of the cavalier, as he heard this statement. "Better he had buried his castillanos in the Ozama. He had then been more at peace about his venture, and there were quite as much profit. But let the madman and the knave sink together—what boots it to us? Who is the lesser villain that hath helped you to these moneys? Let me hear the name of the precious fiend, that waits till the moment of extremity and helps us ~~from~~ the precipice, it may be, to plunge us more certainly down. To whom, Codro, hast thou bartered our souls?"

"Nay, not so bad as that, Vasco. If the venture be in souls, it is we that have bought the commodity, since never was the soul of Felipe Davila held half so precious in his sight as the gold which he has this day loaned to our use."

"Felipe Davila! Felipe Davila!" exclaimed the cavalier with something like a tremour in his voice, and a start from his hammock, that betrayed great hidden emotion. "You mean not to say, Codro, that you got this help from Davila?"

"Even so, my son. From Felipe Davila comes our succour. But you seem not pleased that it should be so. Wherefore? We could get this help from none else."

"If you could get help from none else," said the cavalier, "there is nothing more to be said; since to us these supplies are of the last importance, and most necessary to

the completion of all that was done before. But I could have wished that this money had come from any coffer but that of Felipe Davila."

"And wherefore, my son? What harm can there come from the use of this wealth, though it may have been gotten by the evil ways of the miser? Shall we not turn it to good account? Are not our purposes those which sanctify even the use of evil? Do we not toil in the aim of honourable fame, and will it not be your endeavour so to steer your barque, as to make your labours redound to the glory of God, and to the spread of his holy word among the heathen? Methinks, Vasco, you are strangely scrupulous in this reluctance, now that the hour is at hand for which you have so long striven, to make use of the help which has come thus unexpectedly, as to seem rather like the gift of Providence, than the poor offering of man!"

"Nay, Codro, you do not take me with you. I scruple not—I am free to use this help, though from such base hands as Davila's, I almost fear there may be a curse upon it. But, know you not, or forget you, that Davila is the uncle of Teresa; that it is to his bohio that I wend nightly when my purpose is to look on her? You knew that I sought her,—that—"

He was interrupted by the gentle voice of his aged companion:—

"Nay, Vasco, of a surety I have not forgotten these things. But how make they against the propriety and wisdom of that which I have done? Well I knew that Davila was a vile creature, the slave of the miserable gold which has made him toil through so much sin, and which has stained his hands and soul—if the story of the old pilots of Diego Colon be true—with more blood than that of the saints can well wash out."

"Not that—not that—that is nothing, Codro; but Teresa—Teresa!—She will know all—she will know my necessity—my want. She—"

"Be it so, my son, and what the evil? Surely, I did not forget that you had in your heart a strange fondness for that maiden, who, to speak the smallest truth, is most lovely to the eye—"

"And pure, Codro,—pure—and not less wise than pure!" was the brief but emphatic interruption of the

lover, as if he dreaded, or seemed to expect some qualifying speech on the part of his companion.

"Of this we need not speak," replied the old man evasively. "There is no reason that you should grieve that this help comes from Davila, because of your regard for his niece. What is there of shame in this loan? You have not put on false shows of fortune in approaching her. She knows you, as all know you in Sauto Domingo, as a brave and noble cavalier, to whom fortune hath been less bounteous than heaven, and who hath done more service to the king, his master, than the king hath ever been pleased to repay. You are known, Vasco, by good deeds and not by goods—by the stanch virtues of courage and courtesy, rather than by castellanos. It cannot be that Teresa looks upon you as a cavalier of fortune, though she shall some day know you as one born to it."

"No, no! she cannot—she knows me for what I am, Codro, if she knows me at all—a matter on which I have but little certainty. But it was my fear that, seeking her uncle's coffers, it would seem that I had founded a claim to his credit upon the assurance of my regard for her."

"Not a whit, Vasco; the fear is idle, though natural enough to one who loves, and who is ever not less jealous of his own carriage towards the maiden than he is watchful and suspicious of hers in respect to all other persons. But this loan, though your name be joined with mine in the security to Davila, is a loan to me and not to you. He knows you only as the friend that shares my risk in order to promote my benefit. You appear not before him in any wise as a supplicant, and scarcely in any form as a debtor. I have cared for that."

"Ah, trusty and kind Codro, I owe you much—much that I fear me I shall never be well able to repay. Your own venture in this goodly barque is large—"

"All that I possess, Vasco; the fruits of a long life of toil and no little peril. But wherefore speak of this?"

"Should it be lost, Codro; should the waters which, in these treacherous seas, have swallowed up so many lofty ships, and rent asunder so many noble armaments; should they swallow ours, then thy loss—"

"Is all, Vasco—all; and yet, how worthless in comparison with thine, for thy life is thy venture with my goods, and I say to thee again, as I have said to thee many

times before, that I hold thy life to be among the most precious of all the things which Spain has sent to these Indias. But I fear neither the loss of these goods nor of thy life, which is too precious to be computed among the mere miserable things in human traffic. Night after night have I read thy progress on earth in the bright mysterious eyes which look forth, and direct my studies, from the heavens. Thou art born for great achievement, my son, and most surely the hour is at hand. Thou wilt come to greatness, and the world will glory in thy name. The rich spoils of the new ocean to the south, of which thou speakest to me, even when thou sleepest, will not fail, I am blest to think, to repay thee for the toils, which it is no less certain must be thine;—and even were it not so, Vasco,—even should it be that thy conquests yield thee but barren greatness, as, under cold requital of our monarch, is but too much the peril of those who serve him with all their soul and with all their strength, yet will I so rejoice in thy honours, and in the bright fulfilment of the promise which the stars have made me in thy behalf, that I will freely give my treasure to the engulfing seas, and rejoice in the thought, when it is buried, that it was lost in serving thee.”

The aged man had risen as he seemed to warm with his own predictions, and approaching the hammock where his younger companion still partially reclined, he placed his hand with the warm pressure of a father's, upon his brow; the latter caught the hand and carried it to his lips.

“Noble, generous old man,” he exclaimed, “sooner will I perish ere thou shouldst lose one maravidi of that wealth which is to secure thee in comfort through thy old age. Believe me, father, I will think not less of thee, and of what I owe thee, in the adventures I pursue, than of my own selfish fortunes.”

“Think of thy own fame—think only of the greatness which the stars promise thee, my son, and the heart of Micer Codro will be happy.”

“And yet, father,” said the cavalier, “I would that from thy skill in that science of the stars, of which it is my sorrow that I know so little, thou wouldst give me to see what fortune awaits me in another path than that of glory.”

The speaker paused. The answer of the astrologer, for

such he was, scarcely satisfied him, and was evasive and abrupt.

"Thou wouldst speak of thy love for the damsel Teresa; but of this I can tell thee nothing. The stars tell me nothing. I have strove to read them on thy behalf, but they veil themselves when I would do so; and a thick mist gathers before my sight. Methinks, Vasco, they smile not on the passion which may keep thee from thy nobler purposes."

"Nay, Codro, let not thy zeal in behalf of my fame, make thee jealous of my affections. Thou dost, methinks, greatly mistake the nature of the noble love, which helps the rather, and stimulates to great achievement. Love is no blinded passion such as the minstrels fable; but a flame that lifts the purpose, and ennobles the endeavour, and seeks to make the creature worthy, in whose bosom it has made its dwelling-place and altar. 'Think'st thou because I love Teresa, that I am less heedful of the fame which my fond imaginings—my thoughts by day, my dreams by night,—have, no less than thy friendly voice, promised to my endeavour? Think'st thou, because I have suffered in my heart the gentle dominion of the affections, that I am less mindful of the high ambition that strives against every rival, and permits no venturous footstep to advance before its own? No, Codro—no! Thou hast not found me a sluggard when any performance was needful, and I need not ask thee to look upon our barque for the proofs of a toil which has not been intermitted because the labourer sometimes stole away from his employment to warble a light arezto beneath the lattice of his mistress. Love has taken nothing from the vigour of my soul, but has rather strengthened it, Codro.—Teresa, if she loves me, will scarce keep me back from a path of venture, which is to make me famous and a leader among men; she will rather urge me forward with reproving language, and chide me forth upon the seas, should it be—as I believe not—that, forgetful of all things but the bliss within my enjoyment, I yield up, to unwitting repose, the hours which are due to fame and fortune."

The old man shook his head doubtfully. The earnest speech of his companion failed to convince him.

"I am not sure, Vasco," he answered, after the interval of a moment—"I am not sure that Teresa thinks of thee

as thou fondly imaginest—I am not sure that she loves thee;—still less, my son, am I certain that she is worthy of a love like thine.”

“Nay, Codro—thou dost wrong her much. Thou know’st her not, my father—it is clear that thou dost not know Teresa.”

This was said in a tone of emphasis clearly intended to be conclusive. The old man saw that the topic was now growing irksome to the cavalier.

“It may be, my son: Teresa Davila may suffer wrong in my thoughts, and for this I were sorry, for, believe me, it is no purpose with me to do wrong by word or thought to the most worthless of human beings. It is for thee that I am watchful—it is thy great and promised glory that makes me suspicious of all things and persons that may stand betwixt thee and thy becoming achievements; and it is, perhaps, because I deem thy love for Teresa unrequited, that I am unwilling to esteem her as worthy of it and of thee.”

“But wherefore shouldst thou think thus, Codro?” replied the other hastily, and leaving the couch as he did so. “What hast thou seen in her carriage—what hast thou heard from her lips, to lead thee to this thought?”

“Much, many things, Vasco. She has a smile for thee which is too ready—her laughter for thy jest is too prompt and unmeasured. There is little heart in the smile which is for ever on the lips—there is little of earnest and sincere thought in the mind, which is so soon yielded up to merriment. Could I see that she beheld thy coming, and shrunk to behold thee, with a timid spirit that yet lingered while it fled—could I see that she listened to thee, as if she too devotedly listened to have freedom even for speech or smile in return—for thine;—did she who trembled to see thee approach, look sad and silent to see thee depart—I were better persuaded of her affection, and her sensibility to thine own. But I cannot yield faith to this fancy of thine; when I see not these signs, which a long experience of the world and the world’s ways, persuade me are tokens of the true affection only. Teresa has thoughts which are too light and capricious for a heart which is devoted and earnest like thine own. She sees thee as thou approachest, with eyes like those which the cunning fisherman sets upon the fish which is to be his prey. The

pearl diver of the gulf looks not with keener vision for the gray coalid shell beneath the water which treasures up his prize, than Teresa Davila looks for the thoughtless lover, who, blind to the cruel iron which she would infix within his heart, rushes with devouring haste to the tempting lure of her beauty, which, as a banquet, she spreads before him. She would wear him as a spoil, if the spoil be a rich one and a great. Nay,—when I tell thee that I think she loves thee not, I mean not to say that she would refuse to wed thee. Let Vasco Nunez go forth upon his mission, which—I read it in the stars—is to bring him to wealth and greatest glory, and Teresa Davila will place her slender white hand within his, and there shall be no words from her lips which shall not breathe to him of love.”

“Ha! say’st thou, Codro; and yet thou tell’st me that she loves me not?” said the other exultingly.

“Even so!—even so, my son! The lips which tell thee that she loves thee, will tell thee what I believe not. It may be that they will tell thee nothing but the truth—and yet, there is in my thought a solemn conviction that she will play thee false—that there is no true affection for thee in her heart—that she is one, steeped to the very lips in selfishness—that she cannot forget, in her vanities and weaknesses of mind, what the true love should ever refuse to remember—the dominion which it gains over the fellow soul which it has won, and the singleness of purpose and of hope which in that very moment such soul foregoes for ever. She will yield nothing—she will forego nothing of the individual purpose of her mind, to the tie which links her with another nature than her own, and binds her to an existence where nothing can be exclusive. Be the maiden whom thou lovest, my son, one, willing—nay, glad to know thee for her law, not less than for her love. Be she one to find pleasure in her service before thee—to look for thy coming with an expectance which can be satisfied with nothing less—and note thy departure with a sorrow which knows no true soothing until thy return. I fear me Teresa is no such woman: she hath a pride which would vex to know that her heart paid such high homage to another, though that other were the choice of her heart, and stood before her the embodied perfection of the noblest virtues.”

Many times during this speech had the companion of

the astrologer striven to arrest his words, which, though uttered in the gentlest manner, and in tones of the truest regard, were no less cruel to the lover than they seemed unjust to his mistress. When, at length, the old man paused, Vasco Nunez waived his hand impatiently, and though a faint smile, the result of visible effort, was upon his lips, there was yet a gloomy frown upon his forehead, and his tones were cold, and marked by a dissatisfaction which he vainly strove to hide.

"No more—no more of this, Micer Codro;—no more, I pray thee. Thou know'st little of Teresa—nothing—I see thou dost not; and hence I forgive thee thy error—thy injustice. Thou art very ignorant of Teresa—I marvel greatly thereat, for thou hast spoken with her, and seen her often, and dwelt beside her, when the voices in the bohio of her uncle, were heard audibly in thy own. Thou know'st her uncle—that is clear,—for thou hast persuaded him to yield that which he cherished with a care he had not given to his own worthless life. But Teresa is beyond thee. The stars which thou watchest blind thee to her eyes, and thou seest not their beauty, nor the lore—lore dearer to me than all of thine—which I read in them nightly. Go to the stars, my father—I will not pass between thee and the smallest twinkler whose ray thou affectest; but pass not thou between me and mine. Leave to me the study of Teresa's—I joy to think I read them no less ably than thou dost those of heaven."

"Would thou didst, my son; but I fear"—

"Fear nothing, my father. Hast thou not said that the hour of my triumph was at hand. Thou hast read it in the stars;" cried Vasco Nunez, interrupting him with an air of pleasant triumph, while laying his hand upon the old man's shoulder.

"Yea, my son,—I have told thee ~~out~~ the truth—thou wilt triumph—thou wilt achieve conquest and fame; yet, in the same blessed volume which showed me thy success, did I also behold a danger which threatened thee and a fearful trial of all thy strength!"

"Ha! but I fear not the danger—I am ready for the trial."

"And the danger came to thee from the temptations of a woman, and the trial grew because of her. There were dangers—many dangers and strifes in thy path beside,

but I tell thee, Vasco Nunez de Balboa, there were none of them all that bore so perilous an aspect to thy fortunes as these. Dost thou wonder that I should tremble for thee, my son? Art thou angry that I should give thee timely warning of thy danger?"

The old man grasped his companion's hand as he uttered himself with equal affection and solemnity.

"Not angry—no! not angry, my father," was the reply of the cavalier, who was evidently impressed by the manner of the speaker. Ere he could say more, voices were heard at the entrance of the cottage, and its powerful guardian, Leonchico, aroused from his drowsy repose by their approach, sprang up with a warning growl, and put himself in readiness at the entrance of the cottage.

## CHAPTER III.

## NEW PARTIES—PROPOSALS AND REJECTIONS.

THE voices of the persons approaching were now distinguishable by those within, and some surprise was apparent in consequence, upon their faces.

"That, surely, is the voice of the bachelor Enciso!" was the exclamation of the cavalier, his look changing as he spoke to sternness with the conviction.

"You are right, it is Enciso."

"Now, what seeks he here,—what brings him? He hath for me no feeling of the friend, and the thought that he should find the soul to seek me as an enemy, were a mere folly. There is something strange in this."

"Wherefore should it trouble thee, Vasco," demanded the astrologer, with expostulating earnestness, as he beheld the visible harshness growing upon the features of his companion. "No matter what brings him, my son; there is no need that such as he should move thee to anger, still less is there any need that he should see that thou hatest him. Smooth thy brow, he cannot greatly help, and can but little harm thee; and didst thou hold him to be baser even than the worm that crawls, it is not wise to chafe angrily when the worm comes forth into thy sight."

"No! but when it crawls upon my path, Codro, when it leaves its slime before my eyes, then do I trample it beneath my feet, or thrust it from my presence. I care not that Enciso should feed and fatten at the expense of better men in Santo Domingo; but, why comes he here? What brings him to the dwelling of a man, who hath neither favour nor feeling in common with him? But, let him have care while he stands before me. Let him but look awry, or chafe me with a word, and I will set my foot upon his

neck, with as little scruple, as upon the vilest reptile that ever crawled upon my path."

"He will not chafe thee with either look or word," was the reply of the astrologer; "he knows thee quite too well for that; and, trust me, he comes for other objects. He comes now to find favour in thy sight; to win thee, perchance, to some common purpose with Ojeda in his proposed venture, in which, I told you, he had taken part. If this be his aim, he will spare no toil to propitiate thee. It may be well for thee to listen patiently, my son—there may be profit from his service, since there are none so base and worthless, of whom the wise and deliberate may not make fitting use. Let us see—let us hear him, without anger. Smooth thy brow, Vasco; look not on him with scorn, and beyond all things, preserve thy temper. The man hath some power to foil in part, if he may in nothing help our enterprise. If we cannot favour his desire, at least, there is but little need to offend him."

"We need him not, Codro, and where should be his power to hurt our enterprise. Be the barque but ready, Codro, as with thy present moneys, thou wilt soon have it, and I will plant my feet in that southern sea, my father, even as the stars have promised, and we shall laugh to scorn the whole swarm of legal reptiles that find so thriving a nest here in Santo Domingo. But, be it as thou sayest, however little reason there be for keeping countenance with one so little worthy as Enciso. I will say nothing to vex the creature; not that I fear his venom, but that I may not feel his slaver, which, to my thinking, is far the worst evil of the two."

"No more, my son, he comes," said the astrologer; "take the dog in thy hands: Leonchico loves him even less than thou, and, following thy looks, would fasten upon his throat the first moment that he appeared in sight."

"A wise dog, a brave dog, and a just," replied the cavalier, with an approving laugh, "but what other voice is that which answers to Enciso? By my faith, it is sure, old Gomez Davila that comes with him. His loan to thee, Codro, gives him license. I trust he comes not for new conditions. But open, open!"

The old man unfastened the door at this moment, and the lawyer, Hernando de Enciso, appeared at the entrance,

followed close by the decrepit miser, whose timely assistance had enabled the astrologer to complete the equipment of his friend for the great enterprise which he had in view. The ready grasp and sudden word of Vasco Nunez, alone prevented Leonchico from springing upon the first named visiter with a ferocious vigour, scarcely less than that to which he was commonly aroused by the studious provocations of the trainer, on the eve of Indian combat.

"Ah, Señor Vasco: I thank thee. The dog is a brave dog—a terrible dog—but for thy timely hand he had clutched me,—he had given me trouble, I think," was the rather tremulous and insinuating speech of the bachelor.

"He had cut thy throat, señor," was the cool reply. "Thou hadst never got from beneath his hair, but with the loss of all thy own, and thy own hands, even then, had never helped thee. Enter señores, he is now subdued; as tame and harmless, as, but a moment ago, he was wild and vengeful. Enter—ye are both safe."

"Truly, Señor Vasco, thy control over him is wonderful," said Enciso. "He sleeps at thy bidding."

"Wonderful indeed my masters," echoed old Davila, with a grin of affected admiration. "But, truly, it should be so, else were it no less evil to the hand that prompts him into combat, than to the savage he is taught to seek. Thou canst depute thy power upon him to another, Señor Vasco; for so I have heard it said of thee."

"Ay, if it pleases him to serve that other, Felipe Davila; but the dog is choice no less than strong, señores, and he hath taste and wisdom, not a whit less because of his fierceness. There were some cavaliers in Santo Domingo, that even my word could not make him follow, save to rend. He loves thee not, Enciso; he loves not thy looks; I marvel much where he found this prejudice! but he hath it, and small provocation would move him to so close a freedom with thy throat, that thou would'st think the hangman far more merciful, should he once take hold upon it."

The bachelor forebore any near approach to an animal of whom he had such awkward information; and muttering some unmeaning words of congratulation to the owner of so terrible an agent, he crossed over to the mat to which the hands of the astrologer motioned him, and took a seat

beside him. Felipe Davila followed his example, and seeing them thus disposed, Vasco Nunez made his way towards the entrance, as if to depart.

"You would be private with my friend Codro, señores; I will leave you," he said, as he laid his hand upon the door.

"No, no!" replied Felipe Davila hastily, "not so, sweet Señor Vasco; it is no such private matter; indeed, we would also have speech of you, Señor Vasco; the bachelor Enciso, hath something for your ears."

"Ah! if that be the case, Señor, I am ready," replied the cavalier, turning with cold dignity to the hesitating bachelor. The latter felt himself in the presence of his superior; but there was an additional consciousness which was not less annoying than this, to one of the ambitious, yet small, pretensions of the lawyer. He had been long taught to know that Vasco Nunez held him in contempt. There had been dealings between the two in former days, when the cavalier was a rash royster in the New World, to whom adventure was always attractive, even when it was not always legitimate. Such was the sort of persons from whose errors the griping hands of the pettifoggers had derived those profits which he was now about to launch upon the deceitful seas, in sustaining the pretensions of Ojeda. The knowledge which the former had acquired in these early days, of the practices of the latter, had inspired him with that hostile feeling of dislike, which his prudence had not always been sufficient to conceal. The lawyer felt the contempt which he had not the courage to resent; and at the moment of the present interview, it may be farther said, that with his primary object of gain before his eyes, he was not unwilling to forgive the injury, and forget the contempt, provided he could persuade his enemy to assist in the prosecution of his schemes. The gold for which he toiled, would, in his eyes, sanction any contact, as well of the hate that spurned, as of the pollution that defiles. The ice once broken by his companion, the miser, the eyes of Enciso brightened, and a pleasant and conciliating smirk of the lips prefaced the opening of his business.

"Yes, Señor Vasco; it is even as my friend Davila hath said. There is a matter in my thought to which I

would crave your ear, and for which I would implore your favouring attention."

The person addressed, slowly returned to the centre of the apartment, seated himself upon a mat distinct from the rest, and signified his willingness to listen to the promised communication. Felipe Davila, in the meantime, drew to himself the regards of the astrologer, with whom he conversed in under tones apart. Enciso, with a hesitancy of manner that somewhat belied the confident smirk upon his lips, then proceeded, with sufficient directness, to the business on which he came.

"It is bruited, Señor Vasco, throughout the city of Santo Domingo—nay, I have heard it said by many very worthy men,—that the voyage thou hast resolved to make for the southern sea, in the goodly barque, called the 'Maranon,' will bring thee to the province of Veragua, and most probably into the immediate government of my patron and very good friend, the gallant cavalier, Alonzo de Ojeda."

The lawyer paused, as if waiting for an answer. The keen, cold eye of the person he addressed met his own, but his lips for some moments were closed. The warning glance of the astrologer, however, reminded the cavalier of the policy which had been agreed on between them, prior to the entrance of their visitors, and the muscles of his face relaxed into something like a smile. Speaking with ominous deliberateness and few words, he thus replied:—

"Well, Señor Hernandez, what more of this. Methinks thou hast more to offer."

"Of a truth, I have, Señor Vasco," answered the lawyer, "but thou hast not yet given me to know if the rumour of the town be right. I would hear from thy own lips, whether they that speak of thee in this wise do thee not great injustice."

"Perhaps, but of this I make no heed. I tell thee, Señor Hernandez, it is not my wont to hearken to that busy idleness which makes free disposition of my thoughts and purposes, having none of its own. I were no less profligately idle than the town, did I toil in the correction of its errors."

"Then, these are errors, Señor Vasco," replied the other, with some eagerness, "and it is not thy purpose to seek for thy southern ocean in the government of the noble Ojeda."

"Nay, thou dost vex thy curiosity without profit, Señor Hernandez," replied the other with cool contempt, "thou wilt scarcely take what thou camest for. Thinkest thou, that I, who have kept so secret all my purposes of discovery for so many months in Santo Domingo, will reveal them to other voyagers, even now setting forth upon the same ocean. I were scarcely wise to do this, and thou mightest well leave me with laughter, and exult over the miserable folly of one, upon whose weakness in this respect thou hast made bold calculations. Go to, Señor—go to. I have had experience of the seas, and of the cavaliers that go upon them. Do thou, and the valiant captain, Alonzo de Ojeda, sail for the province of New Andalusia; unfurl thy sails, and be the winds obedient that bear ye to your port. Be your foothold sure, and your bucklers thick, that the Caribs drive ye not into the sea, and pierce ye not through with their lances. And, chiefly to thyself, Señor Hernandez, would I impart sober counsel. Thou hast not tried the valour of the Indian; let thy hand be well practised in thy sword, and be heedful that the temper of thy armour be proof against his shaft; for so sure as I shall follow thee soon, wilt thou find thy strifes in the battles to which Ojeda will bring thee, no such strifes as thou hast known in thy pleading, and perchance, even less profitable to thy fame and fortune. I trust thou wilt have as little cause of complaint with the Carib, as thy noble patron, Ojeda, will have with me."

"But, Señor Vasco, it may be that, as thou unfoldest not to us thy own route for this great southern sea, of which thou hast spoken so confidently, the Señor Alonzo, whose purpose it is to explore all the country in the neighbourhood of his government, shall, without so designing, happen upon it, and thus unwittingly deprive thee of the fame and profit of so noble a discovery."

"Let Alonzo de Ojeda find it if he may, Señor Hernandez, or do thou find it, if it be thy wish, and good fortune so to do,—it matters not. I fear not that either of you will do me evil, or greatly stand in the path of my adventure. There are wide dominions that these seas unfold, and wide are the lands and waters lying open, yet still withheld from us. It is not for you, or for me, señor, to exclude other cavaliers from the greatness and the wealth which they offer to the bold spirit which is willing to seek and do battle

for them under God's own eye. Take ye your course, and push your prows wherever they may go. Ye have the start of me, ye can sail, I doubt not, to-morrow. It will yet be weeks before I can follow ye, and so far, ye have the advantage. Scruple not, for my sake, to employ it as ye may, I ask from ye no favours. I crave not your forbearance. As for this Indian Sea, I hold it locked up from your grasp. I defy ye to find its holy and untravelled waters. Brave though your captain prove himself, I know well that he may not find it—wealthy and cautious though you be, Martin Hernandez de Enciso, I am bold to think it cannot be your luck to find it. The prize is for men of another make than yours. Ye would toil for it in vain."

"And wherefore dost thou fancy this, Señor Vasco?" replied the lawyer quickly, and with an air of pique; "wherefore dost thou think this achievement denied to our adventures? 'Thou dost not impugn the valour of Alonzo de Ojeda? Methinks, valorous and skilful though thou art, Señor Vasco, it were scarcely wise in thee to do this, and—"

"No more, Señor Hernandez; thou dost waste thyself," replied the cavalier, resuming the cold tones and deliberate manner with which he had begun, and from which, more than once during the progress of the dialogue, his warm temperament had moved him to depart. "Alonzo de Ojeda is a brave cavalier and a daring; but it asks something more than valour to achieve the purpose which I have in view. 'Thou, too, mayst have thy virtues, but thou wilt not hold it my purpose to disparage them, when I say that they are not the virtues which can give thee success in this adventure. Yet, though I speak thus coldly, let not my words discourage thee. The great sea of the south will await both of us—find it if thou mayst."

"But, Señor Vasco, there is yet a matter. It is thought by those having knowledge of Darien, that this great sea of the south, should such a one exist, lies within the province which the king, our royal master, has given exclusively to the government of Alonzo de Ojeda. Now, Señor, if this be the case, then wilt thou see that it cannot be suffered thee to pursue thy search of it, save with the permission of the governor, or of myself, as the alcalde mayor thereof—"

"This is too much, Señor Martin de Enciso. Let us

have no more of this. Enough for thee to know that Vasco Nunez de Balboa knows well what is permitted him, is able to determine his own limits by the royal commission, and has the weapon, Señor Martin, ay, and the spirit too, to assert and maintain his rights, whether it be against a royal governor or his alcalde mayor. Methinks, you have finished your commission."

"Nay, señor; you are hasty; you would be angry; you would do us injustice, and mayhap wrong yourself. Hear now what farther I have to say, and judge whether our purpose be not friendly."

The manner of Enciso was, studiously, even more conciliatory than his words. The cavalier, Vasco Nunez, whose blood was already in commotion, found it difficult, however, to subdue himself to the required degree of patience; but with a visible effort he did so, and while amusing himself with stroking with his hands the shaggy neck of Leonchico, he bade the other proceed.

"I have an offer to make thee, Señor Vasco, which, I trust, will please thee, and prevent all future difficulty."

Vasco Nunez looked up, but said nothing.

"The armament deemed needful to the voyage and government of Ojeda, is yet incomplete. It lacks one good vessel such as the 'Maranon.'"

"Ha! The 'Maranon!' Well,—well, go on."

"We learn from Señor Felipe that he hath provided thy friend, Micer Codro, with the needful sum towards the completion of thy stores and crew."

"It is the truth, señor," interposed the miser; "seven hundred and fifty castellanos—a great sum—its loss to me were beggary. I have lent it on the faith of that good fortune which the wisdom of Micer Codro hath assured me awaits the brave Señor Vasco. The blessed Virgin smile upon the venture, and give success to the good ship."

"The money which helps thee, Señor Vasco, is, I may say, so much taken from us," continued Enciso.

"Thou wouldst not have us yield it thee, wouldst thou?" demanded Vasco Nunez impatiently.

"No! It is thy good luck, Señor Vasco, to have found it ere we searched; but we would have thee share thy adventure with us, and take in return a full third of our spoils, whatever they may be, the royal fifth being first excepted. Thy vessel is needful to our armament, but she shall re-

main within thy command. Ojeda and thyself will counsel on equal terms together touching thy adventures, and only claim the exclusive dominion which hath been granted him by the king, when he shall have reached his province of New Andalusia. If then it please thee to part company with him, be it so. The power and the right are thine. What say'st thou, Señor Vasco, doth not our proffer find favour in thy sight?"

The lawyer paused, and the two old men looked up with something of kindred anxiety in their faces, to learn the determination of the cavalier. In that of the miser might be seen a degree of earnestness, which, while it spoke for the interest of one whose castillanos were at hazard, at the same time clearly enough conveyed his approval—even if his coming in company with Enciso had not shown it—of the proposed change of plan which the latter had suggested. This expression could not be mistaken by the cavalier, and it was, perhaps, because he beheld something like a similar approval in the face of his friend the astrologer, that the answer of Vasco Nunez was uttered in almost impatient accents, and with a harsh haste in its tone which indicated a latent sentiment of anger.

"You have spoken, you have made your proposals, Señor Hernandez, which, I doubt not, you hold to be gracious and generous. Now hearken you my answer. I will have none of your venture. I ask none of your shares. Be the good fortune of your armament your own. Not even for the fifth of Veragua itself will I take shares with you. You may hold me selfish—it may be so. But let the penalty of such selfishness rest with me. I need no fleet of ships to find the sea of the south of which I am in quest. One good ship, the 'Maranon,' whose equipment you estimate so highly, will be sufficient for such discovery."

"But she may sink, Señor Vasco; the broma may eat into her sides among these unknown waters; the currents of strange shores may suck her down into their devouring abysses. You may lose, having but one barque, the fruits of all your toil, of all your courage, of all your speculations and foresight."

The astrologer and miser looked with increasing anxiety to the cavalier, as Enciso uttered these words, in which they both fancied lay no little wisdom. But the prompt

answer of Vasco Nunez showed them that far other were his thoughts, and that he suffered from no such apprehensions.

“And if the seas suck the ‘Maranon’ down into their deep jaws, Señor Hernandez, they suck down Vasco Nunez along with her, and thus ends the struggle of one man along with the many hopes that now warm and wake within his bosom. Still, would the profit of his toils be yours, and it would be a marvel, indeed, if, when the good captain, Alonzo de Ojeda, or his worthy alcalde mayor, went back to Spain, they should say, ‘Lo! this conquest is due to the unfortunate cavalier, Vasco Nunez; it was his prow that guided us to the great sea of the south; it was his venturous skill that found these sunny shores, and gathered up these golden and pearly treasures.’ Methinks it were too much to look for such generosity from the Spanish voyager now; and I look for none, and I ask for none of it. No, señor, we must steer separate barques. Seek your province, and may the treasures of New Andalusia be such as you hope to find them. I give you back your offer, with many thanks.”

A deep sigh escaped the miser, who had no doubt been promised a liberal reward if he could succeed in any manner in changing the direction of his *casillanos*. There was also some disappointment visible in the eye of the astrologer, but neither of them uttered the dissatisfaction which was clearly felt by both. The disappointment of the lawyer, however, was not so quietly expressed. It spoke in his contracted brow, in his kindling eye, in the impatient movement of his lips. His voice, too, was somewhat raised when he spoke again, and there was an air of the official about him which was not less premature than indiscreet.

“Señor Vasco,” he said, “you have rejected a most liberal offer. Time will show if you have done wisely. But, let me warn you, should it be, as some think, that the great southern sea lies within the province—”

The short, quick, and somewhat hoarse accents of Vasco Nunez interrupted the speaker.

“Beware, Señor Hernandez, that your warning takes not the shape of a threat. I tell thee, I am in no mood to suffer thee to speak, as from thy present looks thou seemest free to do. Enough for Alonzo de Ojeda when he gets his

province to protect his rights. In this bohio, or in the good ship 'Maranon,' or on the waters of the southern sea, I tell thee that Vasco Nunez is resolved to maintain his. What more wouldst thou say, señor?"

The lawyer muttered some regrets that the other was so impatient, professed the best feelings, denied any disposition to hostility or threats, and finally, finding that nothing was to be effected with one equally jealous and resolved, he took his departure followed by Felipe Davila. The latter plucked the sleeve of the astrologer, who had gone with him to the door, and drawing him a few paces beyond the entrance, whispered in some anxiety—

"And thou thinkest, worthy Micer Codro, that the fortune of the brave youth is good, albeit he doth reject the offer of Enciso. Will the stars keep faith with him that is so obstinate. Doth his good planet rise yet,—will he swim? It were beggary to me, worthy Micer, should the castillanos—seven hundred and fifty—"

"Fear thou nothing," replied the astrologer, interrupting him, "thy money is safe to thee, and at profitable risk. The stars have Vasco Nunez in keeping; and though it was my thought that he should have taken the venture with Ojeda, it is my faith now that his fortune is the better counsellor. Fear nothing for thy treasure."

"Of a truth I fear nothing. He is a brave youth, and will conquer the savages. I glad me he gave no knowledge to the Bachelor touching the route to the southern sea. He is a close youth—he hath a knowledge of his fellow that shall make him fortunate. I have faith, Micer Codro, in his star."

## CHAPTER IV.

## HOPES AND FEAR.—HATE AND RIVALRY.

THE astrologer returned to the bohio. He, too, had faith in the star of Vasco Nunez, and yet he almost wished that the latter had closed with an offer so seemingly advantageous as that of Enciso.

"Wherefore didst thou refuse the bachelor, my son?" he asked of the cavalier, when he had resumed his seat upon the mat before him.

"Ask me rather, wherefore I refused my ruin—my utter ruin! What should I have done with Alonzo de Ojeda—he, rash, reckless, ready always for fight, and as blind to reason as the bull whose ferocity he emulates? What should I have done with him—what could he have done with me? We could not have kept our hands three days from each other's throats; and what had been my fate, surrounded by his creatures, and within his government? Surely, I were worse than a fool, being my own master, to have gone, of my own head, into the guidance and the bonds of another, and that other so fierce a fool as Alonzo de Ojeda, seconded by so sly a villain as his *alcalde mayor*."

"And yet, my son, the connexion is not without its advantages," said the astrologer.

"Ay, true!—there are lures, the preachers tell us, that lie like fruits, even about the mouth of hell. Baits for the blind only—for the selfish and the timid. There are no advantages to me in the proposed connexion with Ojeda. One ship can discover the south sea, and one hundred soldiers were, under my guidance, of more price and value in the new lands, than one thousand under Ojeda. The bull would drive his and their heads against the rocks, which I should train them to walk over. I know the leader of

this armament, Micer Codro, as well as thou know'st his base emissary, the Bachelor Enciso; we are the better for their absence,—believe me—ay,—almost the better for their hostility.”

“Nay, I think not that; but it may be—it must be—as thou sayest, in respect to the connexion. Ojeda would certainly seek to restrain thee, and that were fatal to thy purpose. But let us go forth to the Great Place. There are purchases which thou must make, necessary to the completion of thy equipment, ere thy rivals get the start of thee. Here are the castellanos of Davila. They are thine. Greatly did I fear that the grasping miser sought us out to regain them.”

“Evil got!” exclaimed Vasco Nunez, as he received the treasure, “how many damnable spots have these bright pieces fastened on his soul. I trust they will bring neither sin nor sorrow upon ours.”

“Amen!” responded the astrologer, whose veneration had not suffered any diminution from his study of the stars. “Let us,” he continued, “go forth and rid ourselves of the burden, and, if possible, the sin. Thou wilt need seamen, and the strifes of Nienesca and Ojeda will leave thee little choice, if thou dost not speak for them quickly. They have both criers in the Great Square, and this is market-day, Vasco. There will be a gathering of the people, and thy castellanos, not to say thy presence, will do for thee, what neither of them find it easy to do at this moment. Thou hast money and wilt need no crier.”

A few moments sufficed to put the cavalier in readiness. Throwing aside the robe of stuffed cotton, which had enveloped him during the interview, he appeared in the ordinary garments of the time, without ornament of any kind, if we except a gorget of plain gold, having a small pendant medallion, in which an image of Saint John was set. Over his shoulders he threw a light body cloak, of a dark saffron colour, and his habit thus complete, he girded on his sword, and taking in his hand the steeple-crowned Spanish hat, slightly looped at the brim, declared his readiness to depart. He led the way for his venerable companion, himself preceded by the watchful Leonchico. Casting his eye down upon his feet as he emerged from the shade of the mighty banyan whose branches formed an arched avenue to his bohio, he stopped, and with something of the

precision of a lover, he readjusted the roses of his shoes, which were somewhat frayed and discomposed. This excepted, his movements were all marked by the dignified and manly ease of one born to the high station which he subsequently reached. His dark blue eye, full as it was of fire and expression, yet teemed no less with frankness and good humour; his high and white forehead was marked by mingled benevolence and command; and the almost perfect oval of his face, distinguished by a corresponding perfectness in every feature, denoted an even and majestic mood of mind, seldom moved to any but the highest purposes, undeviating in his devotion to noble sentiments, and as resolute, in their prosecution, as he was unchangeable in his estimation of their value. Perhaps, it was only necessary for Micer Codro to look into the face of his companion, to find authority for his predictions, not less credible and imposing, than that which he gathered from the benign aspect of a favouring star. He did ~~not~~ look in that face with an admiration inspired as much by personal regard, as by his professional faith. For years had the two taken their venture through the world together, in the new world as in the old, amidst the intrigues of courts, and the strifes of camps. To the astrologer, devoted to the mysteries of that wild and wondrous study, then so much affected, and so much confided in by all classes, Vasco Nunez supplied the absence of other ties and nearer kindred. Though otherwise alone in life, the fond superstition which the former professed, had failed to wean him utterly from those affections which belonged equally to his nature and early associations; and it was no less grateful to his heart, than it was creditable to his skill, to behold the rapid rise to prosperity and fame, of one still so youthful, who had set out at first with but few, if any, of those worldly advantages which are generally assumed to be so necessary to eventual success. The eye of the astrologer lighted up with renewed confidence in his own predictions as he surveyed the port, and marked the expression, of his companion. "That form of majesty," he thought silently, "hath a promise no less proud than the star which rules its destiny; that face is full of a language writ in characters so like to those of heaven, I may not doubt that the same eternal hand hath traced them both. All things speak for the fulfilment of the truth of that fusty prophecy which my lips

have been forced to speak. Fame and fortune hang upon his steps, and, a blessing no less bountiful to me, it is permitted that I shall behold his adventure, and rejoice in his success."

The frame of the old man trembled with unexpected delight, and big tears, of a holy and unselfish satisfaction, gathered in his eyes.

"Thou weepest, Micer Codro," said his companion, who now discovered his emotion, and turned to him with the earnest solicitude of a son; "thou weepest—thou art sad—what is the grief that troubles thee?"

"A joy, my son—the fulness of a rejoicing soul that asks relief. These tears lessen its abundant heats, as the big drops fall from the burning clouds, giving vent to the accumulated vapour that else might burst in storm. They are the thunder-drops of the heart, and they tell of the renewed freshness, which is there a hope. I see the hour so long promised thee, approaching; and I glory in thy coming honours, even as the aged father, whose foot is in the grave, rejoices in the bloom and manhood of the child, whose vigour must repair his own, and renew and perpetuate his existence. As the father lives in his child, Vasco Nunez, the withered hand of Micer Codro lives in thee. When my step is no longer beside thee, when my voice has perished from thy ears, when the green rushes of shores, as yet unknown to the Spaniard, shall grow above my bosom—for there am I assured shall I sleep at last—then do I know that thy fame shall live, and thy name shall be known above the proudest and the purest of all the mighty warriors whom Spain hath sent forth on this great service. Of this, thy triumph, am I sure! Would that the one shadow which hangs before my sight, could fall away, that I might speak for thy happiness—thy life, my son!"

"And does not the prophecy of which thou hast declared thyself so sure,—does not this speak for my life and happiness? Hast thou not spoken of the greatness which I shall achieve,—of the fame which I shall secure,—of the triumphs which are to procure me acknowledgments from fame, putting my name among the greatest of our thrice-favoured nation?"

"And does the assurance of fame speak for happiness, my son—does it even speak for life. Even thou, in thy

secret soul, wouldst not be satisfied with the one, nor could I, though I be so certain of thy greatness, be equally certain of thy life. Thou wilt be great, yet thou wilt encounter enemies who will quarrel with thy greatness, and embitter all its rewards. Thou mayst command the brightest treasures in the scope of fortune, yet who will secure thee in their enjoyment? Art thou blind to the base jealousies that move our warriors, valiant though they be beyond all others, and worthy and generous beside in so many respects, to abuse their trusts, to violate pledged faith to their comrades, to plunder and to slay, to secretly stab, and basely forswear themselves, when it seems needful to remove a rival from their progress, or to destroy, in their viper hate, a more successful comrade? Thou hast not forgotten the fortunes of that noble gentleman of my own land, Diego Colon—his bold triumphs, his unselfish zeal for his king and his religion—his trials, his chains, his death! The seas yielded to his footsteps—the stones relaxed from his path—the island rocks opened their sealed harbours for his prows—the wild heathen bowed before him in homage—God and nature gave him succour and sunshine where he went—all things favoured his greatness, but the fellow for whom he had done so much—the monarch to whom he gave a world—the base soldiers whom he led to fortune, and for whose prows he removed the thick seal which had been set for five thousand years upon the ocean waters of the west. Dost thou dream of a better fortune than Diego Colon?—Alas! my son, I can promise thee a glory only less great than his; but for thy happiness—I can tell thee nothing! There is yet a veil above thy star, and I can only pray for thee that thou mayst live for thy greatness, and not be too great for those blessings of life which fame has seldom yet secured to the possessor.”

The cavalier turned from the enthusiastic speaker. He strove to speak, but there was a thickness in his voice which he was not willing that his companion should perceive. He too keenly felt that there was truth in the melancholy picture which had been drawn before his mind. He felt, however much he might desire fame, that fame was not enough. There was a rival passion in his heart, and love would not be set aside even for glory. Freely, at that moment, had the alternative been proposed him, would

he have given up the promise of that star which led to fame, for the humbler cottage-light of the softer deity. He was just then passing the bohio of Teresa. A cluster of palms spread their thick leaves before the lattice, but his quick eye could see the white arm which was extended to close it. His feet bounded forward, as the hand met his pursuing glance, but the white drapery that floated for an instant through the closing window, was all that rewarded the eagerness of his gaze. The involuntary sigh escaped him, as, turning to his companion, he allowed the latter to recover the brief space which his increased speed of movement at the time had made between them. She had not seen him—she was unconscious of the fond eyes then gazing upon the lattice which she had just closed upon them. Was she as indifferent to his regards as she was then unconscious of his presence? Could the suspicion of his companion be true? Was she, indeed, the selfish spirit which he had described her? Was that tenderness of glance, which had made his own proud heart tender to behold, the mere artifice of the skilful caprice, the lure of a bosom heedful of triumphs only, and incapable of a just appreciation of the treasures it might win? It seemed sinful to indulge such fancies, and the cavalier turned to the astrologer with something of diminished reverence, as he came to this conclusion. The latter had seen, but with the wisdom of experience he suffered not his companion to know that he was aware of his emotions. The fondest lover is conscious of some weakness in the passion which he yet indulges, and does not often forgive the eyes which are too ready to discover a secret, that seems more grateful from its being such. The worship of the primitive Christian was of the complexion of this love, and was never so dear to his soul, as when forbidden or reviled by men, he stole away to the tombs and caverns, and felt that what was wanting of dignity to his worship, was more than compensated to him in the intensity of those feelings which arose from its constraint and concentration. The vain man, on the contrary, is ostentatious of his devotions, and seeks the altar quite as frequently with a regard to the public curiosity, as for the satisfaction of his own zeal. When such is the case, the temple is required always to be of marble, and the deity who presides at the altar, must be enshrined in quite as much of the wealth of the

world as the worth of heaven. Such was not the object of devotion in the case of Vasco Nunez. The idol of his affections was the daughter of a poor knight of Calatrava, who, though a favourite of King Ferdinand, and for some time an officer of the royal household, had yet reaped little beyond the simple distinction in reward for his loyal services in that economical court. Though gallant and accomplished, he was not so wealthy as to be independent of the limited reward which came from his present appointment, and it was not, therefore, with any strong reluctance that he yielded to the solicitations of his brother, Felipe Davila, a man of more circumspect economy, and less scrupulous character, who, having no family of his own, desired to adopt his niece, Teresa, and had pledged himself to provide for her as his own child. He had taken her from her parents when about to leave old Spain for the commencement of that career of speculation in the New World, which, for a time, and until he had been seduced by the seeming successes of others, to risk his gains upon novel and wild enterprises, had resulted in procuring for him the foundation of a noble fortune. In the pursuit of gain he had proved himself no less successful than unscrupulous; and, though the extent of his successes was unknown—for, with the usual policy of the miser, he still, even to his own brother, pretended the utmost poverty—it was yet shrewdly conjectured by many, that Teresa Davila was already the heiress of a noble fortune. But such was neither a thought in the mind, nor a desire in the heart of Vasco Nunez. Though a man familiar with the modes of thinking and feeling in the world, and one who had suffered from its most humiliating necessities, he was yet one of those persons who never acquire that narrow wisdom which makes cold considerations of worldly comfort a gauge for the affections. The mere desire of gain, the treasures of the mines, and the jewels from the deep, which absorb the desires of so many hearts, were as nothing to the high spirit whose ambition was striving perpetually with the keenest longing for the pathway over unbroken waters, and the key to hidden worlds. He could live, as he had lived, on the bitter roots, the strange vegetables, and the unripe fruits of the wilderness, when in the same wilderness he found the pathway which he desired to honourable conquest and elevated fame. To this passion, so hap-

pily styled, the "infirmity of noble minds," there was but one rival in his; and to win Teresa Davila, without a single jewel beyond that, richest of all, which he believed to be enshrined in her own purity and affections, was to complete the triumph, over which, there were moments, when his heart seemed to have no desire, and his mind no inclination. Though unfavourable to this latter passion, as believing it to be at variance with what he esteemed the more noble and just direction of his companion's mind, the astrologer yet forbore, on the present occasion, speaking to a subject which he clearly perceived betrayed the cavalier into a departure from his wonted equanimity and judgment. He was not unwilling, with that sagacity which leaves something to time and fortune, to forbear a theme the discussion of which could embitter only, and could not convince.

"Let us hasten," he said, "the loss of time now were a greater loss than if we were to lose our castellanos. Enciso will be the busier for thy rejection of his prayer, and who knows but there may be other sums in the coffers of Felipe Davila, to be loaned on usury if the security be good. There goes a man, my son, who, if the gold were aside, would stand more in the way of thy success with the mariners than any other. He is worth to Ojeda more than the Bachelor and all his cunning; and yet this man hath none."

"None, or he would not risk himself and money on a head so crazy as Ojeda's. La Cosa is a good seaman, but what of that? It will but stiffen the conceit of Ojeda to know that men think it will take all his pilot's wisdom to ballast his folly, and all his prudence and skill to steer clear of the rocks and quicksands to which the rashness of his leader will for ever drive their prows. Be sure Ojeda will quarrel with his counsel when it is best, and hearken only when it comes too late. I believe La Cosa to stand well with the seamen, but not to our detriment, I trust."

"They love him much, and have a faith in his pilotage which they yield not freely to any other. But for him, Ojeda had not the credit to command a single ship. The money of La Cosa hath helped him to his armament thus far, and his goodly reputation will do much to get him the best seamen, if we speed not. He hath a love for Ojeda, which stops not at any sacrifice; and which is strange

enough when we remember the rash and headstrong forwardness of the one, and the cool, considerate circumspection of the other. It may be that he will temper Ojeda in his rashness, and, perchance, subdue his valour to a profitable use."

"Ay, if any thing, or person, may achieve so much, which I greatly question. Ojeda hath had experience enough, years ago, to serve any but a fool or madman; and he hath never yet been without old heads to counsel, and good pilots to guide. But old heads and good pilots are thrown away upon insolent self-conceit and blind passion; and with the single exception of La Cosa, they have all been but too happy to escape from connexion with him. La Cosa will do well to get clear of him with life. His gold I look upon as but lost to himself, and of little service to Ojeda. As for this government of Veragua, which the king hath granted between him and Nienea, and which they are seeking for blindfold, they will neither of them, perchance, behold it; and if they do, it will only be to quarrel among themselves, and fight for those treasures which will then be as so much molten gold poured down their throats. You will see, Codro: I know them both, and know them well, though I have but little knowledge of the stars; yet am I not the less confident in my prediction than thou in thine. But, what is here?—Ah! the carriers bringing the ripe fruits to market. What a train! The fruits hang around them as if they grew about their arms and necks. The yellow fig glitters upon the numerous branches, and the golden orange and the lime send their fragrance even thus far to our nostrils. But the poor Indians!—how they bend beneath their burdens—how they droop—how they yield, until the knee sinks to the earth, and the slender frame scarce rises again for its journey. By the blessed Virgin, Micer Codro, but my heart bleeds for this abused people, even though we win such great profit from their wrongs; and sometimes I feel that I could join hands with the poor savages, and grapple in deadly strife in their behalf, with these worse savages whom I shame to call my countrymen."

"Be prudent, my son," replied the astrologer, in tones subdued to a whisper, and marked by some little trepidation; "thou speakest only too freely for thine own safety: there is one, even now coming behind us, who loves thee

not; and would not be slow to do thee an ill office with the governor. Let Nicholas Obando but hear of such speech from thy lips, and it were thy ruin in Hispaniola while his government shall last. Let Jorge Garabito but hear thee, and Nicholas Obando will not long lack knowledge of thy imprudence."

"Jorge Garabito!" exclaimed the cavalier, in tones which clearly manifested the uncontrolled disgust which he felt for the person named; "doth that base creature—that crow with the feathers of the flamingo—doth he walk behind us?"

"He doth, but not near at hand as yet. He comes from the palm grove of Davila."

"Ha!" was the sudden exclamation of the cavalier, as he now turned his eyes upon the backward path, a movement which he had felt some shame to make but a single moment before. A heavy frown hung like a thunder-cloud above his brows, as he saw the person named emerging slowly from the thick grove of royal palmettoes, whose slender shafts, rising like chiselled columns for more than a hundred feet in air, without branch or stem to spoil their symmetrical smoothness, expanded broadly at the top, and formed a verdant canopy over the bohio of Teresa, which, without impeding the passage of the air, utterly excluded the hot glare of the sun from its green verandas. But Vasco Nunez had no eye for these, the most majestic and graceful trees of the whole vegetable world. His eye was fixed in bitterness and scorn upon Garabito, while his words, simple and few, sought to convey a different impression to the mind of his companion from that which filled his own. "He hath business with Felipe Davila—perchance, he hath occasion for castellanos like ourselves."

"They say that he affects Teresa—that he loves the maiden, and would seek her in marriage."

"They say—who say?" responded the impetuous lover. "Hast thou heard one who might know, or is it only the talk of those withered damsels, who, having survived their own hopes, if not their own passions, spend their days in the mischievous employ of coupling fools with wenches? I would not hearken to the say of one such as these, in any matter which affects Teresa. Hast thou heard this fancy from less busy tongues?"

"It is a frequent speech in Santo Domingo; and some go even further, and reproach him with giving little heed to his repartimiento, because of his frequent attendance at the bohio of Teresa."

"Yet, if this be true, why have I not met him there?"

"Perhaps, he is willing to avoid the meeting."

"He is wise in that," returned the cavalier with a bitter laugh. The astrologer, who did not now seem unwilling to dwell upon a topic, which, but a little while before, he was scrupulous to avoid, continued thus:

"Thou seest that he has but now left her dwelling, my son; and it is not unlike that he seeks her by day only, while thou hast chiefly sought her at evening. By night, he returns to the hills where he has rule, and he may not, by the late decree of Obando, depart from his repartimiento when the night has set. It is my belief that he seeks the maiden."

"And he will win Teresa, think you? He is my rival, and his star, which hath encouragement from his gaudy cloak, will outshine mine in the eyes of the maiden? Is that thy thought, Micer Codro? Tell me:—thou hast fine words touching the conjunction of Mars and Venus; what dost thou think of our rival fortunes? This is no Mars, I am bold to say; and yet, if what thou hast spoken of Teresa Davila, be true;—if she be the heartless thing that thou thinkest her—then may this thing of patches and perfume, be the more honoured in his pursuit than the poor cavalier, who borrows castellanos from her uncle. I would to God, Micer Codro, that thou hadst gotten this gold from Satanos sooner than from Felipe Davila; should it sink in the sea, he would as soon let the devil have his niece—ay, and sooner,—than the poor devil who had lost it."

"It will not sink—it cannot be lost,—and let not, I pray thee, son Vasco, let not this matter give thee more concern. If Teresa loves thee, then will she heed nothing of her uncle's loan in thy behalf; and as little will thy loss of these miserable moneys, move her to any lessening of her regards in thy behalf. If she loves thee not, of what matter is it to thee what is her thought, whether of the loan or of the loss of it. Heeding not thee, my son, what shouldst thou care, what she heeds?"

"True, true; what should I care? and yet, Codro, to think that a creature such as this Garabito, who dreams not

that there is any difference between a spangle and a soul, and has no more heart than the rind of a milk-nut, should win favour—nay, should hope to win favour,—with such a woman as Teresa Davila, passes the limit of nature.”

The old man smiled as he replied:

“Men think there is something strange in this, but women never.”

“Thou hast quarrelled with the sex, Micer Codro; they have been hard upon thee.”

The old man smiled again, but this time the smile was a faint and sickly one.

“I have seen them perish my son,—the loved and the beautiful,—and they have perished in pain and various sufferings, but the little follies and vanities which they loved in life, have not been forgotten in the moment of death. Teresa Davila—if she differ not greatly from the rest—objects not to the smallest riband on the leg of Garabito.”

“Let us speak no more of him,” replied Vasco Nunez with some haste; “they tell me that he is a wretch, no less cruel than foolish. It is said that he hath tortured the poor savages, that he might gather sport from their miserable contortions, and feast his ears upon their unhappy clamours. How may this be? Shall a creature that hath no valour; no affection for strife, even at a season when war is the word in every mouth, and seems the desire in every heart, shall such as he, in the mere humour of his appetite, as I may say, take merriment from the piteous suffering of these most timid of all the creatures of heaven? Loose me this knot, Micer Codro, if it be in thy power. I wonder not that this creature should dance after the fashion of the Frenchman, and that he should pride himself in the plumes that make him strut like the vain bird whose glory lies in its tail; but that he should look with pleasure on blood spilling, and the taking of life; and hearken to the groans of the feeble and unoffending, even while he most encourageth their foolish fancies, passeth my study, and,—but that it is said by truest gentlemen,—almost passeth my belief.”

“And yet, Vasco, marvellous as it may seem, there is this double nature ever in the men of certain nations. Thus, still, hath it been with the Frenchman, who will mingle the playful sports of the kitten, with the glutless ferocity of the tiger. The hot extremes of character, like the in-

tense action of opposing climates, have still been found to meet in the same person ; and nothing is more frequent in the experience of the wise, than to behold sudden changes of temper, which seem hostile to each other, in the same man, from heat to cold ; from storm to calm ; from the full burst of delighted enthusiasm, which is all merriment and life, to the gloomy, stern mood, which looks as if all nature were but a vast sepulchre, and it the unquiet and sleepless ghost, doomed for ever to watch and shriek above it. The frivolous nature hath ever a sanguinary mood, and the sanguinary mood hath its rest in the indulgence of that which is frivolous. Women, who are very foolish, are apt to be very cruel. I have seen many of this sort. There was a man who ruled in Rome that had a feminine frivolity at one moment, and the rage for blood at another, which seemed rather like that of the wild beast, than one born among men ; yet he fought not, and was but a sorry coward after all. But of such monsters in the ancient times, it is not needful that we should speak, if we hearken to the good Las Casas, touching the cruel doings of the Spaniard, and among ourselves—here, in Hispaniola,—doings, which, if the truth be known, are not ended even to this day. Did he not with his own eyes behold five cacicoes roasted before a slow fire !”

“Thou sayst not !” exclaimed Vasco Nunez.

“Ay,—and when their cries came to the ears of the commander, and kept him from his slumbers, and he sent word to the officer on duty to strangle them at once, that they might no longer disturb his rest ; did not the other obey his commands only so far as to gag the unhappy wretches, while he continued his tortures as before, himself stirring the fire until they felt pain no longer, and ceased to yield him sport.”

“I believe it not—it is not possible !” exclaimed the cavalier, with a very natural expression, at once of horror and incredulity.

“It is true, Vasco Nunez,” responded the astrologer, with half-suppressed but solemn accents, “the martyrdom of the blessed Saint Sebastian not more true than that of these harmless savages ; and, hearken to me—more than this, my son,”—here his voice was subdued into a whisper, and, approaching more closely to his companion, he looked backward as he spoke—“more than this, my son,

it is the word that this Jorge Garabito, who now comes behind us, is the very man of Seville, having command at the time over the repartimiento of Alameda, in the iron mountains, where this cruel deed was done. It is thought that it is he of whom Las Casas hath made this cruel record."

The cavalier clutched his weapon convulsively.

"By the Holy Virgin, Micer Codro, could I believe this true, which I cannot, I should slay this monster on the instant. But it is not true. It is not possible; worthless though this wretch may be, I look back upon his plumage, and my sense revolts at such belief. But, if it were true of any man, why hath not Las Casas named the name? What had he to fear?"

"Of what use to name the name?"

"That man might curse him—that, having his name, we might have one more fit than all to express the perfect monster, should he again spring to life in ages yet to come. But there had been a present use in this knowledge, if it were for punishment only."

"And who would punish?"

"The power was in Alameda."

"Ay, the power, but not the will. When Jorge Garabito filled the coffers of his employer with pesos that made him rich, it had been but an idle question to ask,—Where are my labourers?—What tale is this they bring me of thy massacres before breakfast to whet thy appetite?—to keep thy hands in practice?—to yield thee sport when the sun has driven thee beneath the palm-tree into shade?—to prove thy strength with the sword?—and the thousand ways beside which thou hast chosen to murder the people which were given thee in trust? Believe me, son Vasco, Alameda looked to nothing but his three-fifths; and asked for no accountability from his officer, but of the golden pesos which he told before him weekly. While the treasury filled, he took no heed of the blood which Garabito, it is said, made to flow like water."

"But such massacre were infinite loss to the master. What hand would supply the coffers of Alameda, when those that gathered him his treasure, were cut away by his officer? Methinks his own loss were enough to teach him lessons of humanity."

"He had no loss! Well he knew that he must acquire

his wealth quickly or never; for what servant hath long held favour in the jealous sight of Ferdinand, or in that of the no less jealous Obando? Had he been sure of a permanent dominion over the poor Indians, he had spared their lives—he had portioned out their labours, each according to his strength—he had counted them at morning, he had been bountiful of the food he gave them at night. But such was no policy with the master whose way was limited—whose hours were numbered—who saw his successor at the porch! The toils of the Indian were unremitting, and the value of his life small, because the time of his owner was short. If this be not the truth, and the true reason, wherefore is it that the Indians, which numbered one million when Diego Colon first came to Hispaniola, do not now reach eighty thousand? That is a marvel far greater than this of the cruelty of Garabito, unless ye believe in this cruelty to explain it."

"'Tis monstrous! I am resolute to refuse belief, though I deem this creature Garabito base enough for any thing. We will speak of him no more."

"It is well,—he approaches us."

"See him not, if thou canst. I will have eyes only for other objects."

This was said by the cavalier in tones like those which his companion had preserved throughout the dialogue. In a louder voice he continued thus,—pointing as he spoke to the carrier Indians, whose appearance had given occasion to the previous dialogue:

"See where they descend from the heights—what a train—and how they toil. These fruits which they bring must be for the armament; the cotton sacks contain maize and cassavis, and are in quantity too great for the markets here. Nienesa will soon depart."

"He hath need, if he can," said the old man in a whisper; "his creditors find too much employment in his annoyance to let him leave them without notice. We shall hear of Nienesa when he sails."

Garabito approached them by this time, and put a momentary stop to their conversation. He saluted them civilly but foppishly, with a swagger of importance, which added to the distaste already expressed for him by Vasco Nunez. He was a slender and good-looking person enough, had he been content to let himself alone. But

his dress was that of the ultra fops of the time, and faced and flanked as he was on all hands by ribands and knots, there was enough in his mere outside to provoke disgust in the mind of one like the cavalier, whose own habits, though neat, were simple, and whose manners were too direct and frank to tolerate any form of affectation. The mincing gait, and no less mincing accents of Garabito, as sidling by them, he whispered the passing salutation, were of a piece with his costume; and the cold response of Vasco Nunez, and the reluctant down-looking air of the astrologer, had nothing in them to encourage him to linger. The two shortened their pace as he went forward, obviously to avoid the necessity of farther communication.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

THERE was no love lost between the parties. If Vasco Nunez felt scorn for Garabito, the latter requited it with a hatred equally unqualified, though less fearlessly expressed.

“An insolent upstart—a proud ruffian!” he muttered to himself when he had passed the two, and was fairly out of hearing; “one who thinks, because he comes of Los Caballeros, and has learned the use of his weapon under the Lord of Moguer, that he is something better than all other men. He shall learn truer things some day—he shall—that he shall. I am not slack in the weapon myself; and in practice with Alameda, he was wont to say I was good at the thrust, and would become so at the foil. He marked that I had a keen eye for mischief, and a shrewd stroke. I trow that I am even better in hand now than when we played among the iron mountains. Well, there are days yet, and the hour is to come. If I were in the iron mountains now, I would practise a stroke or two upon the hardest skull in the mine: I would that this Vasco Nunez could behold me strike a blow. Methinks he were more civil thereafter. There is a day yet—he shall see—he shall feel me too, perchance. They say he has hope of Teresa—but he is a fool there—the true hope is mine. She hath looked as much, and I believe her eyes. Then, she hath spoken, and great was her admiration at the disposition of my purple cap. The tassel depending to the left ear, the loop and diamond button in front, did move her to the freest language of praise. This Vasco Nunez affects not even the fashion of the curb and chain; nor doth he wear the frill! He would work wonders with big speech and wearisome voyages;—he goes far, and toils hard to suffer

loss. He hath little knowledge of a damsel's heart, I trow, but will grow wiser when he hath lost Teresa."

Muttering in this sort to himself, and looking down, with no little complacency as he went forward, to such portions of his garb, as, in the fashionable nomenclature of that day had called for his special consideration; and upon those symmetrical limbs, at the same time, in whose attractions he equally confided, to work the necessary conquest over the heart of the damsel in dispute, Garabito proceeded towards the train of natives, whose descent from the hills to the great plain of the city, had occasioned the long dialogue between the cavalier and the astrologer, portions of which we have thought it not unadvisable to repeat and record. Burdened with the fruits and provisions of the country, these poor wretches—a melancholy band, consisting of both sexes, and of every degree of age, size and strength—were wending their way to the great market-place, which was at once the place of traffic, of arms, and of assemblage for public purposes. They were probably fifty in number, generally tall and slender of person, with skins of a clear brown, or rather olive complexion; and of hue scarcely much darker, and frequently much lighter and clearer, than that of their conquerors. Their hair, uniformly black, hung in thick masses about their shoulders, but among the women was often gathered up and bound behind the neck by a fillet of yellow grass. This arrangement was, in some cases, absolutely necessary, from its excessive length and volume, to protect their eyes and the free movement of their limbs against its frequent interruptions. They were all decently clad in loose garments of cotton—the manufacture of which was known to them long prior to the arrival of Columbus. This garment descended from the neck to the knee, and among the women, a little below it, where it was met by the high tops of their sandals,—something like the leggin of the North American savage,—made sometimes of the skins of wild animals, but more frequently of plaited grasses of mixed colours, green, purple and yellow. The children, as well male as female, numbers of whom accompanied their parents, and did little offices for them as they proceeded,—were entirely naked. Overloaded with an unmeasured burden, which their cruel tyrants had accumulated upon their limbs, their frames, usually slight as they were erect and symmetrical, now

tottered feebly in their wearisome progress ; nor were the cruel toils under which their limbs were sinking, without an effect even more distressing upon their wretched faces. A gloomy despondency, heartless as hopeless, had settled down, like a continual cloud, upon features that were once expressive of sunshine and rapture only. Their eyes, which were said to have streamed with innocent joy and the most generous good nature, at the first coming of the Spaniards, were now cast down in gloom, and seldom lifted from that earth, into the bowels of which they were forced to grope for those treasures, of which they knew no value, as they knew no use. Their hearts, which had melted with compassion, or bounded with pleasant rapture, at the suggestion of the simplest contrivances of sport, were now crushed and fettered by the consciousness of a chilling and merciless tyranny which denied them every indulgence. The crowding events of strife and conquest, crowned with wealth, which had filled the land of their conquerors with joy,—the progress of twenty years,—had been of crushing consequence to them. Inhabitants of a country which spontaneously yielded its fruits to supply the wants of life, —beneath a climate whose benign influences made cold an utter stranger, their inclinations were gratified without their own efforts ; and the indolence of habit which followed such allotment, left them open to all the tenderest influences of the soul. Their sympathies were sudden as the light, spontaneous in their offerings as the soil with its fruits ; love was the constant employment of their lives, as it was the chief blessing of their heart. Unlike the savages of the continent, they knew little or nothing of war. The dance by moonlight ; the areyto, or song of romantic history ; their games of sport, which made their limbs lithe and active, and taught them an eminent gracefulness and ease ; these were their only employments. It was their custom, says Herrera, to dance from evening till the dawn, and sometimes, fifty thousand men and women could assemble together for this object, keeping, as by a common impulse, exact time and maintaining responsive motions, with their heads, feet and person, with the most wonderful minuteness and felicity. What must have been the effect of a transition from such a life, to that forced upon them by their cruel invaders ? How dreadful the change ! how destructive to life itself, without regard to its innocent

freedoms, and the infantile joys to which their former condition had accustomed them! No wonder that they perished soon beneath the dominion of the Spaniards; the only wonder is, that they could do so much for their tyrants before death came to their relief. They had soon enough melted away from those fiery warriors, without making necessary the use of the smiting sword, the wanton immolation, the bigoted and brutal sacrifice!

"And yet these people have their pleasures still," remarked the cavalier, in reply to the stern reflections of the astrologer. "See where they draw nigh to Garabito. One of the women takes steps as if for the voluptuous dance which they so much love, and though the burden be still upon her head, yet how graceful are all her movements. Some of them clap their hands to cheer her; and look where the little urchin advances with his decorated monkey. He hath garbed the sportive creature in a fashion not unlike that of Garabito himself, and the animal hath his vanity also, that is far more graceful than that of the man. They can dance and laugh still as before, Codro; they are not utterly unhappy."

"They can dance and laugh, but not as before, my son," replied the other, "and see you not that they dance and laugh because of their fears, and not because they have the desire to do so. They would disarm the wrath of their rulers; they would soften the moods which destroy them. I look with no heart upon their merriment, if merriment it be; their smile is distortion, their movement is all that they have to show of the sports which they once loved when they were happy; but it is now a movement of the limbs and not of the soul. Vasco Nunez, my son, when thou hast trodden the green shores of that southern sea, beware what thou doest to the innocent people thereof. Of a truth thou hast need to bring them to the tasks of labour, for without this, they can never learn the performance of those high and holy duties, taught by our religion; but task them not so that the limbs ache, and the heart desponds. Give them no tasks beyond their strength which shall impair their strength; but such only as shall increase it. Punish them, when thou hast need to do so, but never in thy passion; and never let thy punishments go to the taking of life, for life is of all things the most precious, among the gifts of God to man."

The grave exordium of the astrologer was arrested by the progress of events in the quarter to which Garabito had proceeded; which, for the time, were of a character quite too lively to permit any spectator, however devoutly inclined, to enlarge in abstract censure and wise homily. Garabito, as we have already seen, had approached so nearly to the train of Indian carriers as to speak to them and command their attention. It so happened that their duties were under his present regulation, and that he was, in fact, the agent for providing the ships with supplies through their medium. They belonged to the *departimiento*, or division of territory, in which he possessed a sub-authority, not unlike that of the overseer in our own country; and, it may be well imagined, that knowing him as the poor Indians must have done, by the terrors of his wanton practice, such as was well described by the astrologer, he found instant obedience to his commands. They were now not far distant from the cluster of palm-covered huts which formed the place of gathering, or "Plaza de Armas," as it was more proudly styled; and just beyond where it stood, might be seen the tall masts of the ships which were to receive the provisions which they carried. But, though thus nigh, and in sight of the spot where their morning journey was to end, the poor Indians, wearied with the toils which they had taken, were too glad to rest themselves after their descent from the hills, upon the first level which presented itself; and as they reached a little spot which seemed to form the last of the successive ridges over which they had come, each in turn put down his basket, and addressed himself to the momentary rest which the chance afforded. Some of the more fatigued and desponding threw themselves down in the shadow of the little hillock around which they had halted, and closed the eyes, that could behold, when open, nothing but burdens. Others might be seen eating their scanty provision of cassavi bread, while more than one, hidden from the sight of the passing spectator by the studious interposition of his companions, swallowed from his long-necked gourd an unstinted measure of the intoxicating pulque—a beverage made from maize, cassavi, or other plants of native production, and which the Aborigines of all America, North and South, were accustomed to prepare long before the coming of the Europeans. While such were the stolen

enjoyments of some, others, chiefly the women and children, laying aside their burdens, advanced with more boldness towards the highway. The object of these was to display their frail and fleeting, but still persuasive charms to the spectator; and by appeals to his humour or his lusts, obtain from him the boon which his charity might have withheld. These poor creatures had learned the word—the one of all others which they least knew when Columbus first came among them,—which denotes the mendicant; and in lieu of that which the early voyagers represent them as having had continually in their mouths, namely, “take, take,” they now cried aloud in Spanish, at every evolution which brought them to face the spectator, “give, give!”

“Give Buru, give Buru—give the girl that dances—give the girl that sings and dances—dances high and sings so sweetly—give the poor Buru that dances,” &c.

Such was the address, half sung, half spoken, which one of these frail figurantes made to the rude sailor, Juan de la Cosa, as she threw herself directly in his path. The worthy seaman gave her little heed and bade her stand aside, and not trouble him with her follies. But though she stopped the dance, the hand was still extended, and her voice still piteously implored him for charity.

“Give the girl that sings and dances—the poor girl that has no cassavi—give the girl some bread, my master—the poor girl that sings and dances.”

The rough seaman, though he had repulsed her at the first, was not without his share of humanity; and muttering something about her spending the money which he gave her upon pulque rather than bread—a suspicion very like to be well-founded—he threw her a silver coin of little value, and stopped for an instant to behold the graceful dance with which, even before she stooped to raise the money from the earth, she thought it fitting to express her gratitude. This form of begging, not unlike that which the wandering Italians and Swiss exhibit daily in our own times, and country, was one common enough in Santo Domingo; and was indeed the only privilege which was left the poor natives by their grave and inflexible tyrants. They employed it whenever they came into the cities, though their success was not always the same. Some, like the rough, frank sailor, rewarded them with a trifle,

which amply met their expectations; some with a kindly smile, which was, perhaps, scarcely less grateful; but there were many that yielded them no notice, and a few of the more brutal sort from whom they received a wanton cuff or kick, rather than a copper. To this variety of treatment they were quite too well accustomed even for complaint; nor did it often discourage them from continuing an exercise which made them liable to the caprices of the most wanton and worthless among their masters. Scorned and beaten by one wayfarer, they turned to another, with a seemingly callous unconsciousness; and if, in a second trial, they met with better treatment than at first, it was only one of those turns of the die that make the successful player forgetful of all the past.

The girl having concluded her dance, in requital of the gift received from the seaman, the latter was about to turn away, when the voice of Garabito reached his ears.

"Whither so fast, Señor Juan!—thou hast seen nothing—by my faith nothing. Stay but a moment while I choose thee a dancer—one who shall swim in air—who shall dazzle thine eyes to follow where she goes, and make thee giddy but to look. Await me, I pray thee, that I may show thee a dancer."

"Nay, Señor Jorge, it may not be. I am waited even now by Don Alonzo, and have no time for these hoppings which thou speakest of, nor do I desire to be made giddy when I gaze. Thou shalt tell me of these things, and my share in them shall be sufficient."

"Well, as thou wilt, for a surly knave as thou art," said Garabito, when the seaman had departed. "I were but a fool to ask the presence of such as thou to such rare matters; they were only wasted upon thy peccary head; it is enough that I look on them myself. Hark ye, Buru," addressing the girl who was stealing back in silence to her company—"where is Azuma? Is she not among you?"

The trembling woman replied in the affirmative, retreating, as she spoke, backward to the little hill where her companions were at rest. Her example was soon followed by all those who had in like manner scattered themselves abroad with a like object.

"It is well," said Garabito, as he followed in the same direction. "Buru is well enough, but who shall dance against Azuma? I am in the mood to see her now—I

would that Teresa were with me—I have spoken of this woman in her ears—it would chase this ruffian Vasco Nunez, to behold us. Would I had thought of it—I had vexed him with a sight—I had—that I had!”

With these words he approached the train of Indians where they were now grouped together about the hills,—but though willing enough to make sport for their oppressors, without scruple, and almost without discrimination, their sports of every description ceased suddenly as the Spaniard drew nigh. If the story of *Las Casas*, as related by the astrologer, lacked other evidence, there was yet a tacit proof in the terror which his approach inspired, which gave it partial confirmation. The change was as universal as it was sudden, among the Indians. Timid and startled, like their women, the men rose to their feet, and seized hurriedly upon their several burdens. The children, with a movement equally prompt, handled their little wicker baskets; and one little urchin, whose companion was a marmoset—one of the little sportive monkeys whose tricks were among the marvels of *Hispaniola*—laboured diligently to curb the eccentricities and antics of the animal, which might seem, in the mind of such a person as *Garabito*, to denote a condition of too much enjoyment for such wretched creatures as themselves. The whole cavalcade exhibited the confusion and fear of a gang of unruly schoolboys, caught in the very attitude of insubordination. Not a word escaped their lips, but silently and hastily resuming their burdens, they prepared to shorten, with all speed, the few brief moments of rest which they had promised themselves.

“Now, wherefore do ye take up your baskets as I come?” demanded *Garabito*, with that tone of harsh authority which the petty mind ever loves to display. “Set them down as I bid ye—it is my pleasure that ye should not move awhile. Think ye I have no mind for your sports, like other cavaliers?—Ye should know better—ye shall resume them, and quickly, lest I teach ye another dance that you wot of, and have not found so pleasant as the *areyto*. Hear you me!—where is *Azuma*? She is among ye—let her come forth, and begin. I will see none but her!”

The trembling group instantly laid down their burdens, while *Azuma*, the woman *Garabito* had called upon, ad-

vanced from the rear. She was a tall, rather slender, but exquisitely-made person, with a face marked with lineaments of sorrow, even deeper than the rest. But so gentle seemed her features in their grief—so sweet withal—that the harshness of affection was subdued in its expression, and nothing left but its purity—as if the trials through which she had passed, like the fire which refines the metal, had only served to purify and to temper, and not debase or destroy. Her step, though slow, was light and graceful, and with her hands meekly folded upon her breast, she stood immovable as a statue before the Spaniard. Her sad, expressive silence, and wo-begone features promised but little for the wild antics which her limbs were required to perform.

“I would have you dance, Azuma,” said Garabito in harsh accents; “you are slow when I command. To it, woman—to it, and do your best; let air feel you, and beat quickly with your hands.”

Without a word she threw herself into a posture of the most voluptuous grace and loveliness, such as the Haytien maiden was wont to assume when she begun the areyto, and such as would make the fortune of an artiste at any of the fashionable theatres of our time.

“That will do—that is something like, Azuma,” cried Garabito with a commendatory chuckle; “keep thy place for an instant!—I would that Teresa could see thee now:—ay, it were something to show—it were something to brag on. By the blessed image! I would that I were one of those painters now, that give a life upon cloth and paper—I would carry thee to Spain even as thou standest now, Azuma, and show thee there to certain eyes, that fancy there is little grace or charm in these wild countries. The fools! would I not show them! But begin thy dance, Azuma,—the people gather—let them see what thou canst do, woman, and ere thou beginnest, let the shadows fall from thy face, till it looks free as the light movement of thy limbs. Let thine eyes show the brightness which melts and dazzles, while thine arms twine about the air, and thy foot shrinks from the earth at a touch, as if the element only were its fitting place of rest. Away, woman, let the people behold thee.”

Garabito had something of the taste of the artiste, and might have made an admirable leader of the *ballét de corps*;

but though the poor woman began the dance, there were some of his requisitions with which she had neither the heart nor the power to comply. How could she smile; how dispel the cloud from her face, and the big tear from her eye? She made no effort at these objects. Her feet did, indeed, spurn the earth from which they bounded; and never yet did form more completely or more lusciously seem to swim in the air, which her outstretched and fast waving arms appeared toiling to embrace. The crowd began to gather and to murmur in their half-suppressed delight. The idle sailors clustered about, with a pliant mood always ready for enjoyment, while the busy tradesman lingered on his way, looked back, halted, and forgot his purpose in the contemplation of powers which the poor Azuma, unlike her companions, did not now exhibit, but in compliance with the commands of one whom she did not dare to disobey. He, meanwhile,—the tyrant who commanded,—delighted with any audience, as it flattered his mean spirit with an exhibition of his power, kept up a running commentary on every movement:—

“Now, my friends, behold; she hath gone through the grand *querija*; she is about to *baluz*,”—employing phrases picked up among the Indians, by which they designated certain movements of their wild dances—“you will see her, yielding and sinking, till she seems about to fall away, even into the arms of death himself; but anon, when she is at the worst—when the earth is about to receive her,—she will swim you into the very stars, until your eye blinks, and the water gathers in it. Look!—there!—ha! ha!—said I not?—well done, Azuma, well done; but look thy brightest, woman, when thou swimst the *querija*; let the shadow fall from thy countenance, and smile, as thou shouldst, in coming to the *pass*: Ha! well—that was well done, my masters—to it again, Azuma, as thou didst but now.”

The rapture of Garabito was shared by the gathering auditory. But, though dancing with all that wonderful grace and freedom, which the Spanish chroniclers describe as almost peculiar to the people of the country, and among whom she was conspicuously known as excelling in the glowing exercise, it was evident that the movements of the poor woman were those of the human machine only, and that there was neither heart nor hope in her various and

beautiful action. There was nothing in it of that light-souled spirit, which accustomed only to the benign influences of their southern clime—a region of fruits and flowers, and balmy airs and blossoms,—regarded even the presence of the Spaniards as, at first, a blessing like the rest. Yet the dance lacked nothing of its animation. On the contrary, it soon put on an aspect of fearful excitement, as, wrought upon by the intense physical action which the commands of Garabito continued to stimulate, Azuma repeated her efforts, which combined great muscular flexibility with the most nice and wonderful adroitness. At one moment every muscle would seem corded to the utmost point of tension; at the next, relaxing them as by magic, she would seem to sink away into exhaustion, which, in the case of a European must have soon followed such exertions. But, practised as they were from infancy, the capacity of indulgence among these people in exercises of this sort, was utterly beyond the belief of those not familiar with the spectacle. In the present instance, the fear of Garabito, whose persecutions of the Indians were not only well known to those before him, but had been felt by many if not most among themselves, prompted Azuma to unwonted efforts in her desire to avoid offence. In a little while her features became convulsed—her eyes glared wildly, and seemed starting from their sockets; her long black hair becoming loosed from the grassy string which bound it, now descended to her heels and floated wildly on the air; the thick drops gathered and stood upon her brows, where the veins swelled momentarily into ridgy lines, deeply blue and colouring the almost fair skin around them; and in the swimming and voluptuous whirl which produced these effects, the blood of the spectator bounded in like heat and sympathy. Warmed by the exciting beauty of her movements, their rapidity and grace, and not less by the remembrances of their own past amusements of the girl, her companions set down their burdens, half forgot their cares, and beating time with their hands in air and upon their sides, crowded around her, muttering at forgetful moments, little snatches of their next favourite areytos. The enthusiasm of the elder savages extended to their children, who, accustomed to fewer restraints than their parents, soon began to lose their fear of the stern Spaniard, to skip

and shout with unmitigated delight as they beheld the wonderful performances of Azuma.

It happened most unluckily, that the leader of the little urchins on this occasion, had been entrusted with the decorated marmoset already spoken of; who, taught to take a part in all such performances, broke suddenly away from his restraints, and made his first appearance, running among the Indians from shoulder to shoulder, and playing a thousand comic tricks as he ran. The mirth of the poor savages grew contagious, and Garabito himself was unable to resist it. With hearty clamour he urged the mischievous little animal on, and helped, in no small degree, by his words and cries of cheer, to increase his natural sauciness.

The spectators shouted aloud their admiration, and clapped their hands, and danced after the little creature with a delight that threw aside all constraint from their own deportment, and diminished in some measure that of the Indians. But the merriment of the latter was arrested by a little incident that soon changed the whole aspect of affairs. The monkey, tired of making free with the heads and shoulders of the poor savages with whom he was in the constant habit of taking such liberties, and encouraged by the open applauses of the sailors, bounced suddenly in among them; and, leaping from head to head, now pulling off their caps, and now twitching the hair beneath with no measured fingers, proved himself quite as much at home among his new acquaintance, as he ever did among the old. The good-natured sailors, with few exceptions, took this intrusion in kind part; and what with their awkward scramblings after the urchin, and their play at cross purposes with each other, in the unavoidable collisions which the sudden movements of the agile creature necessarily occasioned, they found the sport far greater than before. Nobody enjoyed the scene more than Garabito while his own person remained sacred; but what was the consternation of the Indians when they beheld the monkey dart off in a tangent from the crowd, and suddenly emerge into conspicuous station, perched on the very apex of the high steeple-crowned hat which the dandy wore. There he commenced a dance not dissimilar to that which Azuma had just finished. The merriment of the savages was ended in an instant. They had experience of

the danger of trifling with the dignity of such a creature as Garabito. But the sailors had no such fear or thought; and regarding the matter as a continuance of the sport, they were pleased to increase those playful clamours which had provoked so greatly the natural sauciness of the monkey. The laughter of Garabito was changed to sudden fury, particularly as the quickness of the monkey, leaping from shoulder to shoulder, and to and fro, between back, shoulder and head, contrived to elude all the efforts of the bedevilled Spaniard to relieve himself. The Indian boys, accustomed to manage the creature, came to his assistance; but the whoops, halloos, and commands which he had been taught to obey heretofore, now failed to move him in the slightest manner. He had been, unfortunately, too much encouraged, by Garabito no less than the rest, beyond his usual privileges; and was just in that state of intoxication which, in a man, prompts him to run the full length of his line, though he well knows there is a halter at the end of it. The threat of punishment which he well understood, occasioned not the slightest heed on his part, and he jiggled and bounded aloft upon Garabito's head and shoulders, in spite of all his struggles, which, indeed, were not very direct ones, for having some dread that his fingers might be bitten, he was at no pain to make a hasty use of them. Taking advantage of this fear, which the cunning animal very soon understood, he finally plucked off the hat, upon which he had practised so many gambols, and waved it aloft with one paw. At times the other was permitted to amuse itself familiarly with the well disposed locks beneath him, which he twitched with the most shocking unconcern, bidding defiance the while to all the efforts of the dandy, who, stamping on the earth with fury, shouting and swearing, and throwing up his hands, and leaping from side to side, succeeded only in compelling his tormentor to change his position, but never in expelling him from his perch. The laughter of the crowd added to his fury, which was not a little heightened by the consciousness that the whole scene was witnessed by Vasco Nunez, whom he knew to be approaching. That cavalier, as may be imagined, was excessively amused by the spectacle.

"A brave monkey!" he exclaimed to the astrologer, as they paused in their course to survey the scene. "He hath found his kin, he knows his claim of brotherhood. They

are garbed alike, and there is little difference, save in size between them. Garabito is but the greater ape of the two, let them play awhile together—it is rare sport, the affinity is good.”

And in the heart of the speaker there was an unexpressed wish that Teresa Davila might also behold it. His unmeasured laughter reached the ears of Garabito, and increased his frenzy.

“I will hang you up, ye villains! one and all—I will hang ye! the red fires shall seize upon ye, dogs, if ye take not this foul creature from my shoulders.”

A torrent of oaths accompanied this outbreak, and threats which the Indians well knew were not idly expressed, prompted several of them to come forward, though slowly, and with trembling, to his assistance. The boy by whose neglect the monkey had been suffered to manifest his impertinence, having armed himself with a whip, succeeded better than the rest, in driving him finally from his place of eminence. But the urchin bore off with him the hat of Garabito, as a sort of trophy of his achievement; while the latter, whose very reason seemed to be utterly disordered by the torments and the taunts he had undergone, and having the jeers and laughter of his own countrymen still sounding in his ears, drew his sword and made after the criminal, who now stood upon a little point of rock and still seemed disposed to chuckle and rejoice in his impudence, though half conscious of the danger which he had incurred. But for his agility, he had paid for his insolence with life; leaping from point to point of the rocks around him, as Garabito approached, the little wretch, still bearing the hat in triumph, mocked at the hostility which he was so easily able to elude, and stretching out his long paws in the manner of a wicked schoolboy, taunted the infuriated dandy to renewed efforts at overtaking him. Meanwhile, the sailors, to whom the whole scene afforded nothing but delight, urged its continuance after their own fashion.

“All sail, Señor Garabito, you shall overhaul the enemy soon. You have but to weather the cape and the game is certain. The chase slackens sail and you shall have him at short quarters, close in shore.” Such was the language of one. The encouragement of a second was bestowed upon the monkey; while a third lent his counsels to the Indian boy, who, scarcely less active than the marmoset,

was pursuing him with the best prospect of success. He sprang up the heights in pursuit—put in practise sundry well known tricks to persuade him to terms—leaped as daringly from ledge to ledge of the declivity as himself, and at length succeeded in compelling him to restore the hat which he had continued with awkward efforts to confine upon his own head. Finding he could no longer baffle his sturdy pursuer with such an incumbrance, he hauled it to the feet of Garabito who, exhausted with his efforts, and rendered mad by the ridicule of those around him, stood red and panting, looking emotions which the Indians too well understood to venture to approach him, while under their distracting influence. The hat still lay at his feet, as the boy, whip in hand, leaped down from the little height from which he had chased the monkey. Without speaking a word, Garabito fixed his furious gaze upon the trembling child, and simply pointed with his finger to the hat. The sign was understood, and with slow steps, that seemed to denote a lurking apprehension of danger, the boy approached, and stooping down as to raise the desired object from the earth, was seized by the hair by the vengeful Spaniard; swinging him from his feet with one hand, Garabito lifted his sword in the same instant with the other. The act was sufficiently startling and threatening in the eyes of all who remembered the atrocious notoriety which his former savage deeds had secured to his name. The astrologer was the first to cry aloud to his companion.

“God of the martyrs, Vasco Nunez, strike in and stay his hand; he will slay the child if thou dost not.”

Such also was the fear of Azuma, who was the mother of the boy. She bounded forward with a shriek, and with that animation in her fine features now, which she had not worn during the whole of her picturesque performance, threw herself before the Spaniard, grasping with one hand the child, and with the other seconding the piteous prayer, with which she implored his mercy.

“He will not—he dare not strike!” said Vasco Nunez, in hoarse accents, but hurrying forward as he spoke, with a degree of haste which belied his confident speech. “He will not use weapon upon the child—impossible! He is not base enough for that—he dare not, before our eyes!”

But the action of Garabito looked full of the direst purpose. With his fist he spurned the mother from before

him, with one hand held the child at the full length of his arm, while throwing back the hand that held the sword, he waved the instrument aloft, in order to give force to its descending sweep.

“ Hold, Señor Garabito—hold, Spaniard ! wretch, base, cowardly villain, hold back thine arm. Beware, lest I do to thee whatever thou dost to the child.”

The words of Vasco Nunez were too late, or only served to provoke and goad the vindictive monster to the commission of the deed. The fatal blow was given at the instant. The keen steel aimed too unerringly, and with all the bitter force of rage, went through the tender neck of the boy, severing flesh, gristle, bones, and life. The body of the victim fell quivering upon the shoulders of the mother, who still lay, and grovelled at the feet of the murderer ; while the head, hurled from his bloody hands, rolled among the devoted savages, who, apprehensive of like cruel treatment, ready to fly, were huddled together in fear and trembling, at the edge of the rocks.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE AVENGER—NEW PLOTS AND PARTIES.

A WILD shriek of mingled horror and hostility burst from the lips of the approaching cavalier, as he beheld the bloody and unexpected deed. The trembling grasp of the astrologer now laboured vainly to restrain him. He broke through all impediment, dashed aside the gaping crowd who seemed all too much stunned by the deed, and awed by the authority which it was well known Garabito possessed, to take any part in its punishment; and with a fury in his look and manner which could not be mistaken, and which fully declared his purpose, even had his threat been unspoken, he rushed upon the murderous wretch, where he stood, half exulting in the slight of arm which he had shown, and altogether heedless of the poor mother's agony; and dashing aside the weapon which the villain opposed to his approach, in his precipitation, his own being still undrawn, he hurled Garabito to the earth and planted his heavy foot upon his neck. This was all the work of an instant—of a single impulse, which was acknowledged by the crowd, so speechless hitherto, with a shout of unanimous approval. He did not in that moment of desperate excitement feel the slight wound which the murderer had inflicted upon his side, nor till he had him down beneath his foot, did he seem conscious that his own sword remained still in its scabbard. Another instant repaired his error, as he remembered that justice was yet unexecuted. He drew the keen steel forth, and the pale cheeks of the criminal attested his dread of a fate that promised to be scarcely less sudden and terrible than that which he had inflicted upon the unoffending boy, as he saw the bright blade sweep in air, with its point bearing down upon his bosom. The timely hand of the astrologer arrested the blow.

"What wouldst thou, Vasco Nunez—what wouldst thou, my son, by this violence."

"Slay the black-hearted villain—the bloody murderer, even as he slew the child."

The groans of the mother, who clung to the bleeding victim till her long black tresses were dyed red and matted with his gore, increased the rage of the cavalier, as it seemed to implore the doom which he threatened, and flinging himself loose from the astrologer, he again prepared to strike. But Micer Codro who knew the danger which he must necessarily incur, even by an act of such sacred justice, clung to him again, while he cried to the bystanders for help in his attempt.

"Stay thy hand, brave Vasco, dear son, stay thy hand, strike not the blow, remember the decree of Nicholas Obando. It is death to him in Santo Domingo, who shall take life of a Spaniard. Remember, I pray thee, thou hast no friend in Obando; thou wilt find no favour at his hands, though God himself looked on and approved the deed. Break the law, in however small a measure, and he will mete out to thee its harshest penalties. Be patient, spare this man—thou hast no matter in his doings."

"Ay, but I have, Micer Codro, and so hast thou, and so hath Obando, and all men not absolutely brutified by the damning power of Satan and his angels. All men who look on such crime unmoved, are partakers, unless they show themselves willing to avenge."

"Thou hast already shown thyself willing to avenge. It is enough."

"Stand aside, Micer Codro, I bid thee; and stay me not in the course of justice."

"I dare not, Vasco—for thy own sake, I dare not." The astrologer covered the prostrate body of Garabito with his own, as he spake these words:

"Move me not to do thee harm," replied the cavalier, hoarsely; and while the astrologer began to repeat his warning touching Obando and his decree, with no gentle hand he grasped him by his cloak, and lifting him from his feet with the ease of one who lifts an infant, he threw him fairly behind him, while he exclaimed,

"Let Nicholas Obando come; I fear not that he will censure. His own sword should do this justice, if mine did not. And he dare not, in the face of Heaven and of

Spain, do me wrong for the performance of this duty to our king and country, not to say to God and man. Yet will I give this wretch a chance for his life; no man shall say I took him at 'vantage. Rise, villain," spurning the murderer with his foot, while withdrawing it from his body; "Rise, villain, and take thy weapon. Thou art ready and valiant enough to use it upon the feeble savage, and the feebler child; try it on the man, sirrah—try it on the Spaniard. Rise, dog, ere I strike my heel into thy teeth."

The murderer availed himself of the permission to rise, as promptly as the stunning fall which he had received would permit. But, though he resumed the grasp upon his weapon, and took his place fairly before his antagonist, he did not show that forward disposition to the encounter, which the injury he had received, and the sanguinary mood of which he had shown himself capable, would have seemed to justify.

"Thou art ready!" demanded the impatient warrior, with a quick sudden tone, looking as he spoke into the very eyes of Garabito, with a withering, sharp glance, that promised to penetrate only less deeply than his sword. The other was disposed to expostulate. Vasco merely stamped with his feet, and simply pointed to the murdered child.

"But, Señor Vasco, wherefore? It is but a heathen boy—an Indian—a lad born for perdition. Wouldst thou have me answer with life for such as he?"

Such language need not surprise the reader, when he remembers that it was forty years after the period of these events, when it became necessary for the pope (Paul III.) to issue his famous bull, declaring the Indians to be men, and entitled, therefore, to all such consideration as was due to humanity.

A stroke upon the cheek with the flat part of his sword was the only answer which the cavalier deigned the murderer to this speech. A murmur ran through the crowd, which, without sympathizing greatly with the Indians, always sympathizes with courage, and were now indignant to behold the tameness, under such an indignity, of one wearing a weapon, and who had just proved himself so indifferent to bloodshed. Garabito could no longer evade the requisition. The blood mounted into his face with the suddenness of a torrent. Though entirely devoid of real valour, he was yet not without that conventional courage

which must always comply with the requisitions of the community, and to fight now was absolutely necessary to save caste.

This consideration came to his aid, and he was strengthened by the free murmurs of those around him. He raised his eye to that of his enemy, set his feet firmly, took an attitude at once manly and graceful, and the swords clashed and crossed. The murmur of the crowd, changing to that of applause and pleased anticipation, was still encouraging; and a faint smile rose upon the lips of Garabito, which was strangely contrasted with the bitter joy which glared out from the eye of his opponent. Twice, thrice, the weapons clashed and clung to each other, their points bearing down to the earth, under the mutual pressure of the well sinewed arms that bore them. Like most of the Spaniards of that day, Garabito had some knowledge of his weapon; he had played with a skilful swordsman, as he had boasted, in the person of Alameda, and had learned some of the nice practice with which the ready fencer sometimes manages to elude the strength with which he could not equally contend. Driven to the wall, he became collected, and assumed the show of a confidence which he did not possess. But his knowledge of his weapon, his art, and practice, were nothing to the ability of Vasco Nunez, in the same noble art. He, in the language of history, had received, *par excellence*, from his cotemporaries, the appellation of "*Egregius Digladiator*," or "master of fence," and a very few passes between them soon convinced the crowd, and the feeble Garabito among them, that he was in the custody of his fate. He grew pale with the conviction—his efforts became hurried and confused; and, with a wandering of his mind, came a wandering of his glance, which is always fatal in such a conflict. His eye lost that of his opponent, and in the next passage the finger joints of his sword hand experienced a shock and numbness which instantly relaxed them. The weapon flew from his grasp, and the point of Vasco Nunez was lunged with deadly force and exactness towards his heart. He saw no more—a death-like paleness covered his cheek—a mist shrouded his sight—a miserable sickness filled his heart, and he sunk without an effort to the earth. He fell without a wound! The arm of his enemy had been arrested ere the blow was given, and the miserable tyrant, whose reckless and blood-thirsty nature

had doomed hundreds to the most cruel form of punishment and death, was deficient in the courage to look boldly on his own. He had fainted from the fear of death, and he now lay a spectacle of shame, exposed to the wonder of the poor savages whom he had tortured, and the unqualified scorn of his own people.

"Who checks me? who stays my arm!" were the fierce words of Vasco Nunez, looking around him. His eye rested upon a small but noble-looking gentleman, who had just reached the spot in time to arrest a weapon that would not otherwise have spared the wretch, whom its very aspect may be said to have overcome. A conciliating smile rested upon the fine features of the stranger, and his words were gently spoken, and of a character to disarm, in part, the anger of the cavalier.

"Nay, señor, you cannot now strike this person without shame. His blood would do dishonour to your weapon; the very fear of it hath sufficiently slain him."

The suggestion was enough. An artificial sentiment of chivalry taught Vasco Nunez to spare, where a natural sense of justice might have moved him to destroy.

"You are right, Señor Diego," replied the cavalier—"you are right, and I thank you for your timely counsel. The blood of such as he would indeed dishonour the sword of an honourable man; yet, señor, did you but know—"

The stranger interrupted him:

"Put up your sword, Señor Vasco—the Señora Teresa approaches. Let us put ourselves before the miserable spectacle that it be hidden from her eyes."

There was a tremor in the heart of Vasco Nunez as he hearkened to these words, which the conflict with Garabito had not occasioned. Meanwhile the proud lady of his love drew nigh, borne in a cushioned chair upon the shoulders of four Indian slaves, her dark eye flashing as she met the obeisance of the cavalier, with a fire all its own, and languishing at other moments as if softened by some dream of love, and overcome in its enjoyment. Gracious was the smile which she bestowed upon her lover—so gracious as almost seemed to assure him of that regard which the astrologer held to be so doubtful. She passed on, leaving as she went a softness in the soul of Vasco Nunez which made him turn away from the scene of strife and of bloodshed with a sentiment of horror and disgust

His eyes followed her vanishing form until the stranger reminded him that the duties of humanity were yet to be performed.

"This miserable spectacle must be taken from the thoroughfare; the body must be removed."

Addressing the trembling Indians, who had shrunk into the back-ground, and to this moment had not offered to touch the carcass of the murdered boy or lend the slightest assistance to the mother, Vasco Nunez bade them take up the child;—but the words were not well uttered, before they were answered by the miserable mother.

"No, no, no!" she cried, in broken Spanish, grasping closer to her bosom the headless trunk over which she had been bending in a grief almost as silent as it was fruitless during the whole progress of the combat: "he is mine—he is the child of Azuma; and Caonabo, his father, who is a free man of the mountains, will come to seek him in the night. Touch him not! take him not!—the fire will not hurt him now—nor the sword." And she lifted her hand imploringly towards the Spaniards, who were grouped in front of her, as if dreading their approach; but when she saw her own people draw nigh, she started to her feet and in the language of Hayti, she spoke to them vehemently for a few seconds, and in tones of imperative command.

"What says she?" asked the cavalier, advancing towards them as he spoke.

"Ah! it is you!" she resumed, in broken Spanish, sinking again upon her knee before Vasco Nunez and placing one hand upon the headless trunk: "you will not take the boy from Azuma—the poor boy, the son of Caonabo—the poor Hawaie, that only played with the monkey—that will not play with the monkey any more—the poor Hawaie!"

And she threw herself at length upon the senseless corpse, in all the abandonment of consciousness to surrounding objects, which marks the genuine sorrow of the soul.

"Poor wretch—look! this is a dreadful spectacle!" exclaimed the cavalier to his companions.

"Let us leave her!" was the reply of the stranger. "We can do nothing for her; and while we remain here she can do nothing or will do nothing for herself. In our

presence, too, the Indians are afraid to act. They will better help her when we are gone."

The opinions of the stranger were evidently correct, and Vasco Nunez, as he felt their truth, in spite of the seeming inhumanity, was about to turn away, when, starting from her trance of grief as she heard his movement, she crawled suddenly forward, and clasping with both her arms the knees of the cavalier, rested her head against them and muttered a few words in her own language, which, from the tone of her utterance, might be deemed a blessing. Vasco Nunez gently strove to disengage himself from her grasp, while he spoke in accents subdued to a sympathizing kindness:

"I can do nothing for you, my poor woman—nothing!"

She lifted her eyes, streaming with tears, and looked her gratitude in his face. Then, convulsively sobbing, while releasing him from her grasp, she replied in imperfect Spanish:

"But if you could, master—but if you could!"

She said no more—the rest was implied. The confidence in his humanity to do for her whatever lay in his power, which the broken sentence seemed to convey, was, perhaps, the highest acknowledgment which the Indian of Hayti could give to any individual of the Spanish race.

"Let us go," said Vasco Nunez, as he dropped unnoticed a piece of money at her feet; "let us go, señor."

The miserable murderer, Garabito, by this time had shown some signs of consciousness, but he had not risen from the spot. He was partially concealed from the cavalier by the persons of two men in humble condition, whom the stranger recognized as his followers.

"Take your master from sight," he said to them while turning away—"he will thank you for it."

They made him no reply, but proceeded to obey his suggestion. They had little need for this. The Spaniards were no sooner out of sight than Garabito recovered, and rose without assistance to his feet. But his cheeks were deadly pale, and there was a gleam from his eyes like the very last from those of despairing and departing sanity. His glance rested upon the person of the woman who crouched within a few steps of him, busied in wiping with her hair the blood and dust from the face of the sun-

dered head which she now held tenderly in her hands. The sight of the dreadful spectacle chilled the bosom of the wretched murderer. The eyes fixed in the glaze of death, were yet riveted upon his own; the jaws were spasmodically parted, and the tongue, dropping blood and ~~water~~ lolled out upon the cheek. The murderer gave his victim no second look. He turned hurriedly away, motioning his men to follow, and it was only when his form was entirely lost to sight behind a rising ground that the trembling natives came forward to the assistance of the poor woman and her child.

Garabito did not follow his assailant who, with the crowd, had taken his way towards the place of public assemblage. His course was from the town and towards the hills that seemed to promise him a shelter in their iron fastnesses, from the shame which he felt when among his people. His mind brooded only upon its degradation and the hope of revenge. He had no word for his followers, who communed to themselves in language which he was not suffered to hear.

"The Señor Jorge," said one, "will have no stomach for his cassavi to-day. He hath swallowed of food more bitter than the poison mandioc."

"By the blessed Virgin, though we be his followers, holding his service and taking his pay, Pedro, it did my heart good to see Vasco Nunez cross weapon with him. Jorge Garabito had such conceit of his sword that there was need to cure him. He hath a lesson this day, that he will not soon forget."

"Yet, what a hot-brained fool that Vasco Nunez, to draw sword in such a matter! What was the woman or the boy to him or to any body? A pretty coil, in God's name, about an Indian—a little cub of a heathen, not much bigger than the monkey and not half so active; and for this a free-born Spaniard must take buffets o' the cheek, and bide strokes of keen toledo. Look you, now, the Señor Vasco, to my mind, lifts a hand quite too high, now that he hath a vessel ready for the ocean seas, and since Micer Codro hath found for him that fortunate star. He makes equal count of the heathen and of our own people, and there will be other swords in this quarrel, do you mark me? of better edge than that of Jorge Garabito. It is well for us that the Señor Jorge hath had no such love for these

heathens, for then our pesos had been fewer, and there had been but dull sport in the iron mountain. For my own part, Sanchez, I could tell thee—"

"Ay, Pedro, of some of thy own valiant deeds of this sort among the heathen," replied his companion interrupting him; "but if this practice of Vasco Nunez grows to be universal in Santo Domingo, then wilt thou curse the long tongue that couldn't keep its own secret. Hear now to something better even than thy own bravery—something that will pay thee well if thou canst prove that thou hast some of it left, and art willing to put it into quick exercise when I bid thee."

"What mean you, Sanchez? Speak."

"Didst hearken to the speech of the woman, Azuma?"

"What speech?"

"To Vasco Nunez!—Ah! I see thou hast too long a tongue to have good ears. Hearken! When Vasco Nunez bade them take the child away, she refused, if you remember?"

"Surely I do."

"Well, that were nothing, but for certain words which she let fall in her speech."

"I heard them not—I heard no words that I cared to hear, Sanchez."

"I warrant thee—I could have sworn it! But thou shalt know these words upon conditions."

"What conditions?"

"To share with me the adventure—the reward—first having sworn to keep the secret which I shall tell thee. Wilt thou do this?"

"Nay, but let me know the venture—the reward—wouldst have me thy dudgeon?"

"Thou shalt be, or thou shalt have no part in this matter. Thou shalt swear by the Virgin to keep the secret I tell thee, and give heart and hand to the enterprise; or I swear by our blessed Lady at Compostella, thou shalt have no knowledge of this business. What! shall I trust thee with a good two thousand pesos, and have no security from thee for thy truth? No, no, good Pedro, I know thee too well; I have sailed with thee too long. Thou shalt swear, Pedro, swear, or thou sleepest without my secret, and without a peso of the whole two thousand."

"Two thousand pesos, two thousand! By the Holy Vir-

gin, if thou wilt have it, Sanchez—by the Holy Virgin, and Saint Sebastian into the bargain! Didst thou think me an infidel to refuse thee in so small a matter? I will swear to thee after any form, to keep any secret, and help thee to any service, so that thou swearest in like manner to share with me these two thousand pesos."

"That will I, and now swear—thou shalt smack the image, so that I hear and see thee."

A silver cross was taken from the bosom of one of the parties, and pressed to their mutual lips.

"And now, Sanchez, for thy secret."

"Dost thou remember, Caonabo the Carib chief, who had dominion over the kingdom of Magusna? He it is for whom the Governor, Obando, offers his reward—two thousand pesos."

"Ay, do I; he fled from the mines of Cibao—a big Indian and bold of heart. There will be blows when he is taken. Did he not defeat Valverde with great loss?"

"Ay, did he," said the other; "as thou sayst, there will be blows when he is taken; but there will be pesos, too, Pedro—two thousand pesos."

"Nay, nay, Sanchez, I shrink not back though I speak of blows. I will join thee in this danger. Say, hast thou knowledge where to seek Caonabo?"

"Ay, that have I; my ears are keener far than thine, though my voice be not half so good. The Virgin be praised that it is not, for then, like thee, I should listen to no music but mine own."

"Stay thy prating, and give forth thy secret. Thou hast tongue enough now, I trow, beyond any necessity. What is thy knowledge?"

"Thou art right. I feel loath to resemble thee too closely in my speech, and will come at once to the business. This woman, in her grief, declared the boy whom Garabito slew to be the son of Caonabo."

"Well! what then? how does that help thee?"

"He comes nightly to her cabin."

"Ha, and she dwells—"

"In the *repartimiento* of Pedro de Aguilar, in the little valley of Los Fleches, over which Garabito has rule, and where we, blind-boobies that we were, have seen nothing."

"And thou proposest—"

"To follow the footsteps of this woman and to seek him there," said Sanchez.

"By the blessed Virgin, I am with thee," responded his companion, "I am with thee; but what is thy plan?"

"Enough," said the other. "Garabito pauses and looks toward the hills. He will scarce seek the Señora Teresa again to-day. He hath no loving mood to move him now. His eyes are on San Juan. He will seek Ribiero, and drive out his shame with a calabash of wine; and we shall have no service but to lay him in the hammock, and let him sleep off the drunkenness which he will scarce do before the morrow. This will give us time. But thou must see to thy weapons. As thou lookst for close strife with Caonabo, who is what thou hast spoken him, though his people are not, both strong and fearless,—there will be need for keen stroke and close strife; but the pesos, my brother, the pesos, Pedro—does not the thought of them make thee valiant?"

"For any mischief! have I not sworn to thee, Sanchez? Give me thy cross once more if thou doubtest me."

"Enough, I believe thee. Not a word, remember; and look not too wise when the eye of Jorge Garabito is upon thee. See, he beckons us. He takes his way for the hills, and will be drunk with Ribiero before sunset. The Virgin strengthen the good wine of the calabash, that it fail not of its work in season!"

"Amen!" was the devout response of Pedro, as the two hurried after their employer.

## CHAPTER VII.

## NICUESA—NEW OFFERS—THE PREDICTION.

"I WAS about to have sought you, my dear Vasco, at your bohio," was the familiar and somewhat affectionate speech of the cavalier, whose fortunate appearance at the very moment so perilous to Garabito, in all probability saved his life. "I was about to have sought you on matters of much moment to myself, and thank the fortune that helped me to this meeting by the way. Go you to the Plaza!"

He was answered in the affirmative.

Diego di Nicuesa—for it was he—was an accomplished gentleman: something more of a cavalier than soldier: who had filled several posts of honour in Spain, and having the advantage of noble connexions in the old country, was well taught in all those little graces of manner, which, if they do not always indicate sincerity and earnestness of character, are more apt to conciliate, and have been usually found to commend the owner to a consideration much more favouring than is often bestowed upon real merit, however elevated and worthy. He was, as we have already briefly described him, small but handsome of person, exceedingly graceful, and equally remarkable for his accomplishment in tilt and tourney. An intimacy, formed in the new world, and strengthened by mutual services, justified Nicuesa in the freedom of his approach to Vasco Nunez, and gave a sanction to those hopes of success in the object which he had in view, which, if disappointed in the end, were yet not so utterly unfounded, and consequently obtrusive, as those of a like kind which had been already urged by the Bachelor Enciso. But, were this not the case, the gentle and unexacting address of Nicuesa, must of itself have disarmed his freedom of manner of all offensiveness,

"Vasco," he continued, "I have some proposals to make you, which, if your friend, Micer Codro, will be sufficiently mine to help me persuade you to accept them, I am just as willing that he should hear as yourself."

These words spoken, Nicuesa gave his hand to the astrologer who accompanied them, and Vasco Nunez declared his readiness to hear the communications of the cavalier. Thus encouraged, the latter proceeded thus, while the three kept their way to the Plaza de Armas.

"There is too little money to be had at this time in Santo Domingo, Vasco, to make it difficult to number the fortunate. The story is that you are among them; that, by the aid of art magic, and our friend Micer Codro, you have found the secret abiding place of the soul and substance of the old usurer, Felipe Davila; that you have lightened him of ten or twenty thousand castellanos, and the promise of as much more; and that you are now able to fit up in readiness for sea within the next two days."

"A little truth, and the rest as usual," was the laughing reply. "Micer Codro has succeeded in persuading Davila out of some few hundred castellanos, which will help me to complete my preparations; but I believe the old rogue already repents his confidence, since he brought the Bachelor Enciso to us this morning, in hope to change somewhat the direction of his trust."

"Hal! but you yielded not—you did not disgorge?" was the hasty demand of Nicuesa.

"Not a peso!" was the reply. "We had been fools, indeed, to have done so; and to have shared with Enciso, were a folly no less great. I have pleasure in telling you that the two went back as they came."

"By Saint John!—we, who cry in the wilderness may well implore his special service and succour—but thou wast right to send them back as thou didst, for coming on so insolent a mission. It were a most heathen and infidel demand, to claim from a cavalier that which they had freely given; and to seek to make him a shareholder with such a sharper as Enciso. But on what terms made they this proffer to thee? What were the great advantages which the Bachelor held forth?"

"Nay, I know not; something of joint fleet, and joint command, and joint profit, with Ojeda in Veragua. I gave

little heed to his glozing promises, being resolved beforehand to have no dealing either with him or his captain."

"Thou didst right,—thou hast the wisdom on't; for what had been his promise and pledge to thee, when he had thee among his creatures in that wild land? He had laughed at thy remembrance of an engagement, which, from the beginning of thy trust, he had only studied to forget. He would have had thy ship, too, no less than thy castellanos, I reckon."

"His demand was for no less, I tell thee. Modesty is not the commodity of the courts, or if it were, Enciso were not a professor in them; but to thy own matters, Diego; thou hast not forgotten the business which thou wast in such haste to settle but a while ago."

"No, no!" said the other, hesitatingly, and with an expression of good-humoured confusion in his countenance; "but of a truth, Vasco, my business being not altogether unlike that of Enciso, it is my fear that I have somewhat too freely spoken of the insolence of his. I begin to think, now that my own matters rise up to my recollection, that, after all, Enciso was something less insolent than he seemed at first. He was bold, perhaps, but it was only in his necessity, and the necessity may well serve to excuse somewhat, if it may not altogether justify."

"I fear this money of Davila's will do me little good," said Vasco Nunez, gravely. "It is even so with every spoil for which many are striving. If the treasure be gold, they cross weapons ere its safe division; if it be a captive damsel, they murder her, that none shall have what each so much desires. I say to thee, Nicuesa, I am almost persuaded to let thee have these castellanos without terms, for I am in the faith that they will serve me little; and to confess a truth, it is almost sufficient cause to persuade me to such a resolve, when I know that they come from the hands of Davila."

"Wherefore is that an objection with thee?" demanded Nicuesa, with some astonishment. Himself somewhat unscrupulous in money matters—and this was one of the failings of his character—he had not that nice sense of honour, the reservation of which operated at this moment on the mind of Vasco Nunez. To his unrestrained expression of astonishment and inquiry, the latter answered with increased gravity.

"There are reasons for it, señor."

"Ah! I see—I understand," said the other; "you would owe nothing to the uncle of Teresa; it would fetter you, you would say; but, my dear Vasco, these scruples are very idle. You will grow less nice, and, pardon me that I say so, more wise as you grow older, than you are now. By the blessed Conception, and that I hold a most fitting oath for men who deal in love-matters, it should be no scruple with me, though the damsel's uncle were twenty times her uncle, and father, to boot, to take all the money that he should offer. What says the saw? 'The gold is blessed in spite of the blood;' and the woman whom I honour with my hand should be grateful that I relieve her kindred of the distressing charge of that, which the reverend fathers of the church, (who take it whenever they can lay hands upon it, and probably for the like reason, to remove it from those it might harm,) tell us is the root of all evil. For my poor part, it is a moderate, but constant prayer with me, that I may have it in my power to plant out a few more of these evil roots; for, as I deem myself something of an adept in making them grow when I have them, it is my faith in no remote season, that I should be an extensive farmer. Did you ever hear of my spoils on my way out, Vasco? Did you hear, Micer Codro?"

"No—what spoils?" was the response of both.

"One hundred of the Anthropophagi from the Charaibee Island, which we now call Santa Cruz. They sold well in San Domingo, and helped me to as many seamen, and to provision for two months. These are ventures good as gold, Vasco, since these feeble Indians of Hispaniola sink so fast beneath their burdens; and the beauty is, that you gather them with the weapon of the warrior and not that of the slave."

"None of these for me, Nicuesa. I should deem my spoil worthless if not something worse, if I do not better than this in the great southern sea."

"Ah! that great southern sea, Vasco—do you ever think to find it?"

"As surely as I live!" was the solemn answer.

"You will waste your best days, my dear Vasco, in the search, and, I fear me, after all find nothing. I could give you better counsel."

"Perhaps! perhaps!" said Vasco Nunez, quietly.

"I have a better plan; and, by the way, to my own business. You know, Vasco, that my armament is almost ready, and I lack but little to its completion, and something, not so little, to pay off creditors that might not else be so willing to see me sail. Now, where I am to get this money, unless by your help, the saints only know."

"My help! These castellanos afflict you then, Diego?"

"Give me these castellanos, Vasco, and take part in my adventure."

Vasco Nunez shook his head. The other continued:

"Hear me, Vasco, before you answer. I have, as you know, the royal grant for one half of Darien to the west, including Veragua and reaching Gracioso à Dios. The island of Jamaica is given to Ojeda and myself in common. You shall share my profits in proportion to the castellanos you lend me, and I will give you command of one of my fortresses in Veragua—sole command—the freedom of Jamaica for supplies; and one-fifth of the profits of all the mines which may be discovered in your district."

Vasco Nunez laid his hand on the arm of the knight. "Nicuesa, you forget: the Bachelor Enciso, on behalf of Alonzo de Ojeda, hath but this morning made me an offer of like advantage."

"But I am neither Enciso nor Ojeda, Vasco."

"No! God forbid, for your own safety, that you should be, Nicuesa. But though I couple ye not, I see no especial reason why your answer should not be the same as theirs; the condition of the promise being the same in both cases; and, assuming it to be complied with, being still of no force to persuade me."

"Then you will not let me have any of these castellanos!"

"By Hercules, no! Not a maravedi, Nicuesa. I thank you for your offer, which, if I had not some other purposes in view, I should count most liberal; but it does not suit me. I have hopes of better fortune than you can promise."

"You will make less money, Vasco. The southern sea, my friend, is one of your dreams, bright and beautiful but illusive. It will swamp your fortune, Vasco, but scarcely swim your bark."

"Be it so, Nicuesa; but I hope otherwise. We shall

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see. I will not let you have my money, but, by the blessed Mother, señor, you have all my prayers."

"Enough, Vasco," replied the cavalier, whose disappointment did not seem for an instant to disturb his equanimity. "I thank you, and hold myself not the less ready to serve you, Vasco, as a noble cavalier and honourable friend, because of your refusal to stead me in this matter. Let us say no more, but enter the Plaza. Surely, among the many brave gentlemen in this crowd, I shall find one, having a warm heart under his doublet, and a full purse of castellanos at his girdle. The golden fortune perch upon my shoulder now, that I may see such a person."

"Amen!" said both of his companions, as they followed him into the public market-place, "may you find a thousand."

"Thanks, thanks; one friend and a thousand castellanos; the more money, the fewer creditors! Stead me, good Codro, with a fortunate star, and I may have some hope even of Felipe Davila."

The astrologer shook his head, and there was a grave significance in his eye as he listened to the cheerful Nicuesa, which promised for him any but a happy augury.

"What! it will not shine out—it burns dim—it is not fortunate! say no more, Codro—let not these money-bags see thy face when I challenge their credit, and promise them bold profits. If thou canst smile too, as thou dost on Vasco, it will be a matter of a thousand pesos to me, and, perchance, if I am successful, a something to thyself. But a truce now! These harpies of Santo Domingo, will think as they behold me smile, that it is because of thy prediction; and I trust thou wilt not shake thy head again with that speaking gravity, to let them see that thy faith in my fortune is other than my own. Let us in, for the crier is at work already, and it is a castellano's value to show to the stout mariner that the captain who seeks his service hath a hearty smile and an open hand. They will find both, I trust, in Diego de Nicuesa."

"That we may both say, Diego, without looking at thy star," was the response of Vasco Nunez as the lively cavalier entered the area before them.

"It were well," said the astrologer with a mournful countenance, as the former passed from hearing—"it were well if hearty smile and open hand, were all that is needed

in his adventure. I can tell Diego de Nicuesa, that they will do him small service in Darien, however much they may stead him here."

"Ha!—thou hast looked upon his fortunes, Codro," said Vasco Nunez, stepping back and listening to the astrologer with an air of anxiety which showed how much importance was annexed, in that day, even by the most intelligent persons, to the opinions of that visionary tribe of whom it is difficult to determine whether they most commonly impose upon themselves or others. The answer was immediate.

"What saith the scripture, my son? It is written—'no man knoweth his own sepulchre'—I tell thee that no man will find the sepulchre of Nicuesa. There are hollows of the Charaibeian Sea that shall have more knowledge of his fortune, my son, than any living Spaniard."

"Alas! father, can this be so? And Nicuesa is so noble a gentleman, so graceful and so gallant."

"Noble and base will go down into the weedy waters together, and there will be none left to choose out the grave for the pure of lineage."

"Let not thy look show forth these gloomy tidings, Micer Codro—let him win what favour he may from the misers of Santo Domingo. If the sea sucks down their treasure it will be of little count the loss, when the same sea swallows the brave spirit and the gentle heart. Let us in, Codro—let us befriend him; methinks, I could yield him these castellanos of Davila to keep him from the perilous waters."

"They would not keep him, even if thou wouldst; for there is that in the stubborn vanities of men—strong in their own conceits and hopes, which makes inevitable all the registered decrees of fate. Nor, even did he keep from these seas, would he elude his doom. There is a providence that shall move its completion, though the victim stirs no single limb. Not more truly does the pointed steel yield to the grasp of the northern tooth, than does the selected victim obey his fate, though, like the conscious bird before the wounding eye of the green serpent of Cayuba, he shrieks to behold it, and spreads a feeble wing to fly. He will rush into its jaws at the very moment when he fondly deems himself most secure from any danger."

“And thou thinkest truly that such will be the fate of Nicuesa?”

“I have seen it—it is written, my son; but of what avail to reveal it unto him. He will sneer and doubt as does the blind man ever; and he will die even in his blindness, not believing, but hoping, even against reason, to the last. Let him die, since we may not stead him by our warning. Perhaps it were quite as well that he should die blindly.”

“Perhaps! But truly, Codro, it is fearful to be hurried thus from life—from the height to which we have toiled with a perilous labour, and a sleepless hope—to be hurled suddenly from the steeps of triumph, and feel the deep seas rolling over purposes and pride, alike—destroying the goodly life that had in store a thousand achievements of greatness, each mightier than all the past!”

The astrologer did not say what he felt and thought while listening to this reflection of his companion. But a secret voice was whispering in his heart the while.

“And such too will be thy fate, noble, and generous, and valiant, as thou art. Full of hope, and the love of greatness, thou too, like the cavalier thou deplorest—thou too wilt be hurled from the utmost height of thy dominion, when thy triumph is most seemingly secure, and when the assembled world is looking up to do thee homage. Such is the written promise of thy star—but it is also written, that, unlike Diego de Nicuesa, thou wilt first triumph! Thy greatness is secure!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PLAZA—THE NOTARIES—THE LADY TERESA.

THE Plaza de Armas, or Place of Arms, in Santo Domingo, to which the steps of our company were directed, was a place of much more use than importance. It was not, as we have already said, simply an area for military assemblage, but, combining the advantages of a market-place with that of the parade, it offered equal facilities to the tradesman selling his wares, the seaman seeking engagements for new voyages, and the citizens gathering together for the consideration of public business. Here sometimes presided the governor and the alcaide; and here, too, at this period might still be seen the rude seat raised by Columbus, and honoured to all future governors by its first reception of his person. As a market-place, it was seldom without some occupants, either in the persons of the wretched Indians, their women and children, sitting beside their little piles of plantain and cassavi; or of their lordly customers, who sauntered through the passages, peeling "the fig while the fruit is fresh;" or, reclining upon rude benches at the several corners, quaffing the intoxicating juice, which the natives had taught them to prepare, called pulque, and which the Spaniards soon learned to drink with as much delight, and scarcely more moderation than the savages themselves. The structure employed in these various uses was a simple framework of poles, elevated some twelve or fifteen feet from the earth, thatched with caneshafts and palm leaves intertwined, and otherwise entirely open to the weather. It formed an oblong square, and covered a quarter of an acre of ground. A knowledge of the genial temperature of the climate, not less than of the sudden and terrible hurricanes to which the island was subjected, which the Spaniards soon acquired, taught them to

adopt, to a large extent, the customs of the natives in building, and to avoid, up to this period, every more solid form of habitation, which could not, any more than the frail bohio, withstand the tempest, and which must only expose the inhabitant to a greater risk, from the tearing asunder and the falling apart of the heavy timbers, which its erection must necessarily require. Like the Indians, their dwellings, until they began to work in stone, were low to the ground, and constructed of materials which, when scattered about them in sudden ruin, could inflict but little injury upon their occupants. Perhaps, too, a desire for repose, the natural consequence of the relaxing influences of a climate so insidious and seductive, led the grim warriors, whose whole life previously had been one continued battle, to avoid all labours not necessary to their various plans of conquest. The luxury of idleness forbade the erection of massive dwellings, the toil of building which, seemed superior to the gratification of living in them; and to ascend the lofty flights leading to an upper story, soon became too great an exertion for those who saw no sort of necessity for the building itself. Arguments are never wanting to convince the understanding, when the blood has already taken part in the controversy; and with the exception of those rovers who were continually arriving from the old country, and to whom the island of Hispaniola—already occupied by thousands of unglutted adventurers—offered no farther rewards for avarice and enterprise, there were few among the Spaniards not overcome by the intoxicating influences of success and sloth. They were no longer the bold and but half civilized warriors, who, from battle to battle, and from mountain to mountain, had marched through Morisco blood, and in despite of the fierce valour of the Moriscan chivalry, under whom they learned most of their accomplishments in arts and arms, from the sterile passes of Arragon and Castile to the green plains and purple towers of Grenada. The gold of New Spain, like the molten metal poured down the throat of Valdivia by the fierce Indians whom he had so long hunted for it, through every sort of crime, and who at length bestowed it upon him in a form no less terrible than full of retributive justice, seems to have been a moral and physical death to the mother country; and in the prostration of her greatness, in the seeming annihilation of her national valour; in the decay of her enterprise, in

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the degradation of her people, seems not unaptly to have revenged the sufferings of the miserable savages, who perished in uncounted thousands to procure it. Those of her sons who set forth upon their journey for adventures in the wildernesses of the new world, soon found their hearts hardened to all the sensibilities which, even in the fierce wars with the Moors of Grenada, then just ended, it had been equally their pride and pleasure to encourage. A stern and avaricious bent of purpose, upon the single object, produced a degree of morbid misdirection in the mind, which utterly subverted every thing like principle, and rendered their humanity entirely dependent upon the caprices of moods naturally changing with every impulse of a proud, successful, and hence an intoxicated, race. Endowed on a sudden with resources of wealth, which were unexpected, and to which they were unfamiliar, they became even more haughty than before; and as the necessity for exertion lessened in their eyes, they relaxed from the hardy discipline which the moral energies of Isabella the Catholic, appear to have taught to the several nations which her queenly policy had incorporated into one; and gave themselves up to a luxurious disregard of all the severer duties which, among a heathen people, should have followed hard upon their path of conquest. Adopting from the savage that desire for repose, which, in the bland climates of Cuba and Hispaniola, seems almost to have assumed the air of a sentiment, and to have thrown around voluptuousness the virtue of a grace, they surpassed him in its indulgence, while subjecting him to toils under which the most iron-sinewed manhood must have shrunk and perished. The rush floor of the Haytian soon satisfied the torpid conqueror whose eyes had wandered with delight over the rich carpets of Morocco, upon which he trod in the Grenadian palaces; and the proud towers and the variegated marble of the haughty dwellings which had been the reward of his valour after the conquest of Malaga, and Baza, and Guadix, lifted as they were upon sterile and gloomy hills, were considered well exchanged for the humble cane bohio of the Cuban, swept by the balmy winds of those foreign seas, sheltered by the shade of towering forests, and yielding, without culture, to his wish, fruits more luscious than he had ever fancied in his wildest dreams before.

But, however humble to the eye accustomed to the tri-

umphs of Moorish architecture, may have been the Plaza de Armas of San Domingo, it could boast of having sent forth many a noble armament. Its shipping, already numerous, were beginning to pierce the rivers of the continent then recently discovered, to bear away in search of conjectured fountains, whose waters were those of youth and immortality, and daily to make the conquest of new shores and empires, that were boldly and not extravagantly entitled the very regions of the sun. Its commanders already began to look down from eagle eminences upon the golden empires of Montezuma and the Incas; its seamen were already panting for the glory—how equivocal and insecure in its rewards!—of being discoverers of new worlds, and the possessors of unopened oceans. Not a day passed without yielding some new name to the column of renown, which Spanish valour and avarice had raised in the eye of the wondering world; and every returning barque brought tidings of pearly shores, and waters that trickled over sands more golden than Pactolus. Let not the swelling imaginings of those assembled in the rude structure to which we now turn our eyes, seem unjustly ascribed to them. It may be asserted with safety that, in that day of feverish anticipation, when the acquisition of so much that is wonderful, necessarily provoked the imagination to a faith in resources of wonder yet in reserve, infinitely beyond the known and even the conjectured; no story however strange, or conjecture however fanciful, was found too marvellous for the credulity of some one of the hundred classes of hungry expectants with which the island was filled. The atmosphere of the time, if we may so speak, not less than of the region, was one of marvels; and we find accordingly that the most staid and sober of the discoverers were imbued with fancies, to which the vision of the poet could discern no parallel. Even the truth-loving Columbus, rigidly tenacious as he appears ever to have been to say no more than he could say with safety, rose constantly into a form of utterance which left but little to the embellishments of fiction. In those days men believed in mermaids whom they frequently beheld on fragments of rock, or diving down into the transparent waters of the Bahamas. A nation was supposed to exist, upon the authority of Sir Walter Raleigh, who were born without heads, and had their eyes in their shoulders. A misty veil, such as seems to overhang the

spiritual, and to impair if it cannot obscure, the emerging truth, seems to have rested upon most objects at this period in the physical world; and the land and the sea, which daily developed objects utterly unknown to the European, might very well be supposed, to contain other objects equally unknown, and far more marvellous. To the Spanish cavalier, solemn and superstitious in his feelings, and haughty and swelling in his thoughts, every variation in nature from the accustomed objects of his sight, savoured of an especial miracle in his behalf. The flying-fish that leapt into his caravel in the moment of his despondency, was a messenger from heaven; the firefly that rose from the marsh, and revealed its dangers to his sight, was a spiritual guide. He lived in a realm of wonders, which his pride assured him were peculiarly designed for himself, till in time he grew, in his own estimation, as one so favoured of heaven, the crowning wonder of the whole. It can scarcely be surprising to us, if he ceased to regard himself as human, and if, in consequence, forgetting most of the apprehensions of humanity, he soon learned to forget all its charities. But let us enter the place of gathering, in which we shall find assembled, at this moment, a goodly portion of the inhabitants of the city.

The area of the building, and the greater portion of the seats were already in possession of a mixed assembly of captains, citizens and seamen. These formed little groups which were parted on different sides, as if by tacit consent, according to the prejudices prevailing among them in behalf of leading individuals. At present, the community was filled with the disputes of the rival knights to whom King Ferdinand had made such magnificent, and, in some respects, inconsistent grants. On one side were those who formed the party of Ojeda—on the opposite were the friends of Nicuesa. Scattered promiscuously among the two might be found many persons not yet determined in behalf of either, though perhaps inclining to the side on which they sat; while, in the centre of the apartment, and in small groups at the extremities, were others as yet entirely uninfluenced by a bias of any kind. Many of these were lawyers—a class of people in which the colony was already stocked to overflowing—whom the frequent litigation of the adventurers arising from their uncertain and conflicting titles, their unjustly divided spoils, and the

strifes engendered as well by personal dislike as by the right of property—had called into early and constant requisition. Others were citizens, perhaps creditors of Ojeda and Nicuesa, or of those engaged by them for the voyage—watchful of the moment when to press their claims, and having the man of law in readiness for its assertion even to the final steps of arrest and incarceration. Groups of seamen might be seen, sitting, lying and lounging in various portions of the spacious hall; sometimes drowsily yielding to the exhaustion produced by a late debauch, but in every situation, wearing the indifferent, good-humoured carelessness of countenance, which so eminently distinguishes that sturdy class of adventurers, to whom their repeated risks of life and fortune seemed to have taught an almost total disregard of both. Huddled together on the outer verge of the hall, though still beneath the long drooping eaves which depended from it on every side, and completed its shelter from the sun, squatted little parties of the natives, whom the presence of the Spaniards in the centre of the building, had driven thence, with their fruits and vegetables, to the limits. These sat or stood around, wondering if not pleased spectators of proceedings which they could only partially understand—seemingly unconscious of object or aim in life, unless when summoned by some one or other of their tyrants to lift for him the desired fruit or refill with liquor the presented calabash; and this done, sinking back into that apathy of demeanour, which, if it speaks not entirely for the absence of life, is the most certain indication of that deficiency of trust and hope without which humanity has never yet found existence desirable. Nor did these several groups entirely complete the assembly. There might be seen at the upper part of the hall, and on either side of the seat, known as that of the "Admiral," two elevated scaffolds, of a better finish than the other portions of the structure, though still rude, which sustained a triple row of benches, rising as they receded, one above the other in the manner of those of a theatre. A temporary canopy overhung them, made of the native cotton, but stained by the Indians—an art which they possessed before the coming of the Spaniards—with many colours most of which were of a glowing and intense brightness. It will easily be divined that the seats so conspicuously placed and decorated were intended for the

gentler portions of creation, to whom in Hispaniola, the Bato, or Bull Play of the Indian, their Areyto or Historic dance and song, the decision of justice and the execution of the criminal, alike offered attractions not easily to be foregone and seldom overlooked. The gathering of the men on any occasion to the "Plaza," was sure to bring forth the most lovely and the most curious of the sex. In the seats which the grave gallantry of the Spaniard had provided for them, but which his jealousy had half shrouded with the heavy and gorgeous drapery already described, they watched the progress of business, hearkened greedily to the disputes of rival warriors, sometimes encouraging them with occasional words and smiles, and not unfrequently, whenever a sly opportunity offered for such a proceeding, pelting them with the skins of the luscious anana which they ate with industrious eagerness as the business proceeded. A third scaffolding not so lofty as those assigned the ladies, but raised considerably above the level of the seats with which the area was covered, was intended for a purpose more in unison with the general objects of the structure. This was the stand for the crier—the agent or attorney for the party seeking a market—for the auctioneer disposing of articles which it was necessary to exhibit to the spectator's eye, and for the ocean-adventurer aiming to recruit the seamen for his ships. It was now occupied for this latter object, by an agent of each of the rival knights, who, seated at the opposite extremities of their little provinces, maintained all that courteous distance, and nice observance towards each other, of the smallest forms, which denote the jealousy and distrust so natural to persons placed in such immediate competition. A little table before each of them served to sustain their papers, pens and ink, and certain unopened caskets, the contents of which, only conjectured by the assembly, were nevertheless supposed to be not among the feeblest of those arguments which were meant to persuade the thoughtless seamen to new perils and toils, in the search after unknown worlds. Behind each of these persons waved a little pennon-celle or flag, bearing upon it certain emblematic forms and figures, significant of the objects of the voyagers and the rewards which they held out to adventure. On that of Ojeda, which was a white ground of silk with a deep purple border, might be seen a rude representation of a conflict

with the Indians, such as he really had on one occasion at Cumana, the circumstances of which were well known to the Spaniards, and had won for him the most golden opinions from the common people. The back ground showed an Indian village in flames, while the whites and savages were mingled in furious *melée*. In the foreground Ojeda himself might be seen—a tolerable portrait—having just overthrown a gigantic warrior, and being about to complete his victory by the death of his victim. The point of his weapon was already described as entering the neck of the savage: the black blood was spouting from the orifice, and the last writhing expression of agony in the face of the dying man, was sufficiently horrible to produce all the effect of a fine picture among the spectators of that period, who only needed to be reminded of an event which all of them had seen but too frequently to render necessary any more felicitous touch of the artist. The scene was one too grateful to the sanguinary temperament of Ojeda, to leave it at all doubtful in his mind that it must be not less so to the people whose services he sought; and yet it is more than likely that the flag of Nicuesa, designed in less bloody taste, was far more captivating to the fancies of the spectators. It represented on a pale blue ground the approach of a ship to the towering heights of an island which was readily recognized as that of Hispaniola. An Indian girl stood upon the shore, and with extended hand, and smiling eyes beckoned the approach of the voyagers. Strings of pearl hung around her neck, and were fastened in profuse quantities to the gay painted cotton garments which she wore. Her black hair was literally starred with bits of the gold called *guanin*, and she wore bracelets and anklets of the same attractive metal. The eminence upon which she stood just above the waves which beat at her feet, had its attractions also. It was a pile of the oyster which yielded the precious pearls of the south, and the artist had judiciously painted some with their lips parted, and showing within the large precious fruit in the attainment of which Spanish cupidity had already proved itself capable of every peril as well as every crime. The intention of this artist was of much more merit than his execution. At once true and poetical, no comment could have been more severe upon the national character than that conveyed in this slight design. There needed but another scene to show

what had been the return of the voyager for that confiding innocence, and lovely hospitality which had welcomed him to a shore, where he found happiness, but where he left not even hope.

But it is time that we return to the narrative from which our description has too long beguiled us. Let the reader imagine now that he beholds the scene and the assembly into which we have ventured to introduce him, on a sudden moved to life and animation. A gay burst of music, solemn and sweet, such as Charles the Fifth was wont to say, with an audacity of fancy not more becoming than the taste was just which induced it, "spoke directly to God," announced the arrival of some of the more conspicuous persons of San Domingo, escorting and ushering in a band of stately damsels, whose quick, vivacious black eyes, peering from beneath mantillas adjusted nicely to produce their proper effect, denoted a very different sentiment from their stateliness of demeanour, and the slow and measured pace to which the constraints of their education had habituated them. A shrill, lively clamour from the gongs and cymbals of the ships, which were generally provided with these instruments of Moorish music, followed the more decorous strains of the Spanish band, and during the brief performance of the latter, the Plaza was rapidly filled with people of all qualities and professions. The drowsy mariners began to bestir themselves, the lawyers to adjust their papers, the criers to look around them, and clear their throats for the business of the day, and, even the poor Indians, leaving for a moment their little piles of fruits, would steal as closely to the circle as they dared, looking towards the musicians with faces that gradually put on a more cheerful cast, as the strange, sweet, foreign tones, beguiled them into momentary forgetfulness of their own condition. Ojeda was already in the Plaza bustling about among the seamen, and promising to do wonders for those already enlisted. The Bachelor Enciso was at his side to supply those arguments which the less acute mind of Ojeda might not so readily perceive, or which his headstrong quickness of temper might readily lead him to forget. Though as brave a man as ever lived, Ojeda was no little of a boaster; and, perhaps, among a swelling and ostentatious people like the Spaniards, accustomed as they were in that day to achievements upon which the rest of Europe looked with

amazement and delight, it became essential for the leader who hoped to win their suffrages, to promise largely for his own performances. Among the lower orders of all nations boasting has ever been a prevailing accomplishment; and the basest soldier in the Spanish ranks seldom wanted one voice at least, to testify to his own prowess. The rival of Ojeda, to whom the reader has already undergone introduction, had not as yet made his appearance; and when we are told that the agent who had charge of his interests, was one of the most acute notaries in San Domingo, the presence of the principal may not, perhaps, be esteemed so very essential. That person at length rose to open the business of the day. He was a tall, slender personage, with a nose almost as sharp as the pen he carried behind his ear, and though it might be hyperbole to describe it as nearly the same length, we are nevertheless bold to assert, that it made greater approaches to a parallel than incredulous persons, not spectators, might be willing to admit. The mind of Antonio Guerra was scarcely less sharp than his nose. His features generally denoted the hard, calculating, diplomatic and subtle character of one entirely without kindred of any description, and whom a long and intimate acquaintance with the world, its strifes and vicissitudes, had rendered indifferent to all considerations, those excepted, which go to the attainment of wealth and the security of power over the multitude. Like this class of men generally, he had never been positively prosperous. He had made money it is true, but he had never found it possible to retain it. There were always some adverse influences—some opposing winds, that assailed his barque and made it necessary that he should throw his treasure overboard, for the preservation of his life. Providence seldom appears to afford any very permanent triumphs to the cold of heart and those indifferent to humanity; and though it may not be moral to teach, and, perhaps, is not often true, that merit finds its rewards in this narrow term of life, yet it may almost always be asserted with safety, that the punishments of evil begin long before it is ended. The humble station of Antonio Guerra as crier for the expedition of Nicuesa, furnished an odd contrast to that which he held but a year before, when the supposed possessor of immense resources, he beheld his ship go down, and was indebted for his life to the services of one of the meanest of his

crew. It was, perhaps, no small merit for one cold and selfish as himself, that he yielded nothing to adversity, but addressing himself to a renewal of his toils, was not reluctant to take an office which gave but little profit and was held in too little esteem to offer any inducements to ambition. The faculty by which he had always succeeded hitherto, was one which he did not omit to employ in behalf of Nicuesa. He gave his whole energies to the task he had undertaken; and served his employer with a closeness and zeal which deserved the success, which more elevated purposes in life and a purer moral, might have enabled him, and made him worthy, to retain. He entered upon his work with a glibness, a cool composure, and all that vulgar and blunt sort of eloquence which is so desirable in the auctioneer of modern times, whose business that of Antonio Guerro might be said to resemble. Rising to his full height, which, on the scaffolding where he stood made him eminently conspicuous among and above the crowd, he rang a little silver bell vehemently, as if commanding the attention of the multitude. A buz went through the audience at this signal, and indicated that pleasurable expectation which testifies to the presence of a well known favourite. More than one approving speech was audible to the crier, but without producing upon his pale, thin, inflexible features, the slightest change of expression. With the elevation of his person, the notary of Ojeda began also to exhibit signs of life. His arms and legs simultaneously bestirred themselves, and his whole person began to show tokens of disquiet and disturbance. He was a short, fat, fidgety sort of person, seemingly the very opposite of Guerro, but not without a certain share of those talents which his rival possessed, and which his present occupation was supposed pre-eminently to require. Though lacking the reputation of his rival, the notary of Ojeda whose name was Medina, familiarly styled the Padre Medina in San Domingo, and who boasted a lineal relationship to a noble Spanish family of the same name, was not without a decent degree of assurance which might, in time, impress a higher estimate of his claims upon the popular mind than he had at present. He too rang his bell with a vehemence equal to that of Guerro, who turned upon him a quiet look of contempt—then, rising in his place, and looking confidently round upon the audience, he seemed to wait the key-note which it ap-

peared was expected from the lips of his rival. The audience had not long to wait. Antonio Guerra was a man of too much good sense to baffle the public expectation by delay, and he answered their clamours by proceeding to laud their valour, their patriotism, and that passion for adventure in foreign parts which had given to the Spanish nation such a vast precedence over all others at this period, that of Portugal, perhaps, excepted. This exordium over, he proceeded to one of those audacious frauds, which, whether the result of cupidity or the diseased imagination which deceives itself along with others, would be, perhaps, in our day, considered quite too extravagant for serious censure. He exhibited to his audience, a map regularly drawn, coloured, and in every part distinguished by names of places and persons, seas, bays, and inlets of regions utterly unknown, and existing only as subsequent discovery has taught, in the crude or cunning fancies of the artist. In this map all the visions of Columbus, about Cathay, the Spice Islands of the Orient, the Golden Chersonesus, the Great Khan, and those wondrous sources of wealth and splendour from which Solomon drew the materials for his temple, were laid down with marvellous precision, and for the first time found their names and habitations in the savage wilderness of the western continent. Broad rivers wound their way through golden mountains; cities rose proudly among towering hills; while fleets of nations whose flags were yet to be seen by Europe, were boldly drawn upon this specious presentment, dignified with euphonious titles from old Spain, and defined with an accuracy of measurement under a scale of Spanish leagues, which left nothing more to be desired. Seamen—sturdy rogues—were already nigh to testify to the correctness of the map—to describe its shores and cities—its fruits and inhabitants—the largeness and beauty of its pearls; and the teeming fulness of its precious mines. They had tales of valour to relate, which had been achieved in its partial conquest; incidents of wonder to quicken the narrative, and even wounds to show in proof of their story. That such fabrications should be resorted to with partial and even perfect success, by those who sought in this manner to seduce the credulous, need occasion no surprise at a time when truth and falsehood had no such facilities for circulation, as are afforded by the modern newspaper. The oral relation was

then generally relied on for intelligence, and it became a matter of serious responsibility, to dispute the testimony of men who were ready to maintain their every assertion by an appeal to the sword. The tale grew and gathered as it went, and when all ears were open to the most wild extravagancies of assertion, the creation of a new world was, perhaps, a matter of only less difficulty than the finding of persons condescending enough to occupy it.

“Madre de Dios! can it be, señor—can this be true? a mountain of solid gold, gold hewn out with instruments of steel—solid masses rolled down into the valley, and gathered up and put in carriages, and carried off even as we carry marble in blocks for building! can such be true? Is the precious metal, which the wealthiest nations knew only in thin veins—difficult to find—hard to gather—is it in truth, bestowed in such lavishness upon the ignorant heathen, who knoweth not the value of the thing upon which he treads, and maketh of it familiar vessels for the most lowly and base uses. What is thy thought, Señor Vasco—say worthy Master Codro, what ear may be given to this marvel.”

“Such ear as wise men yield to most marvels, señor;” was the reply of Vasco Nunez to the citizen, who, grasping his arm with looks that savored of alarm quite as much as astonishment, challenged his opinion of a portion of the testimony which Antonio Guerra had quoted in support of the map which he displayed. It may be said that there were sceptics in San Domingo, and that, by this time, the little area was filled with a buzz of disputation; words ran high, and from conversing among themselves upon the story which they had listened to, questions were at length directly propounded to the narrator.

“We would see some of the guania which comes from these mountains, Señor Antonio—methinks thou shouldst have some of these fine pearls which the seas of those regions void upon the shores.”

“Ah, it were good for eyes that water!” sneered the rival notary of Ojeda, who chuckled and rubbed his hands with great delight, and snapped his little gray eyes with exultation in the direction of his opponent. “A question somewhat hard to answer, Señor Antonio, but a reasonable demand, señor, unless Diego de Nicuesa hath forborne to touch the treasure till he hath first had counsel and per-

mission of Holy Church. Ah! my masters, press ye not too closely upon the heels of my brother. See you not that the gold is even now but gathering, and ye give not space for it to be seen. He hath fear, that as ye press upon him, the block which he hath hewn from the mountains of Cipango will suffer hurts and losses from your daggers. Press him not to show these pearls, my masters; or ye might suffer much harm from the blinding brightness in your eyes."

The laugh was against Antonio, but without seeming to give him much annoyance. He waited patiently until each had expended his pennyworth of wit, then glancing coolly and contemptuously toward the still chuckling Padre Medina, he replied as follows:

"The man hath spoken, however strangely, my masters, with some wisdom; though how such quality might find its way into his brain, it passes mine to satisfy you. The gold shall be shown in season, and the pearls, and other gems of which I have not spoken, but which may all be had for the gathering in certain regions of Veragua, into which the noble Señor Nicuesa stands now ready to conduct you. But if it be wisdom in the Padre to require to look upon our treasure, and to feel it with his hands, it were sorry wisdom in us to suffer it. Alas! my masters, how few are there among us, at all times prepared to resist the temptations with which the Evil One lies in waiting to ensnare our souls. Shall it be visited upon the head of the worthy Padre as a sin too great to be forgiven, that he is not one to bid the tempter depart from him. It were a hard judgment, my masters, if this were so. We will not vex our brother with free speech upon his weakness, and we trust that he will not complain that we keep our treasures on the far side of our table. The flesh is weak, my masters, and the Padre Medina hath much of it."

"Thou withered atomy, thou skeleton! would'st thou speak against mine honesty," cried the Padre, with a sudden change of manner from the good humoured chuckle to the fierce and angry gesture of the brawler ready for combat.

"Nay, not so," cried Antonio coolly—"The Virgin forbid that I should speak against the dead, or waste breath upon that of which none hath yet beheld certain signs of life. But I have business, my masters," continued Anto-

nie, turning from the furious Padre who seemed almost ready to turn the assembly into a gladiatorial ring—"I have business—your business—my masters—to attend to, and will waste no more words with my worthy brother, who seems not to have provided himself with fitting knowledge of what he came for, and knows not therefore what to say. For my part—"

"I know what to say—I will say what will confound you, Antonio Guerro," was the furious interruption of Medina. "I say that the Señor Diego hath made no such discoveries as these you boast of—that he hath seen no such mountains—that he hath gathered no pearls from Cipango—and hath brought no slaves from the great Southern Sea. Nay more, my masters, I say that he hath not only not found these places, but that they have been found, if found at all, by my most honourable Lord, the Señor Alonzo de Ojeda. I will show you that it is he that hath found Cipango—ay, Cipango, my masters—that Cathay already lies at the foot of his discoveries, some of the mountains of which look over into the territories of the Great Khan."

The voluble Padre was interrupted in his bold declarations by a sturdy sailor who had already entered in the armament of Nicuesa.

"By San Jeronymo, Padre Medina, but these are new discoveries of thine. When I met with thee this morning thou told'st me nothing of these things, else perchance I had taken thy offer, and been a partaker of these rich treasures which thou hast at command. Wherefore didst thou keep back these tidings. By the Holy Father, thou hast done me wrong. Had I not equal right with the rest to look into the territories of the Great Khan—was I not worthy to share in the treasures of Cathay?"

"Nay, who denies thee, Gutierrez," replied the unabashed notary—"thou mayst do this now—the papers are before me—thou hast need to give me thy name only, and thou sharest in all the spoils of the brave cavalier, Alonzo de Ojeda."

"And how may I do this when I have already taken part with Señor Diego? This I should not perchance have done, hadst thou made thy discoveries in season."

"Nor I—nor I—nor I," was the echo of a dozen voices.

"Methinks, thou hast thy answer, Padre," remarked

Antonio Guerro, re-commencing his proceedings. The other was not silenced, but continued to mutter and interrupt his rival by occasional suggestions of falsehood, and numberless sarcasms such as may very well be looked for in a controversy so carried on before a mixed multitude, by persons lacking in any very nice restraints of morals or society. But the ears of Vasco Nunez ceased to hear, and his eyes to behold the rival notaries, upon the arrival of a group of damsels among whom the keen glance of the lover soon discerned the lovely person of Teresa Davila. This stately maiden, who maintained the carriage of an Amazon, and who could have looked the maid of Orleans to admiration, entered the Plaza, without seeming conscious of that observation to which she was in no wise indifferent. Her dress was composed of a gown of the purest white, surmounted by a symar of pale blue silk, which, closely fitting her bust, displayed its full and exquisite proportions to the nicest advantage. A string of pearl intertwined with her ebon tresses offered a pleasing contrast to their glossy hues, which shone darkly bright through the transparent veil of nicest Moorish workmanship, which, secured by a splendid carbuncle to her brow, was also bound by another gem of equal value to her shoulders, and from them fell nearly to the ground. But the grace of her carriage, and the nice taste which had adjusted every part of her costume, were not sufficient to satisfy the spectator, and long retain his glance after it had once caught a glimpse of the proud, bright face, the dark and fiery eye, and the imperial sweetness of that mouth, which conferred upon it what a painter seldom might, the life of expression. Her head was distinguished by that noble contour which has been for so many ages remarked as the distinguishing and most admirable trait of the Spanish women; and resting upon a neck of chiselled smoothness and swanlike movement, it mingled an air of grace with its aspect of command, and united with the general majesty of her demeanour, a serenity of carriage which conciliated even when it impressed, and invited when most it awed. Perhaps, a something too much of fire in her eye made it doubtful whether her heart could ever yield to any great degree of feminine weakness. There were those, and the astrologer Micer Codro was among them, who esteemed her, chiefly, perhaps, from the gay and reckless radiance of her eyes, a creature insensible

to all the softer influences of love, and only moved in her attachments by that narrow selfishness which fills the bosom given up entirely to its own vanities. But these were the harsh judgments of those who did not themselves love. It was the hope and faith of Vasco Nunez that his more favouring judgment would be sustained by his own fortunate experience. Time will show which of these was right.

"She would wed thee now, Vasco," whispered the astrologer to his companion, as he caught the glance of the maiden's eye turned towards him; "if, on the instant, thou couldst claim her hand, this instant would she bestow it."

"Would it were so," was the emphatic reply; "but why sayest thou this instant; why not hereafter?"

"Thou art now triumphant, my son, and her pride is satisfied with thee. I could not be surety for her love if thy fortune suffered change."

The cavalier turned from his grave companion, with a stern countenance of dissatisfaction. But no such countenance was shown to the fair Teresa. He beheld her with a very different aspect. Putting aside the crowd which stood between him and the maiden, he hurried forward to the entrance and had the joy of assisting and attending her to the raised and curtained seats, where had already assembled a goodly number of the fair damsels of the city. He stood beside her where she sat, and in the indulgence of those dreams of the heart which for a season will even blind the ambitious soul to its high purposes of fame, Vasco Nunez grew not only forgetful of his own purpose in the assembly, but almost unconscious of what was going on around him. The increasing clamour of the crowd, provoked by the play at cross purposes between the rival notaries, and at length, of their leaders, soon obtruded itself upon a sense, but too well satisfied not to find annoyance in every change.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE RIVAL CHIEFTAINS.

THE movement of Vasco Nunez which led him to the side of Teresa Davila, was followed by a corresponding movement of the astrologer. With difficulty, the faithful old man struggled through the crowd, ascended the steps, and plucked the cavalier by the sleeve in the midst of an address to the maiden, in which he spoke much more of love than compliment.

"What now?" demanded Vasco Nunez, hastily.

"Thou hast forgotten all, my son. The damsel fills the brain with lethe that fills the heart with love. These seamen must be secured even now or never. In a few moments they will have taken part with one or other of these knights, and the refuse only will be left thee. Suffer me to do this business for thee, and secure thy fitting complement, if thou wilt not thyself."

The cavalier, secretly pleased with the offer, yet made some show of hesitation.

"It will trouble thee too greatly to press through this crowd, Micer Codro!—"

"Not a whit! Velasquez, thy lieutenant, is at hand, and shall bring chosen men to me at the porch. I will put an argument into their hands which shall better convince them of thy superior claims than those which the notaries yield only to their ears. It will take me but little time and even less labour, to secure thee thy men; and if thou wilt, I will give moneys to Velasquez to get thee stores and provisions. Mendez Pacheco I behold in the crowd—perchance, he will seek thee for that which thou owest him."

"Pay him then, in God's name," replied the cavalier,

precipitately, but in a close whisper, "but suffer him not to come near me."

"This will leave but little in the casket," said the other.

"Well—it matters not; we have all then that we shall need. Let it take all; but let not Pacheco come to me with his vile murmurs in this presence. Not here—not now! let me be free of him."

To the great relief of Vasco Nunez, the astrologer departed on his various purposes, and he was suffered once more to give his whole attention to the proud maiden by whose side he stood. The controversy, meanwhile, had not only waxed warm between the two notaries, but the audience had naturally enough begun to grow interested in it. Sides were soon taken by the bluff seamen; and as the several criers uttered their sharp speeches at the expense of one another, a hearty hurra from either portion of the assembly rewarded them for their rudeness or their wit. But the sharp-shooting was not confined to the subordinates entirely. It was not long before it extended to their superiors, who soon found themselves unable altogether to resist those influences which moved the assembly, and in which they had such weighty interests. They had not listened to the jeers of their respective agents without feeling that they too sometimes suffered from the sarcasms and sneers so freely bestowed upon their representatives. Gradually they had been brought to say something aloud in the course of the proceedings, and as this could not well be the case without something being uttered calculated, however indirectly, to provoke the opponent, or disparage his claims in the support of their own, the feeling of rivalry between them, previously existing, which had not been altogether without its bitterness before, was not a little increased by the actual personal collision to which they were proximating fast. The hot-headed little warrior, Ojeda, was heated doubly by the obvious necessity of restraining his temper at a moment when any ebullition of it might defeat his purposes; and, moving now to the foot of the scaffold on which his crier sat, now mounting up behind and whispering in his ear, and anon shooting off into the open air, as if for a breathing space, betrayed to all the excitement under which he laboured, and which compelled him to maintain, to the great amusement of the party of Nicuesa, a sort of perpetual motion. His rival,

on the contrary, preserved much more effectually the dignity and ease of his usual winning manner. Without exhibiting any impatience, or acknowledging, by word or action, any annoyance, he yet busied himself with quite as much industry as Ojeda, and a far better prospect of success in raising his claims among the seamen, and commending himself to the favour of all persons who might serve him in his purposes. With a gay speech to one, and a pleasant smile to another; now a whisper of compliment, and now a sudden and friendly grasp of the hand, he made his way through the crowd in all directions, winning golden opinions as he went. But golden opinions were of far less value in Santo Domingo than golden treasures, and something more was essential to success than the felicitous condescensions of the gentleman or the boastful promises of the warrior. The seamen had acquired no little knowledge of their leaders in the hundred voyages made by as many adventurers, which every season sent forth from the mother country; and they had now learned to place a high value upon services which, amidst the strife with Indians, and among themselves—not to speak of the dangers of the seas—were not often paid for according to promise or desert. Conscious, too, that they were absolutely necessary to the rivals for the completion of their armaments, they were resolved to hold out to the last moment, and then to make the very best terms which they could extort from the necessity, or which lay within the capabilities, of their captains. Their reluctance or slowness to engage, necessarily led to increased exertions on the part of the notaries. They stimulated the latter to a degree of earnestness in their efforts, which finally terminated in short-chopping contradictions of each other's testimony—a sort of warfare, which, as it displayed the angry passions of those who were not yet willing to come to blows; and as it had the still further effect of provoking, almost to madness, the petulant Ojeda, while gradually warming into irritability the more gentle and better graced Nicuesa, afforded just that sort of excitement to all ranks of spectators which is derived from a contemplation of those brutal sports, misnamed of “The Fancy,” in which the vulgar of Great Britain and America are supposed to take so much more delight than that of all other nations. The Spaniards of Santo Domingo were not wanting, however,

in due efforts to encourage the combatants to the *ultima ratio* implied in these exhibitions.

“Ha! by Saint Dominic, Padre, but you cannot answer that. There he hath you, as one may say, between wind and water. To the pumps, man, it will need all your breath.” And the cheers went up for Antonio, but not to the annihilation of his stubborn rival.

“Were I here to speak for myself only, my good masters, he were not long without his answer—an answer to put his nose into the dust and out of sight, immeasurably long as it is; but the business of the Señor Ojeda is at a stand, my masters, while I waste the precious hours; and I should be forgetful of his merits, were I simply striving here to show my own. Let me dwell for a moment upon his well-known prowess in battle, his great skill, of which you had proofs, when in his first voyage to the coast of Paria, he—”

“Ay! what were his profits in that voyage? Let him tell that, my masters. What brought he away from Cumana, and Maracapaná, and the Islands of the Charaibee, but wounds? It were a sorry reward to hold forth to us now, to tell of the profits of that voyage to Paria.”

Such was indeed the history of Ojeda's first adventure as a leader in American discovery. The speech of Antonio Guerro was not without its effect upon his audience. This was perceptible to Ojeda, as well as to his notary, and the former was seen, with a face bloated with fiery anger, to ascend behind his agent, and whisper in his ear, with tremulous eagerness and haste.

“That is true, my masters; Antonio Guerro sometimes speaks the truth. The brave Señor Alonzo de Ojeda did bring little from Paria, in that first voyage, beside wounds; but those wounds were all taken for his people, whom he never yet deserted; and they were wounds from which I trow that Antonio Guerro would have fled with shame, and so, perhaps, his betters. It is no shame to have made one unprofitable voyage, my masters, since good fortune smites not always, even upon the greatest merit.”

“But it is scarcely a sign of the greatest merit to have never made one profitable voyage,” was the reasonable and ready response of the other. “Where are the proofs of the Señor Ojeda's success? Where are his pearls, his gold, his slaves? Methinks I have heard the questions asked by the

alcalde, and certain men learned in the law, quite too frequently to make it matter of wonder. It were no great wisdom in him to produce these treasures, if indeed it were in his power so to do. There be such officials known to the law, as lay forcible hands on such matters, in requital of certain vulgar responsibilities, which are called debts. It were a blessing to the Señor Vergara, whom I see beyond the music, and to many others whom I could name in Santo Domingo, though I behold them not all present, could they but look upon some of these proofs of the Señor Alonzo's successes. They were creditors by far too generous to take from him the honourable wounds which he got on the shores of Paria—the only profits of that first voyage which he ever brought home with him to Santo Domingo."

The fiery little captain shook his fist, and looked unutterable vengeance at the speaker; but he was saved from any rashness by the direct retort of his emissary, who, by carrying the war into his enemy's country, did much to silence if not soothe his anger.

"It is new, my masters," said he, "to reproach a brave captain with his wounds, and make his misfortunes a subject of idle merriment; but, we will admit that the Señor Alonzo hath all the wounds, and that the Señor Diego hath most wisely gone only where he could get none. That he hath not escaped every where in like manner is no less certain; for I have either dreamed it, or it is true, that he hath had misfortunes also. I will not speak, as from my own knowledge, but will humbly ask of himself, he being here present, if he hath no debts!—if he owes no creditor!"

Ojeda clapped his hands at this sally, and every eye in the assembly was turned upon the spot where the handsome Nicuesa stood. Laughing good-humouredly as the notary concluded, the cavalier responded promptly to the impertinent question, and in a manner that showed him as prompt in converting seeming evil into benefit, as his unhappy rival, Ojeda, was in converting the good into unmixed evil.

"That he does, thou knave!—he owes more debts and hath more creditors than he will ever pay, unless he gets help from the gold mines of Chersonesus, which he hopes soon to do with the aid of this good assembly. It is such noisy knaves as thou, that will not suffer my attorney to show the proofs upon which I found my claim to borrow

more moneys, and find newer creditors. I have no fear of what I owe, if they will only suffer me to owe enough. I have no fear to pay my creditors, as I trust ever to keep unwounded and free from harm. It is my pleasure to think, that when I return to Santo Domingo, I will bring with me every seaman that I carry hence; and none of them without his proofs, not of my valour and his own danger, but of my prudence and his own great profits therefrom. I have no ambition of wounds, my friends, infinitely preferring a whole skin and a heavy pouch. I trust, my masters—those who go with me, I mean—that we shall never lack the first, and soon fill the other.”

A loud cheering from all parts of the Plaza rewarded this frank speech of the cavalier. The good nature of his reply—in such complete contrast to the angry deportment of Ojeda, shown at every stage of the controversy, and whom such attacks from the rival notary only drove to greater disquiet—did more, perhaps, than any thing besides to help the object of Nicuesa. The solid considerations of interest, however naturally imposing to most men, are not unfrequently set aside and disregarded by the rough citizen of the sea, when opposed by influences which touch his humour, or provoke his enthusiasm. The agent of Nicuesa beholding the effect of what he had said upon his audience, took up the cue, and proceeded upon the same hint.

“The Señor Diego owes money, it is true, my masters,—he hath no occasion to deny it; but his creditors doubt nothing of his ability and willingness to repay them in due season.”

This, perhaps, was not altogether true. There was more than one testy creditor present who could not so easily be persuaded of the stability of Nicuesa any more than that of Ojeda, and who did give him some considerable anxiety and trouble before he set sail for his government. But at this moment there was no need, and no one willing to gainsay the assertion, unless it were the rival notary; and, to his words—his vocation being known—none of these, not more familiar with the fact, gave any sort of credence.

“And what less can be said, señor, of the credit of the gallant Alonzo de Ojeda. That he hath debts, he does not deny.”

“He cannot!” was the cry of more than one voice in

the assembly. The little warrior grew more restless than ever and mounted behind his notary.

"He hath no wish to deny," said the notary.

"Would he had wish to pay!" were the distinct words of one from among the crowd.

"Who dares doubt it!" was the fierce demand of Ojeda himself. "Let him come forth that does, and I will make him eat my sword handle this instant."

"That were no payment," said the voice. "I stipulated to be paid in silver and gold and not in steel."

The laugh was universal against the little warrior. He became furious in consequence. Leaping down from the scaffolding of the notary where he had been standing at the utterance of the jibe, he darted into the thickest of the crowd, pursuing the direction from which the impertinent sounds had arisen; but the voice was now silent, and the speaker was evidently concealed by those around him, whose ill-suppressed chucklings, as he drew nigh, in no small degree heightened the anger of his disappointment. The incident told very much against Ojeda, who had shown himself so sensible to a taunt, which had only provoked the good humour of his rival. The notary of Nicuesa did not fail to improve the impressions of the audience on this subject.

"It is easy, after this fashion," he said, "to pay one's creditors. By'r lady, if the Señor Diego could be persuaded to adopt this mode of stopping the mouths of those who trust him, there should be free discharge for him in Santo Domingo. He should want neither men nor money for his venture; but he wastes his valour not upon his friends—only upon his foes;—not upon confiding creditors and generous Spaniards, but upon the Anthropophagi, the foes of man and our blessed religion. His valour—"

"Speakest thou of the valour of Diego de Nicuesa," cried the rival notary, "in the same day with that of Alonso de Ojeda?"

"Ay, in the same hour, and in the hour before it. I speak of the valour of Nicuesa as a refined and Christian valour, that strikes with judgment and skill, not less than with force; that shuts not the eye in seeking out the enemy, rushing with down-head, like the bull upon the barrier; but with the keen sight and graceful advance of the cavalier, who has learned to joust after the manner of the

Moresco—so as to surpass even him in the tilting match—who goes towards his foe like one sent from heaven with commission to overcome. Know you not, my masters, that he can send his horse into battle to the music of the viol; that he hath taught him to caracol to sweetest music while he flings his heel into the face of his enemy? You have many of you seen this horsemanship of the Señor Nicuesa."

"Ay, and the heels of the horse hath also more than once saved the head of the rider," said the notary of Ojeda.

"He hath never shown his back to the Indians as the Señor Alonzo did at Cumana."

"Nay, there thou liest, slave!" was the fierce apostrophe of Ojeda, coming forward as he spoke; "thou liest, and I should this moment chastise thee—but that thou standest in the place of another, who shall be accountable for thee. Ho! Señor Diego, dost thou hear thy notary; thou shalt render to me for his lying insolence. If thou art the man and the soldier he hath declared thee to be, I look to find thee instantly ready."

The fierce little warrior was happy to seize an occasion to expend some of the rising choler which had been accumulating in his breast for the previous hour; and it was no less grateful to him, though by a strained construction of his rights, to single out his rival as the most conspicuous medium for his relief in this respect. The taunts of the notary, echoed as they had been by more than one in the assembly, had goaded him to a pitch of feverish rage that baffled and banished every restraint of reason, and without regarding the possible evil effect which his course might have upon his objects, he uttered his demand to Nicuesa in such a manner that it seemed to place it beyond the power of the latter to evade the issue. The reply of Nicuesa was sufficiently prompt.

"As thou wilt, Señor Alonzo—as thou wilt. I trust ever to be sufficiently ready for all who seek me, whether in love or anger—unless it chance to be one of these same creditors of whom we spoke but now; I am sometimes exceedingly loath to encounter such as these."

"It is well—I rejoice me that thou hast spirit to maintain the false assertion of this knave of thine. I will be with thee on the instant."

This was spoken by Ojeda while at some little distance

from, and while the crowd stood, a solid mass, between him and his rival. Without the deliberation of a moment, he began pushing his forward progress, and the idea of such a conflict, at once appealing to the desire of many, and, perhaps, to the tastes of most, in the assembly, the crowd readily gave free passage to the small but restless body of the fiery warrior.

"You will not—it will ruin you with all your creditors!" was the expostulation of Juan de la Cosa, the lieutenant of Ojeda, a cool, experienced veteran, whose calm good sense, was required continually to be in requisition, to keep his captain out of mischief. But his words were unavailing now. He rejected the expostulation of La Cosa with scorn, and pressed on his way to the spot where Nicuesa stood, perfectly quiet, at the foot of the ladies' scaffolding, regarding the scene with as much seeming composure, as if he had no sort of interest therein.

"I care not if it ruin me with all the world, I will submit to no insolence like this; I will suffer no wrong from man. Nicuesa shall answer me for this insult, though I perish the instant after."

"Thou wilt not fight with him on such a quarrel," was the expostulation of Vasco Nunez to Nicuesa.

"Give the matter no heed; I will trouble him with conditions," was the smiling answer.

"Ho! Señor, thou art not ready! Why dost thou not breathe thy weapon," demanded Ojeda, confronting Nicuesa. "Give it air, I wait thee at the entrance."

"All in good time, Señor Alonzo," calmly responded the party addressed. "If I fight with you according to your desire, there must be terms between us—there must be some composition."

"What terms—what composition?" demanded the other impatiently.

"I owe certain moneys in San Domingo, Señor Ojeda, and until these are paid, I have no right to risk my life, save in the labour necessary to promote the interests of those who have so far honoured me with their confidence. It would be a serious risk of life, were I to engage in fight with one of thy known excellence in the use of thy weapon."

"Of a truth would it," was the somewhat exulting re-

ply. "Thou wilt not fight me—thou fearest me, Señor Diego?"

"I have not said so, Señor Ojeda,—thou art but too precipitate in thy valour. I will fight thee, for though I acknowledge thee brave as any in San Domingo, be sure that Diego de Nicuesa holds thee in no sort of apprehension."

"Draw then, I pray thee—I grow impatient; if thou wilt fight, fight!" cried the fierce Ojeda, with increasing anger.

"Ay, but as my life is fairly the right of my creditors, I dare not risk it unless with some hope of profit. Stake thou then five thousand castellanos, Señor Alonzo, and I will place a like sum at issue, and whoso shall survive our combat, he shall possess the ten. Five thousand castellanos will compound with those I owe, and leave me free to play at hazard with a life, which is now rather their property than mine own."

An offer of this sort, while it confounded the hasty Ojeda, filled the whole assembly with merriment. All persons knew the strait for money in which Ojeda stood, and as they as well knew how such an overture would work upon his fiery temper, they received it with shouts of applause.

"Lay down thy castellanos, Señor Ojeda," cried one; "let not the combat wait because of thy slackness."

"He hath to make the voyage first to Paria," cried another, "and then it may be that the vexed waters of the gulf will suffer none of his divers to go down."

"But can it be that so worthy a captain should lack a loan in San Domingo to so small an amount? Thou wilt lend him, Señor Davila," cried another.

"Not a maravedi;" cried the miser hastily, in reply to this suggestion. "By'r Lady, I have but too much already at risk in the hands of these captains of the ocean sea."

"I thank you, I thank you friend—worthy friend!" cried Ojeda, when he could recover breath, and trying all the while to suppress those outpourings of his wrath in words which he manfully resolved should find their sufficient utterance in deeds. "I thank you, but it needs not. The Señor Diego is a man of honour, and will not shrink from combat on so poor a pretence. He must know that he cannot now avoid the combat, which as an honourable cavalier of Spain, I do most earnestly insist upon."

"Ay, but I do, save upon composition, as I before said, Señor Alonzo," calmly replied Nicuesa.

"You shall not evade me on any such pretence, Señor —"

What more Ojeda would have urged to press the combat, or whether he would have confined himself to words only, cannot be said, as he was at this moment stopped by one who laid a resolute grasp upon his shoulder, and whispered in his ear the following words:—

"Press this matter, Señor Alonzo, and I compel the alcalde to do his duty in the affair between us. The Señor Diego is my debtor as well as thou, and he hath rightly judged of my rights. Nor he nor thou shalt cast away life, if the power be with me to arrest the folly. Pay the castellanos which thou owest me, and thou mayst fight any who owe me nothing. Offer again at this strife, and by the Holy Mother, I cast thee into prison, and thou shalt never set forth upon this voyage, for which thou art so prompt to quarrel."

There is something proverbially humiliating in debt, and the fiery spirit of Ojeda, which neither the poisoned darts of the savage, nor the keen thrust of the Spanish sword,—no, nor chains could subdue—was at once spelled into quiet by these few but impressive words uttered in a whisper, the import of which the audience might have guessed, but did not hear. He turned upon the speaker, who was a withered, but a stern old man, and looked at him with an eye that seemed to shoot forth shafts of fire to wound and to consume; but he was prudent enough to resist the impulse, which, in his soul he entertained, of defiance to the last. But the angry reply subsided in his throat, in a hoarse murmur, and he turned his wrath upon his lieutenant, De la Cosa, who stood at a little distance behind him, looking exceedingly well pleased at the arrest of the brawl, even by such humiliating means.

"It is thou that hast done this, Juan," he said, in hoarse accents, to the sturdy mariner, upon whom he seemed for the moment disposed to wreak the fury which had been so suddenly restrained in other quarters.

"Thou hast said rightly, señor," was the reply. "I saw thee madding, to the detriment of all of us, and knew no course to stop thee save by threat of alcalde and griping officer. The broil is now fairly over, and, let me tell thee,

thou hast no cause of quarrel with the Señor Diego. By'r Lady, if ye were both bound to answer for such rogues as ye have to speak for ye, there were neither credit nor character left for either of ye in San Domingo. Let us go aside, I have something for your ear; and you, Antonio Guerro, go on with your business—ye have made but little speed to-day, in the matter which you have in hand. You, Padre Medina, have need to do likewise; and, hark ye, when you speak forth your own follies, mingle them not up with the names and words of the honourable cavaliers who employ you; they have follies of their own enough to answer for, without drawing weapon for such idle words as yours."

"Juan de la Cosa! Juan de la Cosa!" was the cry of the multitude.

"Thou hast rightly enough spoken, Juan de la Cosa," replied Antonio Guerro, "yet not with thy usual wisdom. Thy master had no need to move in the matter of which I spoke; and if my speech could make a fool of him, it were no foolish speech. But he puts on his own bells, and I but ring them. Let him keep his cap under his arm, when he comes next into the Plaza, and no one will then see with what it is laden, nor hear the jingle of the bells thereof. Art thou answered?"

The tetchy Ojeda was on the eve of breaking forth anew, at this renewal of the attack, which seemed to be very well received by the vulgar part of the audience; when he was anticipated by his more cool and impenetrable lieutenant.

"Thou hast said sensibly enough, for that calf's head of thine. It were better if our captains left this business to us altogether, since they seem only fit to lead when the savage heathen is ready with his dart. It is a fault with such men as the Señor Ojeda, that they are only too valiant, and the valour which makes them overcome the Indian, makes them but too heedless of quiet among those who would be at peace. But the fault is a good one with those who seek for pearls at Cumana. That same fault, my masters, saved the life of many a good Catholic, who, but for the valour of Señor Ojeda, which would seem rashness here, had been sent to purgatory before their time, and with great peril to their Christian souls. Come, señor, let us leave the business to the notaries."

There was much in this speech to mollify Ojeda, and

conciliate the seamen lacking service; there was much in it besides of truth. The valour of the captain had more than once been the shield of his men; and those who listened to the eulogium, and felt that it was deserved, did not, at the moment, remember that the dangers of his followers had more than once been ascribed to the fatal rashness of that same valour. The popular mind is essentially generous, and its impulses are most apt to find a generous direction. You could hear on all sides little recollections of this and that individual, of particular instances of Ojeda's prowess. One could tell of a saving blow struck for himself, in Maracayana, when, but for Ojeda, a fierce savage would have slain him. Another had been actually saved from the cannibal repast of the Charaibeas, to whom he had fallen prisoner in a previous expedition, and who were fattening him for that horrible feast, in which, like Polonius, he was not to eat but to be eaten. These little recollections made it needful that the agent of Nicuesa should bestir himself. The tide seemed to be setting against him. But a few minutes before, the gallant cavalier seemed to be carrying all suffrages, by his frank, fearless and noble manner. The little clue to their sympathies, to which the rough skill of the veteran pilot had guided their thoughts, seemed, however, to effect a marvellous diversion in behalf of Ojeda, and it was with some anxiety that Antonio Guerro prepared to renew the controversy. This he did in a manner as adroit as unexpected. It will scarcely be believed, that, in order to recruit seamen for a voyage of peril, he should insist upon the commander's excellence in playing the guitar; yet such was the case; he not only dilated in the most enthusiastic language upon his ability in this respect, but he avowed the readiness of his principal to give them proof of it.

"Now, what would the fellow?" exclaimed Nicuesa. "Does he mean that I should take the instrument and play for this company?"

"Of a certainty he does, Señor Diego," said the beautiful Teresa Davila, to whom his observation had been made. "And we, who know thy excellence in this gentle art, will not suffer thee to refuse performance."

Her words were seconded by all the ladies. It was their turn to become parties to the proceedings. They had not scrupled to express themselves before, in all matters that

were going forward, but their voices now assumed a voluminous fulness, which fairly gave them the ascendancy, and made them heard, in spite of the buz and confused sounds which arose from all quarters of the Plaza.

"Thou wilt have to play, Diego," said Vasco Nunez, handing him the instrument, which had been passed from hand to hand over fifty heads.

The knight took the guitar, with an air of inexpressible dismay in his countenance, which was no doubt assumed for the occasion. Nicuesa knew his own ability too well to entertain any real reluctance. He took the instrument, which he tuned in the course of a few prelusive notes, and then began a little Indian air, the beauty of which had already inspired the Castilian muse, and had been linked, by a Spanish poet of some repute, to words of his own language. The poem was of the ballad kind, and founded as it was upon one of the frequent superstitions of the time, and more particularly of that class of reckless adventurers whom it was more especially his policy to secure, it commanded a degree of attentive consideration, which, perhaps, would have been withheld from performances of far greater merit.

#### INDIAN SERENADE.

'Mong Lucayo's isles and waters,  
Leaping to the evening light,  
Dance the moonlight's silver daughters,  
Tresses streaming, glances gleaming,  
Ever beautiful and bright.

And their wild and mellow voices,  
Still to hear along the deep,  
Every brooding star rejoices,  
While the billow, on its pillow,  
Lull'd to silence, seems to sleep.

Yet they wake a song of sorrow,  
Those sweet voices of the night—  
Still from grief a gift they borrow,  
And hearts shiver, as they quiver,  
With a wild and sad delight.

'Tis the wail for life they waken,  
By Samana's yielding shore—  
With the tempest it is shaken;  
The wide ocean, is in motion,  
And the song is heard no more.

But the gallant bark comes sailing,  
At her prow the chieftain stands,  
He hath heard the tender wailing ;—  
It delights him—it invites him,  
To the joys of other lands.

Bright the moonlight's round and o'er him,  
And O! see, a picture lies,  
In the gentle waves before him—  
Woman smiling, still beguiling,  
With her dark and lovely eyes.

White arms toss above the waters,  
Pleading murmurs fill his ears,  
And the gem of ocean's daughters,  
Love assuring, still alluring,  
Wins him down with tears.

On, the good ship speeds without him,  
By Samana's silver shore—  
They have twined their arms about him,  
Ocean's daughters, in the waters,  
Sadly singing as before.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE HURRICANE—LOST HOPES.

THE ballad was admirably performed. Nicuesa did not disparage the judgment of his notary, who, knowing the taste of the audience, not less than the excellent skill of his master, had relied confidently on the success of this last effort as the crowning achievement, and as certain to propitiate the mood and secure the favour of the multitude. Nor did he mistake the nature of those who had listened to the strains. Never was the *motif* or sentiment of the performance more suddenly and soon caught up by the sense of the hearers. While the strain was in progress they had expressed their satisfaction by such occasional ejaculations of pleasure and applause, as were permitted by its brief intervals; and these unbiassed expressions of delight necessarily stimulated the accomplished cavalier—as they stimulate even the veteran stage-player—to new and surpassing efforts. The murmured applauses of beauty, also, were freely yielded from the bright, eye-glistening, circle by which he was surrounded, and these went more deeply into his romantic heart, than even the declared satisfaction of those sturdy adventurers, for whom alone the performance was undertaken; and an assembly, which, but a few moments before, was distracted by clamours of a strife which promised to end only in a regular combat, *à outrance*, was now melted even to tears, while every heart sympathized with the dreaming cavalier, described by the ballad, as won from reason and to death by the beguiling and bright-haired sirens of the Bahamian archipelago. The tradition which the song embodied was not less grateful to the marvel-loving spirit of the age, and that “ocean chivalry” from which it derived so much of its conspicuousness, because it had already, long before, been

made frequent in their narratives of adventure. They had a faith, generally, in those days, in the existence of these half human beguilers, of which they were scarcely less assured than of the veracity of holy church—and the wild, spiritual Indian music to which the words had been allied, was yielded from the voice and instrument of Nicuesa with such felicity as to leave nothing wanting to the complete realization of one of those fairy pictures of the mind, which have been so seldom well embodied save in the eye of the dreamer. The scene grew up, as the cavalier sung, before the eyes of the wandering seaman. He could behold the prow of his bark gliding with noiseless rapidity into the insidious vortex of those dangerous currents, that lie between the thousand isles of the Bahamas. Then the music melted away to such exquisite softness that it seemed to demand an effort of the ear to detect its connecting murmurs, while it assumed the accents of that seducing song, with which, from afar, the cunning siren first touched the ear of the wanderer, and made him turn aside from his true path to her destructive embraces. The waters, though the whirlpool lay beneath them, seemed subdued to a breathless silence—a gentle zephyr, alone, stole fitfully over their bosom, bringing the luring voices to the victim. Soft, in little seams and crisped lines of silver, the faint light of the waning moon, lay in the track of the vessel, and the spirit of the scene, no less than of the circumstances, appeared complete and well chosen, in the fancy of the hearer, to give vitality to the mournful event recorded in the ditty.

The murmured delight of all around the musician, suppressed with difficulty while the strain was in progress, now rose into loud peals of pleasure and applause when it was fairly over. Those who stood nighest to the cavalier, grasped his hands or the skirts of his cloak, while others to whom he handed the guitar, kissed the instrument to which they declared the pleasure which it gave them, and with reluctance passed it on to others, from whom it received like tributes of acknowledgement.

“Nicuesa, Nicuesa—the brave cavalier, the noble señor; we will go with him to Cathay—write us down in your books, Antonio Guerrero, we will join the noble Señor Diego—he shall lead us against the savages of Veragua.”

Such were the frequent cries among the auditors, and the

successful cavalier had already enlisted nearly his full complement of seamen; but for the sudden occurrence of an event, in the path of which man's achievement becomes an absurdity, and his courage the vain effort of the feeblest bird that ever opposed its little pinions to the weight of the ungovernable wind. The crowd within the enclosed parts of the Plaza, now became conscious of confused murmurs from without. The occasional cries of the Indians, who, neglecting their piles of fruit, darted away from them and from the building, first commanded the attention of those among the Spaniards who were near enough to the entrance to behold these things with tolerable distinctness. The whole audience had become conscious long before the strain was ended, of an increasing warmth and weight in the atmosphere; and a difficulty of breathing freely was more than once declared; but this was ascribed to the crowded condition of the apartment; and so great was the interest of every mind in the sweet song and the sad story of Nicuesa, that every minor inconvenience was readily borne, that the performer should suffer no interruption. But the change in the temperature of the weather was as singular as it was extreme. The day, rather cool at first, had grown as sultry as it was ever known in the oppressive noon of August; and while the crowd, beginning to be conscious of some strange and sudden change at hand, were looking around in that state of indecision which usually follows the first surprise of most persons by unlooked for events of terror, a simultaneous calling of the Indians without, one to the other, in accents of apprehension which could not be mistaken, aroused them to a common movement which added to the difficulties of their position. The more restless portion of the assembly, made a sudden rush at the same moment for the several places of egress from the Plaza; which, filled as they had been before, with benches, tables and fruit piles, were soon completely choked under the conflicting pressure of their bodies. This increased the vague terrors of those who strove in flight; and mingling entreaties and execrations soon prepared the way for the more brutal strife of blows and violence. Men, comrades in adventure, and brothers in arms where the positive danger was equally before them in the array of savage battle, now took each other by the throat with all the unscrupulous ferocity of long rankling hate. Manhood forgot

all manliness and trampled down age and imbecility under his flying feet;—and the screams of savages without, and the oaths and strife of equal savages within the building, soon filled the area with sounds which strangely contrasted with the winning melody to which all ears had just before listened with such sympathizing delight. But the cries of the Indians and the fierce clamours of the Spaniards, were in a single instant, silenced by the more terrible cry of a power beyond any of theirs. On a sudden, the sea sent up its voice, with a peculiarity and distinctness, which, though it revealed the true source of all the commotion, did not help, in the slightest degree, to allay it. Its deep roar, like that of a thousand wild bulls, playing on the plains of the Pampas, or flying from the hunter, already goaded by his spear, too truly denoted the coming danger which the more experienced savages had already foreseen. The crowd was stunned into silence, and for a moment all exertion ceased.

“What cry—what strange sound is that, Señor Vasco?” demanded Teresa Davila with a trembling voice, which expressed her fear of a danger of which as yet, she knew nothing. With the first clear signal of a real danger his arm had encircled her waist.

“Fear nothing, dearest Teresa, I will save you with my life,” he murmured fervently, drawing her close in his embrace, while his keen eye flew over the assembly, to detect the point most favourable for egress.

“But what means it, Señor?” inquired the trembling maiden as she yielded for the first time to his embrace, and suffered him to bear her from the place where she had been sitting.

“Cling to me—resist me not!” was all he answered, as he bore her firmly forward.

“Tell me, Señor Vasco, what is the danger?” she whispered as she clung closer to his arm. “Have the Indians risen?—is it Caonabo, the rebel?”

“No Caonabo—no rebel, Teresa,” cried the cavalier, hoarsely, as he bore her forward—“it is the sea—the sea sends forth that roar as of two meeting thunders. Sink not now, but cling to me while I lift you here. My neck, Teresa—let your arm clasp my neck. Be not coy now, this is no season for your fear of me.”

“Mary-mother I the sea! said you the sea, Señor Vasco?” and her arms clasped his neck closely, and with all the

conscious dependence of her sex, she prepared to obey all the requisitions of the strong man who sustained her.

"Ay, it is the sea that roars, Teresa; but it speaks of a worse danger than itself. It tells that the hurricane is at hand! See how dark it grows—it is the hurricane that is now blackening all the sky. We must be forth from this frail fabric before it is down upon us. We must gain the open grounds—the square."

The words of Vasco Nunez, heard by all around, gave volume to the desultory and vague apprehensions of the multitude, who knew not what to fear till then. The single word—"the hurricane!" brought with it the most overpowering alarm to all.

"The hurricane! the hurricane!" was the cry from every tongue; and the shouts of the striving men, and the shrieks of feeble and fainting women, imploring for assistance from their friends and others, mingled with strange congeniality with the now louder roaring of the sea as it plunged headlong against the rock on which the city stood, sending its white foam even up into its streets from abyasses that seemed a hundred feet below them.

"Save me, save me, dear Señor Vasco!" cried the terrified woman, close clinging to his neck as he lifted her in his arms, and pressed forward among the crowd. Even in that moment of terror and of danger, the strife of the elements momentarily increasing, and the thickening darkness only relieved by intensest flashes of lightning, the heart of Vasco Nunez grew softened with the sweetest sensations of pleasure, as his ears drank in for the first time a word of corresponding endearment from the lips of the beloved one.

"Will I not save you, Teresa! Ay—fear nothing—you are safe already. Let me think that I am dear to you, and you are then too dear for me to lose. I cannot lose you."

She moaned only in terror, but clung close to him the while. He was one of the few who still retained their composure amid the confusion; and with a resolved mind, which the pressure of necessity only aroused into confidence and strength, he paused briefly, while, looking round the crowded area, he strove to detect with his eyes some one single point of egress, upon which he might, with the best hope of success, concentrate all his efforts.

His glance was momentary only, and, as if satisfied, he confirmed by a renewed grasp his hold upon his lovely burden, and went forward with a step equally firm and fast. To an indecisive man, the task which he had undertaken would have been impracticable; to him—to the man of resolution—it was comparatively easy. He put aside from his pathway with an unscrupulous hand, the ill-directed fugitives who groped and struggled about him, and whom, in a moment of such alarm, a breath might divert and a judicious word readily control; and, feeling the way along the scaffold, to the steps, with his feet, he soon descended into the level of the space below. Here his progress became less easy. The numbers were too great and the material too rude and obstreperous to be as readily set aside as those who occupied the high places above. For a moment the progress of the cavalier was arrested. A space of twenty feet only remained to be overcome between him and the outlet which he proposed to gain; yet that space was occupied by a mass of pressing forms, who, resisted in their own outward progress, had, with the natural incertitude of terror, turned their faces within, and were now striving in a course directly opposite to that which was their true one. The unmeasured and immitigable terrors of the struggling wretches had left them restless but without judgment, and utterly incapable of resolving, they were yet as utterly incapable of quiet. Swaying to and fro, with fruitless endeavour, they bore aside or along with them all better directed energies, making no forward progress as they were utterly ungoverned by any single rule of action. But, it was here in chief that the superior mind of Vasco Nunez displayed itself.

“Hark! hear you not the timbers falling behind us?” he cried to a group that annoyed him on one hand, and whom he was anxious to send forward. With an impulse which was contagious they recoiled, and bounding with headlong terror upon the backward pressing bodies they drove them forward with the sheer pressure of their forms. One of those purposeless and powerless animals, having the shape of manhood only—a huge creature, whose limbs seemed sufficiently massive to have breasted the full force of the hurricane itself, stood with wide mouth and stupid incapacity immediately in his way. It was not a moment for indecision,—nor was Vasco Nunez the man—not then,

certainly, when the life of one so precious to his heart, was in danger, and while she lay almost fainting upon his arm. With outstretched hand—the only one that was free for his purpose—he grasped the imbecile by his throat, and, with all his strength suddenly put forth, he hurled him forward upon the struggling mass in front. The blundering giant, unable to arrest the impetus so suddenly given to his limbs, fell precipitously among the crowd, bearing down with him to the ground, in his outstretched arms, all those whom he could grasp in his vain efforts to stop his fall. These in turn, agitated the farther groups, which, separating in confused forms, left little openings in front which gave him glimpses of the sky. How cheering were these glimpses to his sight! They stimulated his exertions. Availing himself of the opening, he strode over the body of the man whom he had thrown down, and who vainly strove to rise under the pressure of all those who followed the lead of the cavalier; and striking another from his way, he pressed forward, and with a bound, into which all the energies of his elastic and vigorous form were compressed, he gained the entrance which he had sought, at the very moment when a terrific thunderbolt burst at his feet. In the broad red sheet of light which wrapped every thing around him, he saw nothing but the annihilation of the lovely being whose entire weight, pressing on his bosom, seemed that of one already a victim to the dangers which he had striven so hard to fly. She had fainted, but he had a worse fear than this. He believed her to be stricken by the bolt, and in the first moments when that apprehension seized upon his mind, he laid her insensible body upon the earth and sank down beside her, having no farther purpose or thought of flight. But the reflection of another instant reproached him for this unmanliness, and the hope that she might have only fainted from terror or exhaustion, stimulated him to new exertions. He raised her again from the earth, and amidst the cries of the confused multitude flying in all directions over the plain, some calling for missing relatives and companions, others imploring succour, and more in sheer terror, asking protection from the saints, he heard, with pleasurable surprise, a voice at his right hand—the voice of the venerable astrologer, who alone, of all the gay company that filled

that day the Plaza de Armas, seemed to have kept a cool, untrembling mind.

"Straight forward, son Vasco, straight forward. The little rocks lie before thee, and yield the best shelter for the maiden in such an hour as this."

"Take my skirt in thy hand, Micer Codro, if thou lovest me—the glare blinds me—I see nothing of the rocks—lie they far from us now?"

"They are at hand, my son, and thy course was rightly for them when I spake to thee, though when I saw thee first, I trembled for thy life and that of the maiden, and called to thee aloud, for thy feet were hurrying towards the Ozama."

"The holy angels have guided me, for I saw nothing—my eyes swim in a sort of light which blinds them. But how dost thou see thus, Codro?"

"I know not—but I see!" replied the astrologer, who now paused. "We are safe in this shelter, Vasco—set the maiden down—here are the rocks."

The moment was seasonable when they reached the shelter—a little pile of rocks, part of those links among which the Indian woman danced at the command of Garabito. The hot breath of the approaching hurricane had half suffocated the cavalier in crossing the plain, and it was with the feeling of a strange faintness that he laid the pliable form of the maiden in safety, and sank down beneath the rock beside her.

"Where wouldst thou go, Micer Codro?" he demanded, as he saw the astrologer about to leave them.

"I will but ascend this hill, my son. I would look closely at the face of this fearful tempest."

Vasco scarcely seemed to hear the reply. There was a wild ringing in his head, a sickness at his heart, and it required him several seconds of repose beneath the rocks, his lips pressed closely to the earth, ere he found himself free of the suffocating vapour which had so nearly stifled him. When his eyes recovered sufficient strength to resist the glare which had so blinded them at first, he beheld the white head of the astrologer bare to the storm, upon which he gazed with the dreamer's enthusiasm and the prophetic spirit, having seemingly no fear, though he stood conspicuous on one of the highest crags of the long chain of rocks that stretched into the city from the northwestern mountains.

A dozen Indians or more, whom before he had not seen, lay crouching among the rocks around him in silent terror. Pointing to the form of Teresa, who still lay without sign of life, he bade one of them bring water for her restoration. But the Indian heard him with a stupid stare of indifference, and, without leaving his place or changing the direction of his eye, which was turned from the inquirer, and fixed upon the distant mountains in the northwest, he lifted his finger, and pointed simply in the same direction. The eyes of Vasco Nunez followed the guidance of the finger to the spot from whence the continued and increasing roar assured him that the desolation was to come; and brave and fearless as all men acknowledged him to be, a silent awe seized upon his soul as he surveyed the blackening outlines of that vague and bodiless form, whose rapidity outshot the speed of the lightning, and whose power seemed potent for the convulsion and destruction of all bodies;—under whose pressure the mountains were split asunder, whose march made the earth heave and quiver as with a fear like that which fell in the same time on its frail inhabitants, and whose flight, driving against the seas, divided their mighty waves asunder and threw them up into mountains, or sunk them deep down into their own abysses. On the upper edge of the town, and advancing from the piled mountains of the north, from whose brown sides its gigantic and sable limbs seemed to emerge, a vast, indefinable mass of bulging clouds stretched forth a hundred distinct and threatening arms towards the city. Such was the general outline of the hurricane when first beheld by the eye of Vasco Nunez. But its shapes were continually changing, as it acquired force from its own progress, or volume from the accumulating masses of vapour and wind, which, by a natural attraction, it drew towards it in its flight. Soon, these hundred arms linked themselves together, took upon them a spiral form, and had for awhile the appearance of the horn of some monstrous animal; a similitude greatly strengthened by the rolling, plunging and wheeling mass from which it was protruded. From this projection, or horn, a yellow vapour was shot forth along the path which the hurricane was directed to take—a hot and sulphureous blast, that might well have been the breath of some long suppressed and pent up volcano. The spiral extremity soon became a beam,—an immense but straight shaft—thrust forward like a weighty

wedge to force its own way under the pressure of the monstrous mass behind. But the shaft was soon swallowed up and submerged by the crowding volume which travelled after it with a headlong haste beyond its own. Little jets of cloud, now of a discoloured white, and now of a tawny yellow, shot incessantly from its sides, and wreaths of a like complexion hung about its sable skirts, at times wholly encircling their extremities,—at other times dissipating in airy flakes, which hung suspended in the untroubled atmosphere, as the rushing flight of the gigantic body from which they were ejected, hurried it away beyond their reach. The vapour which gave them vitality, in great part exhausted, they hung along the track which the hurricane had made, in a sullen state of rest, reflecting in gloomy and lurid hues the dim rays of the sun, whose fiercest beams could only penetrate in part their dense and turbid folds. On, on, meanwhile, came the immense and momentarily accumulating mass. Its form was now that of a monstrous serpent, while its plunging motion, as it rushed through thinner fields of air, seemed that of the wild beast, leaping down the sides of the mountain to the blood feast on the plain. The eye of Vasco Nunez was fascinated and fixed by the awful shadow which was approaching him; and though his lips were parched as he gazed, and the hot sand from the mountains which was whirled along by the tempest, fell like rain upon his cheek, mingled with big drops of water, scarcely less hot, that oozed out at partial moments from the cloud;—and though his breathing was checked, and his blood thickening in his veins, and his heart faint, he rose to his feet, moved with a wild desire to procure succour for Teresa who still lay in a state of insensibility, which had been so long protracted as to make him apprehensive for her life. But a friendly hand grasped his arm and would have drawn him back to his place of shelter. He turned and saw the astrologer, who had descended unobserved from the eminence where he had watched the coming of the hurricane.

“Move not now, Vasco, my son: sink down again, I pray you, for the danger is at hand. It comes not so fast yet, as it will come a moment hence, when its windy masses are all free from the mountains, where they have been gathering for months. But, in a little while, and it is upon us, with a power beyond any which we have yet

beheld. Look ! how it grows and gathers. See you not, even while I speak, how its flight increases,—and now it speaks ! Down, down, Vasco, lie close as these Indians, or it will suffocate thee. We are just beneath its track.”

“ But Teresa—my poor Teresa !” cried the cavalier ; “ she will die, Codro, she will surely die.”

“ Nay,” said the astrologer, “ fear nothing, this will relieve her for a space ;” and snatching a palm leaf from the basket of an Indian woman who crouched but a few paces distant, he himself bent down over the maiden and fanned her so as to disperse the smoky and sulphureous vapour, that by this time was circumfused throughout the atmosphere. “ This will help her, my son, and if not, we can do nothing for her now. The hurricane is above our heads.”

The gentle agitation of the settling atmosphere, produced by the leaf, had its effect, as the astrologer had said. Teresa showed signs of consciousness, and made a feeble effort to rise as her eyes opened upon the strange aspects of the savages around her. But the arm of her lover, pleased with such employ, still held her down in the shelter by his side.

“ Not yet, Teresa,—it is not over. Fear nothing, I am beside thee.”

He would have said more as she still struggled to rise, but his voice and her efforts were alike arrested, as the entire weight of the hurricane, with its terrific roar, passed above them in the smoky heavens. Plunging from the mountain passes where it had been for months gathering in silence, the hot and hurrying volume came rushing downward with the velocity of an arrow in its pathway to the sea. The serpentine shape it still preserved, but the lighter shadows had all fallen from it, or were left behind in the still atmosphere which it no longer troubled ; and nothing now remained, relieving its excessive blackness, but a lurid and sulphuric stripe of cloud that hung from and beneath it, like a train. Though waving to and fro, in a serpentine direction, chiefly because of the swaying currents of air set in motion by its own headlong progress, no line could have been more directly onward than that which it pursued. Yet it bore along with it bodies of rock, trees of stupendous size, and fragments of many a bohio, the miserable tenants of which had escaped with difficulty.

Lengthening itself as it flew, and losing some of its bulk accordingly, its threatening brow overhung the city, while its terminating folds were still undeveloped among the mountain gorges where it had been conceived.

"We are in its very path, Micer Codro," cried Vasco Nunez, with accents of alarm, that sprang rather from a belief of Teresa's danger than from any apprehensions of his own.

"Close, lie close, dear Vasco; if there be danger here, there is death elsewhere. Move not now—there is no time for change, and these rocks will, I trust, give us all protection. Behold these Indians, they lie flat; they look not up—they will not stir, till the last train of yellow melts from off yonder mountains."

Teresa, restored to full consciousness, clung to her lover with all the tenacity of life, under the still exciting apprehensions of its loss, until he quite forgot, in the intoxicating pleasure of the moment, all of those gloomy terrors to which he owed his situation. But the feelings of Teresa were not his feelings. She simply confessed her fears, not her love, while thus clinging to his bosom. Her words, however soft and tender, were words of fear, and not of tenderness; and these, and his warm and encouraging responses, were alike swallowed up and lost in the howling of the hurricane, as seeming now to detach itself into parts, its heavy masses began successively plunging from the steeps into the sea. The earth shook, the rocks quivered and trembled where they lay; and it required all the strength of the cavalier, now convinced of the truth of what the astrologer had assured him, to keep the terrified Teresa, almost utterly frantic, from rushing away from those very hills which were their only protection, but which she dreaded would momentarily fall upon her. An Indian woman, terrified in like manner, but with no such fond and restraining arm to preserve her from her own panic, fled from the trembling pile which sheltered her, and in the attempt to fly, was seized upon by the whirling column, which wrapped itself around her like a shroud, and bore her twenty feet aloft into the air. Wild shrieks from her companions followed her, but her own shrieks were unheard—suffled in the hot embrace of that storm-torrent which bore her on. A succeeding limb of the same mighty power wrested her from the weakened hold of the former, and threw her out from its pathway, as if, grieved with having

extinguished life, it cared not for the possession of the carcase. The body fell to the earth, lifeless, but without a wound. The breath of life was stifled within her nostrils, and, saving a black line around her neck, she bore no outward mark of injury. She fell among hundreds of scattered wretches, amply warned by her swift and sudden fate, to cower and tremble in their prostrate places of security. Mass after mass of the dreadful besom of the winds swept its way to the great deep, and plunging from the heights into the ocean, laid bare its depths, and turned up its yellow sands. A wall of waters stood up on each hand, boiling and fretting to seek their wonted channel, but kept apart until the march of all the flying legions was thoroughly complete.

"It is off,—it is over now, dearest Teresa, and thou art safe. The saints have been merciful to thee, and the mother of protection has looked on thee with a smile. Thou canst now look up, Teresa; behold where the black column is rushing through the seas! Hark, the roaring of the strife they keep; and look to the Plaza, from which our flight was of such doubt and difficulty. There is scarce one fragment left standing beside another."

While the maiden turned to the spot denoted by her lover, and by an involuntary shudder attested her recollection of the difficulty with which her escape was effected from it, the astrologer called the attention of Vasco Nunez to an event, the misfortune of which, Teresa being saved, and by his arm, he did not so much feel at that otherwise happy moment.

"Ay, Vasco, we are safe—the danger has gone by, and our lives are spared to us; but next to the loss of life, my son, we have lost every thing. Look out upon the bay, and tell me if thou seest at her moorings in the Ozama, the good ship the 'Maragnon?'"

The cavalier looked instinctively as he was bidden to the spot where his ship had lain at the morning; he passed his hands above his eyes as if to relieve his sight, and then replied:

"Indeed, I see her not. There is the fleet of Nicuesa, and there are the vessels of Ojeda. But the 'Maragnon,' I see not! Can it be that she is whelmed and sunken? The spot is vacant where she lay."

"Ay, it hath been ploughed even to its deepest hollows by the keel of the hurricane. Look where it goes afar

into the broad ocean, and thine eyes may yet see the fragments of thy goodly ship which it flings out at every plunge upon the billow."

"Holy mother, can this be true! can it be, Micer Codro, as thou say'st, and are all our wearisome toils to be fruitless and our hopes vain. Jesu be merciful to the poor fellows that were in her. They are in his hands only. For us—for thee, Micer Codro—thou hast lost thy all—in thy old age thou hast lost thy all!"

"Ay, Vasco, but thou livest, my son!" exclaimed the venerable man turning fondly to the cavalier and throwing his arms affectionately about his neck—"While thou art safe I have but little loss, and while thou livest I despair not of thy star!"

The other was unmoved by his enthusiasm, but deeply touched by the affectionate devotedness which the old man displayed towards him in the hour of his evil fortune. He shook his head mournfully but made him no reply. Turning from the dismal prospect, he fixed his eyes on the face of one in whose warm and sunny glance of love he hoped to read the presage of better fortune.

"Thy ship is then lost, Señor Vasco—do I hear the tale aright?"

"Señor!" was the involuntary exclamation of the cavalier, as he repeated the formal address of the maiden. As if doubting whether he had rightly heard, his eye was searchingly fixed upon her, as if anxious to trace in her features something more of warmth and interest than her words expressed. But the gaze of the maiden, who had recovered all her composure in the conviction of her safety, was quiet and impracticable.

"It is lost, Teresa—the good ship, and I fear me all of the poor people who were in her. But my loss were little and of little value held by me, could I be sure of thy gain—could I feel that, losing all things else, I were yet favoured of fortune in securing thee."

The speech was spoken in suppressed language, and not in the hearing of the astrologer, though he readily divined what passed between them. She bent her eyes upon the earth, but, save in this respect, gave no sign of emotion as she listened to his language, and when he had finished, how coolly were her requests made, that he should seek and summon her attendants.

"Can this woman love at all?" demanded the sage, Mi-

cer Codro of himself; but Vasco Nunez, with the blindness of one who sees only through the desires of his heart, saw nothing of this coldness and would not acknowledge its existence.

"It is the bashfulness of the young heart," said he, to the astrologer.

"A bashfulness that is ever firm," replied the other—"that never trembles, nor pales a cheek, nor suffers a quivering drop upon her eye-lashes. Oh, Vasco, I would that thou couldst wean thyself from the love of woman, in which I see all thy danger, and give thyself to glory and great achievement only. 'Thy star!—'"

"No more of that Micer Codro—I tell thee, let Teresa Davila but say that she loves me and I ask for no glory—I seek not for great achievement."

"She will never tell thee that, Vasco Nunez; and thou canst no more defeat the promise of thy star than I can make it. The woman may baffle thee in thy labour for a while, and delay thee in thy performance, and destroy thee after its attainment. But the achievement is most surely thine. I would spare thee the waste of days, and the waste of affections upon one, whom thou pursuest without profit, and can win only to thy loss."

"Let me win her only, and the loss be mine!" replied the cavalier closing the dialogue abruptly.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE GIFT OF THE WOMAN.

THE hurricane, which lasted several hours, had brought the people of Santo Domingo to the close of the day. The disaster which had struck so deeply at the resources of Vasco Nunez, had not, as we have seen, impressed him with so much sorrow at his loss while Teresa Davila stood beside him. It is probable, indeed, that he would have smiled with scorn upon his misfortunes, and held them in slight regard, had it been, as he whispered in her ear, that there was a sweet hope of his success with her. But she spoke no more those tender words which had fallen from her unconscious lips while his arm protected her from the destroying blast. With the assurance which she felt of safety when the hurricane had gone by, returned all that capricious coldness of manner, which the fond cavalier ascribed only to maidenly reserve and a proper dignity. The astrologer was the wiser man in this respect. He well understood the selfish nature of the woman whom Vasco Nunez loved. He saw it in the sudden change in her deportment when the services of the cavalier were needed no longer; he saw it in the cold, indifferent tones with which she demanded to know if his fortunes were, indeed, entirely dissipated by the storm; he had seen it long before, in the nice selfishness of character which enabled her to maintain in doubt, and consequently in hope, a dozen lovers, each of whom was made, at times, quite as happy and confident as the most favoured of her train. He also knew, and this conviction was of more force than any other in his mind, that she had no feeling of veneration for that noble and high-reaching ambition which filled the soul of Vasco Nunez. She could only admire greatness, as it was the subject of

admiration among the little world around her; she knew nothing of, and cared little for, its intrinsic excellencies. The greatness of Vasco Nunez was of a sort which was quite too towering for the really vulgar spirits who were the habitual adventurers of the time, and whose pursuits were chiefly those of avarice and murder. His finer ambition having for its object great discoveries of unknown realms, like those which Colon had given to Castile, he was regarded by a great number as a mere dreamer who was wasting a precious life, with his small resources, upon the most empty illusions. This, too, had necessarily become somewhat the faith of Teresa Davila—a faith only qualified in her mind when she discovered the singular degree of confidence which had been given by her miserly uncle to his soaring schemes; and which, now that the seas had swallowed up the very means by which he was to effect his objects, returned with all its force to her bosom, and taught her to resume her former habits of capricious coldness, with the resumption of her former incredulity in relation to his visions. The astrologer sighed when he saw how completely the noble heart of the brave and accomplished cavalier lay at the mercy of a creature, who, bright and beautiful as she confessedly was, lacked all that nobleness of aim which alone could make her brightness perfect, and that confiding simplicity of soul, which could make her beauty sweet. He turned away from the contemplation of the two, as they walked on from the scene of devastation to the bohio where she dwelt.

But when they were separated—when she no longer stood beside the cavalier, looking on him with eyes whose brightness seldom failed to occasion a happy confusion in his thoughts and feelings—it was then that he could calmly consider and estimate the prevailing extent of his loss. He was, in fact, literally destitute. His own little accumulations for years—those of his friend, the astrologer—were all buried in the unrestoring waters. Never was wreck more complete than that of the good ship, 'The Maragnon.' Goods and stores, and arms and men, were all swallowed up in the storm; and the loan from Felipe Davila, as it had been hurriedly paid away to the seamen at the opening of the business in the Plaza de Armas, in order to forestal the persuasions of Ojeda and Nicuesa, necessarily shared the same fate with the poor fellows whom it pur-

chased. The hopes of Vasco Nunez, in one great leading respect, were broken up and scattered abroad with the dismembered fragments of his vessel. The morning found him, as it were, triumphant over fortune—exulting in the assurances of fate, exulting in the possession of means, by which inevitably to secure success. A single hour had sufficed to dissipate his hopes, and a single blast had defeated all the promises of fortune. The evening found him destitute of all those resources which it had been the toil of years—his own toil and that of others—to accumulate and preserve. He had lost not merely the means of adventure and of greatness, but the means of life. The last gold in his possession had been given in the casket of castellanos to the hands of the astrologer, who regarding the wants of Vasco Nunez as all satisfied in Santo Domingo with the completion of his means for departure, had appropriated all its contents in making his preparations as perfect and extensive as he could. But a few pieces remained in the keeping of the cavalier, and these were inadequate to the need of a single week. He was not merely destitute of means, but, in their loss, he was left destitute of hopes. Where was he to find the material which was to replace the good ship—to refit her for the meditated voyage—to provide her with stores and men anew. His past experience of the difficulties in supplying these wants, taught him to regard as illusory now, any hope which he might yet entertain of the future in Santo Domingo. The hope of better fortune in Old Spain was no less illusory. What had he, a single and destitute adventurer, to hope for in competition and conflict with the thousands which were sent forth daily from thence, having their own fortunes in numberless instances, and strongly sustained by active and able connexions? With the conviction of his own hopelessness, came a momentary forgetfulness even of Teresa and her charms, and the pang of his disaster and the probable defeat of all his plans, can be conceived only by those who have known the misery of losing, in a single moment, the treasured object of a life—the darling schemes of an intense ambition—and all the thousand anticipations of honour and reward from man, which have been the dream of the warm imagination, for ever grasping at the things which are beyond it.

A new annoyance awaited him when he returned to the

sea side where he had left the astrologer. There he encountered the miser Felipe Davila, whom he found pouring forth a thousand reproaches and as many threats in the ears of Micer Codro, for having beguiled from him his money to risk upon so unlucky a person. These reproaches were all transferred to himself when he drew nigh.

"Old man," said the cavalier with dignity—"you speak as if I should have stayed the hurricane with my arm or voice. You speak like a madman. I am sorry for your loss, though it be much less great than mine own; yet thy loss gives thee no license for insult and reproach. Why dost thou upbraid Micer Codro, or myself?"

"He lied to me about thy star—thy star—a murrain on thy star! He lied daily through all San Domingo of thy star, and of the gold that grew beneath it. Why did I fall into the deceit? why did I believe this folly? What right hadst thou with such a star, thou a poor cavalier under Moguer—thou hadst better been planting thy cabbages at Salvatierra. But I will punish him and thee alike, for this treachery. The alcalde shall give me judgment against you as swindlers both—I will have ye in a prison where, if ye incline to lie farther of your stars, ye shall yet see none.—Ye base cheats and deceivers, that have spoiled me of seven hundred castellanos."

"You shall be paid, I tell you, Señor Felipe," cried the astrologer.

"Tell me nothing—pay me the castellanos and I will then give ear to your promises. But now I will proclaim ye as born swindlers through Santo Domingo. There shall be a drum with the proclamation, though I lose the cost of it with my other losses. I could have had the best security—fool that I was—from the Bachelor Enciso; and yet to think that I should be so blind, so deaf, so dumb, so mad and blind as to believe in this story of his star. But I tell you, Micer Codro, the alcalde shall give me judgment against you, and hark you, Vasco Nunez—this fraud of thine—"

The cavalier interrupted the insolent speech of the miser in a voice and manner no less dignified than stern. The indignation of a noble mind, nobly shown, is seldom utterly without its effect upon the vulgar, and the soul of Felipe Davila actually quailed within him, as the cold, but resolute eye of Vasco Nunez looked upon him.

"Hark you, old man!" said he, "I have borne with you, for the sake of one, to speak of whom in the same breath with you, I feel compunction and dislike. But know that even the feeling which I have for Teresa Davila, shall not protect the base wretch who dares couple fraud with the name of Vasco Nunez. Anger me not, therefore, with thy foul language, lest neither thy age nor thy connexion with one I love, shall protect thee from the chastisement which thy insolence provokes."

"I fear you not!" was the reply of the miser, but he retreated as he spoke, and placed himself among the bystanders whom his high words had brought nigh to hear the conference. "I fear thee not; and as for the love thou hast professed for Teresa Davila, know from me that she looks on thee with scorn. She were a greater fool than I who lent money to a knave, to bestow love upon a beggar."

"Ha, dog!" The sudden grasp of Vasco Nunez upon the throat of the abusive wretch made him cry out in other language, as he implored mercy in one breath from his assailant, and assistance in another from the crowd. Micer Codro interposed, but the better nature of Vasco Nunez himself spared him the necessity of farther interposition.

"Away!" he cried, flinging the old man from him as he spoke, and turning away from the group at the same moment. "Thou art mad for thy losses, old man, and knowst not what thou sayest. Thou blasphemest in thy present mood, either to speak of thy niece or of the love I bear her. Thy money shall be paid thee, and with usury, in reasonable time!"

"The alcalde shall give me better assurance of payment than I will take from thee," was the reply of the miser, as the cavalier departed.

"The alcalde!—why talkest thou of the alcalde, Felipe Davila?" said the astrologer, "and wherefore wouldst thou vex a noble gentleman in the moment of his distress? Can it do thee good or give thee pleasure to put one into prison who can only pay thee when he has privilege of limb and liberty. Go to!—why errest thou in this fashion."

"Then wherefore is he so proud! Wherefore bears he so loftily. I tell thee, Micer Codro, it is my will that my

debtor shall be humble and solicit me, else I will cast him into prison."

"This will do for the base debtor, who means not payment and would meet usury with fraud. But thou canst not obtain such miserable concession from the high-souled and accomplished cavalier. I tell thee, man, that wert thou to bind the limbs of Vasco Nunez upon the cross, and flay him with rods and pierce him with darts, he would spit upon thee and scorn thee to the last. There is a nature in him which thou canst not understand, and which all the powers of alguazil and executioner could never move from his resolved purpose."

"We shall see—there shall be judgment ere another sunset upon this matter ——"

"Pshaw, Felipe Davila, thou art but an ass after all, if thou talkest thus in this matter. Let thy passion mislead thee thus, and thou art a loser of all thy castellanos, which thou art most sure with a moderate patience to recover. Wert thou wise now, thou wouldst make this cavalier thy favourite, thou wouldst bestow thy niece upon him if he seeks her, and devote all thy treasures to the facilitation of his greatness; for I tell thee now, here, even where we stand, with all the evidence of his late great loss before our eyes, that the fates design this same Vasco Nunez for an achievement before which all the successes of all these gaudy cavaliers will be as nothing. Next to Christovallo Colon, I tell thee that the name of Balboa shall rank first among the great men of this new empire of Spain. Come with me, that I may better advise thee of these things."

Growling his apprehension and anger as he went, the miser yet followed the conduct of the astrologer, as they drew off to a secret place of conference. The cavalier to whom their conference had chief reference, meanwhile, took his way along the more broken ledges of the rock which overhung the bay, still vexed and chafing with the tempest which had so lately stirred and ploughed it even in its hollowest recesses. He took his seat upon a cliff which looked forth upon those waters which had buried his gallant vessel, and bitterly did he brood in silence upon a misfortune, which the coarse and vulgar insolence of his creditor had taught him almost to feel as a crime—a lesson which the creditor but too often teaches to those who are

less erring than unfortunate. So deeply did he feel this annoyance to which he had been exposed, that, manly as was his real character, he felt that it would be but a small pang were he then to perish. He had reached that stage of disappointment, when he only did not despair. For it must be remembered that for years had he laboured with the unstified idea in his bosom of achieving that great object for which his vessel had been prepared; and all his little gains and labours in that space of time had been preserved and continued sedulously for the same object. The catastrophe which had happened to his bark seemed to him to falsify all the fond predictions of the astrologer, and if he did not utterly despair, it may be said confidently that he also did not know how to hope. The idle people who traversed the town in contemplation of the ruins, respected his sorrows. They kept aloof from the lonely crag upon which he had seated himself. The sun was going down clear and unclouded to his rest. A bright shaft of rosy light played over the arch of heaven, shifting into thousand shapes, each as bright and as sudden in its transitions as any of the dreams of youth. The golden and bushy locks of the day-star, seemed tossing above the sable waters in the distance, the fainter rays stretching in a direct line toward him, as if in promise and encouragement. But Vasco Nunez, wretched and morbid, saw nothing but a humiliating mockery in the lovely image. He turned his eye from that glance which looked upon him so fondly, and gazed upon the sombre masses of mountain in the north from which the hurricane had descended. They too were now touched with the loveliest lights of evening, and so soft was the crimson vapour that encircled their brows, that even he who had but a little before witnessed the whole passage of the hurricane, could scarce believe a region so heavenly-hued to have been its birth-place.

“ Ah, treacherous mountains! ye mock me now with your lovely and delusive aspects. Those folding wreaths of crimson that lie around you have conceived of the storm and their only birth shall be the whirlwind. Gather as ye may, your vapours and your winds, they can harm me no farther. Ye have taken from me all, and the triumph which should have crowned my bark, must now be shared among those of the rash Ojeda, or the no less rash but more accomplished and noble Nicuesa. Could you not

have taken one from them. They have both many—they had scarcely noted the loss of one. I owned but the one, and that ye have taken; and now, ye may gather your storms—I apprehend ye not! Ye can do me no more harm!”

Night fell, and the cavalier was still a watcher among the cliffs. The sullen murmurs of the seas, still groaning from their recent lashings, were more grateful to his moody mind than had been the sweetest music. The gathering shadows of evening, which, in that lovely climate, are seldom gloom, were yet less offensive to his soul than the gold and crimson glories which they succeeded and dispersed. The saffron and the purple, melted into dun; and a bright star rose above the sun's pathway, as it seemed, even from the deep, and stood over against the place where he sat, looking as it were, into his very eyes. He could scarce resist, under its pure and blessed aspect, the conviction of a hope. Just then he heard the tread of a light footstep behind him. He turned not to look upon the intruder, for his soul was too sorrowful for curiosity, but a light, trembling voice reached his ears:

“Master,” it said, humbly and low, as if fearing to offend—“Master!”

He turned, as he recognized the accents; and the mother of the boy whom Garabito had murdered stood before him. She sank at his feet as she met his glance.

“Be not vexed, master, with the woman—it is the poor Buru, master—only Buru.”

The heart of Vasco Nunez melted within him to behold her, and his eyes filled with tears. He forgot his own afflictions as he remembered that terrible one to which she had been subjected. “Of a truth,” said he to himself, when he reflected upon that most harrowing and heart-rending privation which she had been doomed to endure, and without reason or redress—“of a truth, I shame to brood over this loss of mine when I look upon this poor woman and think upon her boy! She hath lost the blossom of her love—the life of her hope—the very fruit of her heart's best affections—in whose life she was long to live, even when the heavy sod lay upon her unconscious bones. I have lost little but the labours of my own and the hands of others—wood and iron—canvass, and the green spars which these forests yield in inexhaustible abundance. Should the

strings of my heart be strained for such a loss as this. Should I give myself up to the boy's agony who hath lost the plaything on which his childish fancies have been set. Surely, I should not become this weak and yielding creature. I have gone through stripes and perils—I have not shrunk from death. I am ready even now for any danger,—then, wherefore, should I show this weight of wo to the crowd, who will behold it but to deride. They will rejoice to see my weakness, and the suffering which I have for this miserable loss of timber and canvass. I have lost nothing beside—nothing! Yes! the triumph—the great triumph—the conquest of that Southern Sea! And yet—what is even this loss to that of the poor woman! The softening tears of the blessed Mother of God fall upon her heart, and bring it healing!”

These musings passed through the mind of the cavalier with the wonted rapidity of thought. Hope was already beginning to assert itself anew within his bosom, as a natural consequence of the just exercise of his intellect; and, however he might come to the natural conclusion, that, in all probability, the glory of his great discovery was taken from his grasp, and the bright fame which he had promised himself was now destined to adorn and perpetuate some other more fortunate name, yet this, he well reasoned, was not a just cause why the strong man should forego his strength, and yield up his soul to the voluntary impotence of despair. The worse affliction of the bereaved mother at his side, taught him to estimate his own more lightly.

“The world hath every where more misery than is mine!” said he, with a natural exclamation. “What would you, my poor woman—why do you seek me? I can do nothing for you—nothing—I have nothing to give you. I have lost all—every thing.”

“Buru wants nothing from the master. Can the master give the boy to his mother—no, no! Buru comes for nothing.”

“True, true, my poor woman, were the good ship mine again, with all her stores, what could I do for you? what could I give to the mother which would replace her child?”

The woman advanced, lifted his hand which she put upon her head, then stooping to earth she placed her head between his knees, and while thick-coming sobs made her

voice almost inarticulate, she replied in broken Spanish as follows :

“ But the master would have struck for the mother—the master would have saved the boy. Had the master been nigh to Garabito, he had put by the sharp sword, and the poor Zemi would walk beside Buru to-night when she goes by the path of arrows up the hills. Buru will walk and hear no Zemi as she goes : but the master would have saved the boy.—Buru loves the good master who struck the Spaniard for her child.”

“ Alas ! my poor woman, it is my sorrow that I struck for thee in vain. Had I been less slow—had I deemed it possible for the base creature to have touched the boy with his weapon, I had been prompt to save—I had saved him ! But I believed not that he would strike the child—I could not think that any Spaniard would have done so monstrous a crime !”

“ Ah ! master, that you had been soon—that you had struck the sword of Garabito from his hand. The boy was good and had many words for his mother when the poor Buru digs in the gray mountains for gold for the Spaniard. He will have no more words again for his mother. But the master would have saved, and Buru will love him. See master—here is guanin—guanin from the hills. It is all for you. Buru brings it for the good master who would have struck for Zemi.”

While speaking these words she untwisted a single but thick fold of her long black hair which was secured to the cone of her head with considerable skill, in which was cunningly concealed several bits of the mixed gold called guanin which the Indians had been accustomed to work even before the coming of the Spaniard, with a peculiar process of their own. Remembering to have seen her, while in the dance, with her hair seemingly unbound and flying in all directions, Vasco Nunez was interested in observing the neat and highly artificial manner in which a single tress of the streaming volume might still be made to secure from sight upon the head, a treasure, which, as she unfolded it before his eyes, was far from inconsiderable.

“ Buru saw the hurricane, master, when it fell on the big canoe. It was all broken, and the thin pieces are gone out on the waters. Buru hath heard them say that the good master hath lost every thing—that he hath no ship, no

pearls, no guanin. But Buru has brought guanin. It is all for the master—take it, good master—the night is around us, the Spaniard sleeps in the bohio—there are none to see. Buru will bring more guanin when she goes back into the mountains. The mountains have gold for Buru, when the Spaniard gathers none. Buru will save it from the Spaniard, and bring it all to the good master who would have struck for her child."

The heartfelt and devoted manner in which the poor Indian gave up her treasures, in the grateful impulse of her heart, to console the cavalier who had lost every thing, touched his very soul. The big drops, gathered fast beneath his eyelashes. Tears had been for long years before strangers to his eyes, but they now gushed forth freely and he did not seek to restrain them.

"The master hath a heart—he weeps—he is no Spaniard!" were the exulting exclamations of the woman, as she laid the gold at his feet. The earnest gratitude of the poor savage saddened while it pleased him. A like proffer from one of his own countrymen, in that moment of moody despondency would, possibly, have only angered him. His claim was better upon the one than the other, yet how little reason had he to expect such a tribute to his misfortunes from any Spaniard. But such a proffer from the degraded Indian—from one of a people as yet unacknowledged as human, and but too commonly the victim of a licensed and legalized brutality filled his soul with mortification. What a commentary upon the conduct of his countrymen was this noble and unexpected show of gratitude in the poor woman, whose best and dearest affections had been so wantonly and cruelly outraged. He felt that he could not receive her gold—he put it away from his sight.

"Keep your gold, Buru—you will need it to buy cassavi when you are hungry; and perhaps, it may help you to procure some indulgences from your taskmaster. It can do me little service and it may do you much. You may share it with your people—it will procure pleasures for you all."

"Does my lord speak this?" said the woman mournfully—"does the master speak of pleasures for the poor Buru, when the boy is dead? Has the Spaniard any good physic to make him to live? If he has, then there is plea-

sure for Buru. She will go back to the mountains and she will feel none of the blows upon her back. The boy shall play with the brown monkey beside her, and her heart will jump when she hears him laugh light and sees him running among the hills."

"Alas! Buru, I tell thee with sorrow as I have already told thee, that I cannot help thee. The Spaniard has no physic which can bring back life. But, by the Holy Mother, Buru, if I could help thee to thy living son, I would not shrink to peril my own limbs—nay, my own life—in the blessed purpose. I feel for thee, Buru—in my heart I feel for thee."

"Ah, master—when the lash fell upon the shoulders of Buru, she smiled, for Zemi was there. When the heart of the woman sank from the labour of her limbs, the heart of the mother grew strong, for was not her child beside her. There is no Zemi—there is no child now. She would have bought the boy's life with the guanin—she would have brought more guanin from the hills, had not the bad master struck so soon. So soon he struck that my good lord could not help me, and now that the guanin cannot bring back life, let the good master take the guanin. It is nothing to the mother who hath no child."

"It will buy you clothes to wear, Buru. It will get you food when you are hungry and sweet drink when you thirst," said the Spaniard, still refusing her proffer. But the grateful but wretched creature was not to be baffled thus. Her reply was ready.

"Buru has no thirst and no hunger now. The water that runs out of the hill is a good drink for the woman. The manioc is a good root even when it brings death; and Buru would not sorrow to eat of that. There is much cotton in Cibao, and that is clothes for the Indian. Oh, master, will you not take the guanin from the poor Buru, so that her heart shall be glad within her. The gold is not good for the woman. She cannot buy with it, neither she nor her people. The bad master of the Spaniard will seize it from her hand, and with his knotted whip he will scourge her that she brought it not before. Take it, master, and buy with it a big canoe; and think not of the black hurricane that came down from the mountains to make thee sad. It will make the poor Buru too sorry if the master takes not the guanin."

She gathered it again as she was speaking, and once more laid it at the feet of the cavalier. To refuse her any longer would have been an unkindness of which Vasco Nunez was incapable.

"I will take your gold, Buru, and do with it what I can."

"I thank thee, I thank thee, good master—I will bring thee more," she exclaimed, interrupting him in the fulness of her joy.

"I will take it, and it will doubtless be of help to me, though it will not buy me the canoe."

"I will bring thee more, dear master," she cried, again interrupting him—"There is much gold in Cibao, and it is good. The sister of Buru shall also bring gold for the good master which she will hide from the Spaniard in her hair. Look, my lord,—after so many suns,"—here she counted on her fingers before his eyes—"so many suns, and Buru will come with her sister, and bring good guania in her hair. Her hair is thick like the hair of Buru—it will hide the gold so that the Spaniard shall never find it. It shall come for my good master, and he shall get with it a bigger canoe than he lost by the black hurricane before. Buru blesses the good master, and will love to serve him."

"Nay, Buru, but this thou shalt not. I do not want your gold, and you must bring me no more of it—bring me nothing. It will do you harm with your master should he detect you, and he might even take your life."

"Ah! would he!" exclaimed the woman quickly—"Buru were very glad if the sword of Garabito, which slew the boy, would slay the poor mother. Ah, master, I tremble to go back to the mountains. There will be one to say to me—'where is Zemi?' and when he asks, what shall Buru answer? She will fall down upon her face, and bury the truth in the sand."

"Thy husband!" said Vasco Nunez.

"Ah! yes! But thou knowest him not, master. Tell me thou dost not know his name."

"How should I, Buru?—thou hast never told me."

"He has no name—I have no husband, and there is no child." These words were uttered wildly, and the miserable mother seemed to be more agitated now than at any previous moment in their interview.

"The master will take the guano!" she said as she prepared to depart.

"This!—but no more; and I take this, Buru, not because I desire it, but as I would not give thee pain by refusing thee. Risk not your life by bringing to me any more, for I will not receive it from thee. I will buy no more ships, but go back to my farm at Salvatierra—give up these dreams of glory—these fancies of discovery, and think of greatness no longer. The fates work against me."

These words were rather the fruit of Vasco's own melancholy musings than as intending any answer to the woman—and, but for the melancholy defiance in his manner when he spoke of the hostility of the fates, she might have found much in what he said that was greatly beyond her comprehension. She understood, however,—and that was the purpose of her visit—that she was at length permitted in her own way to express her gratitude—that the man who had striven to befriend her was not unwilling to accept her humble acknowledgments. Satisfied with this much, her features put on a smile of melancholy pleasure, and bending once more upon her knee before him, she took his hand in hers and placed it upon her head in token of veneration. At this moment a slight whistle from a neighbouring bush reached her ears. She caught his hand hurriedly, carried it to her lips, rose from her suppliant posture and, ere he could speak, without farther word, she darted away, and disappeared in another moment behind the rock on which he rested.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE STAR—NEW HOPES.

HER place was supplied by the astrologer. Micer Codro had not been forgetful nor unobservant of his friend. He well enough understood how grievously Vasco Nunez must feel the sudden annihilation of his hopes; and if he suffered any time to elapse, after the hurricane, before he came forward as a consoler, it was simply because he also knew how idle in the first gush of one's sorrow must be any attempt at consolation or encouragement. In loneliness may the sad heart best find counsel. Quiet thought is perhaps the best minister to real affliction. The brooding contemplation which looks into itself, will find the deity more frequently within, than among the crowd and in the high places. And even now, when he approached the gloomy adventurer, he sat down beside him in silence upon the crag. Their mutual eyes were bent sorrowfully upon those muttering waters in which their fortunes were swallowed up. Yet, though in one sense a greater loser than Vasco Nunez, the astrologer was any thing but despondent; and if afflicted, only so on account of his friend. He had an elasticity of mind, the consequence of tempered desires and long experience of life's vicissitudes, which was yet to be attained by his companion. Perhaps, too, he had hopes, which did not encourage Vasco Nunez, and of which the latter did not dream. Full of these, and confident in the promises with which they allured him, the astrologer sat down in patience beside his friend, who suffered him to take his place without speech or notice. He resolved to wait the moment when grief itself must become tired of its musing monotony, and manhood, impatient of inaction, feel trial and loss as even preferable, in a choice of evils, to that apathetic prostration of life, which is a pain

always to the sanguine and adventurous mind. The astrologer knew the nature of the warrior, and waited, without sign of irksomeness, upon that morbid mood, which he knew must finally relieve itself in speech, even though its utterance be still in the language of complaint. He, meanwhile, was not unoccupied. The contemplation of the visible world and its various glories was to him a rich enjoyment, far beyond the thousand others for which the warring races of men struggle in the soil and strive together in severest combat. The voices of the elements were, to him, the voices of benignant, or, at least, of powerful gods. That lovely and fantastic superstition which, in the earlier period of civilization, expended life harmlessly in hearkening to songs and stories of the stars, and having a confident faith that they exercised a predestined influence upon the hopes and fortunes of the earth, yielded him a wealth, which had this blessing beyond all others, that it provoked no man's envy and took from no man's heritage. The storms of ocean and of air deprived him of them but momentarily, and with the dissipation of the clouds, his treasures came forth to his sight with tenfold profusion, and with a brightness duly enhanced by their late casual obscuration.

Such was the case at this very moment. The hurricane which had swept over the city from the hanging mountains of Cibao, had cleared the skies of every defacing cloud. The accumulated vapours of autumn had departed; and in the pure and singularly blue expanse around, the people of Española found a certain assurance that the dangers of the current year, arising from a source so fruitful of danger, were all, at length, over. Never was night so lustrous. To the dweller in the cold regions of the north, the myriad eyes looking down upon him from their southern mansions, would alone have almost realized to him the idea of the omniscience of the Deity. Their lights seemed linked in one pearly galaxy all over the central heavens, so close, thick and transparent, that the lonely spots of blue which lay here and there between them, became objects of distinction from their very isolateness and infrequency. Yet, crowded as they were, their inequality of size and brightness was no less a beauty to the beholder. The keen eye of the astrologer, whom a long contemplation of their beautiful forms had taught to know and to distin-

guish between them well, dwelt with momentarily increasing pleasure upon their novel aspects, as, troop by troop, the wheeling lustres rose into sight, and took their assigned places in the dark blue fields in the distance. He had learned to distinguish between them by reason of their shapes, not less than by their size and brightness; and many were the occult significations which their cruciform, circular, oval, or dartlike aspects, presented to his thoughts, as, beheld through the creative lens of a most ethereal imagination, he called them, each by its name, and examined it for its mysteries. And how natural, in an age so fanciful, to believe that the stars and starry groups beheld in the new world for the first time by the native of the old, were especially assigned for its government and protection! How much easier for the self-adoring and complacent man to arrogate to himself the countenance and patronage of one, at least, of a host so numerous, and to grow confident in the sweet and flattering fancy which assured him that the bright eye which his own loved to single out in the heavens, turned ever with the interest of a kindred life, to meet the intense gaze of its admirer.

And the night deepened as the sage and warrior gazed. The lonely rock on which they sat had no voices to break the dream of the imploring silence which hovered breathlessly around them. The scene was too sweet and soothing to the two, moved, as they respectively were, by differing, though not conflicting emotions, to leave them any desire, of themselves, to disturb it. Gradually the contemplations of the astrologer deepened with the deepening night, and the wonders of a grasping thought lay before his vision. He even ceased to be conscious of the companion by his side. He mused upon the past which he had known—he remembered old predictions, and his soul grew kindled with the gathering aspects of the new. He groaned in the intensity of his thought, until Vasco Nunez, wounded in spirit and sick at soul as he was, forgot, for the time, his own afflictions, as he heard the utterance of a sound so unwonted from the lips of the aged man. His eyes were involuntarily but slowly turned from the waters, and rested upon the pale cheek, the glistening eyes, the white and flowing beard of the astrologer. The latter saw not the gaze of his companion. His own was busy among the crowding orbs that seemed momentarily to blaze out and

to thicken in the southern horizon. His hands were clasped upon his breast, his lips were parted, and to the eye of Vasco Nunez, he wore the aspect of one whose soul was afar, seeking fellowship in worlds of better and more enduring promise. For a long time did Vasco Nunez watch the sage in admiration and silence.

"'This old man," he said to himself—"What lives he for? His worldly wealth did he bestow upon me, and I have lost it. He hath nothing now in the whole wide world, and I am his debtor without the means of payment. Accursed! that I am, that such should be the case—that I should take from the treasury which should keep him in comfort through the years of his decline. He knows all—he knows that he can hope for nothing at my hands—that I have nothing, either to repay him or others. Yet he utters no complaint; and if he sorrows at all, his sorrows are for my loss, not for any of his own. Wretch! that I am—to look upon him is a pang, and to speak to him little less than torture. Yet I must do both—Micer Codro!"

The last words were uttered aloud. The old man, turned his eyes upon his companion with a sad, sweet smile, and his reply was uttered in tones of the warmest affection.

"My son! Thou hast summoned my thought from a far distance. What wouldst thou?"

"Wherefore didst thou seek me out at Salvatierra, to thy own ruin and mine? Why didst thou come to me with thy delusions of the stars, and take me from my little farm that enabled me to behold the sea without confiding to it my treasures? Thou foundest me prosperous because I was secure—having a fancy in my heart of greatness, which thou hast blown into a flame which could not be quieted—till I threw by the iron with which I dug, and grew sick and ashamed of the toils which gave me bread. Thou wouldst persuade me that the stars were toiling for me to nobler ends, and I believed thee. Well! what now of thy predictions?—thine own eyes saw the hurricane which belied thy promises—which laughed at my credulity—which has wrecked thy property and mine. I tell thee, Micer Codro, I have this day seen thy three thousand pieces sucked down into the greedy deep. Where were thy stars to help thee and to save thee?—it was only last night that thou broughtest me the brightest promises gather-

ed from their false assurances. My star, too!—that bitter mocking planet upon which, more than all beside, thou didst build thy faith—What says it to thee now? Does it look upon thee with smiles? Dost thou yet behold and believe it? Methinks, it should be buried deep as the treasure which it has lost for us, in the depths of that engulfing sea.”

The reply of the venerable man to this burst of reproach was calm and gentle as before.

“Complain not of me, my son, and, above all, complain not of the stars which are as friendly to thee in their aspects as ever. Look with me, my son, upon thy own bright guardian. Follow the guidance of my finger and behold where it now gleams forth with a blaze like that of the unclouded moon. Its shadow rears in a bright silvery line along the bosom of the very waters, which, as thou sayst, have swallowed up our treasure. It saddens not because of our loss—wherefore should we? It tells us that there is hope and triumph for us still—it reproves us for our despondency.”

The astrologer had the most perfect confidence in his own predictions, and in the assurances which the star still carried to his mind; but it was not so easy for him to impress the same ready conviction on that of his companion. Though not superior to the superstitions which affected the wisest of his age, Vasco Nunez was stubborn against any beguiling hope in the face of his late disaster. He smiled almost scornfully as he heard the words, and remarked the earnest simplicity of expression in the face of the astrologer.

“And thou believest it still! Oh, Micer Codro, friend of mine as I think thee, and wise among men, as in truth I do regard thee, how is it that thou canst hope to impose upon me with this vain argument, and dost so thoroughly impose upon thyself? My star tells thee at night that I am on the very threshold of success, and, at morning, the storm sweeps me into the abysses.”

“Not thee—not thee, my son,” was the instantaneous reply of the other—“thy treasure—thy worldly treasure and mine, indeed, it sweeps into the sea, but thou livest—thou shalt still live, and still triumph over the storms and the seas until thou art in possession of the glory which I

have long since promised thee. Sure, I deny not, that these seeming disasters—"

"Seeming disasters!" exclaimed the other, almost fiercely interrupting the speaker. "The loss of ship, and stores, and arms, men and money, which for two long profitless years we have striven to raise, is a loss in seeming only! It is no disaster in reality—no loss—thou feelest none—I have seen none! We are not now destitute, who have lost every thing in that treacherous tempest. Thy loss is in seeming only, Micer Codro? I glad me that such is thy persuasion, since then I may persuade myself thou wilt hold my debt to thee a debt in seeming also."

"And as I look upon thee, and sit beside thee, and take thy hand in mine, my son, with the feeling of the father for his first-born, I do hold thee no debtor of mine unless it be in seeming. If it be thy debt to me that makes thee unhappy, my son, let thy cause for sorrow cease. Thy debt is paid to me—and now, set thy heart at rest, so that thou mayst learn to rejoice with me at the promise which is still before thee."

The bosom of the warrior was touched with the generous expressions of the astrologer.

"Ah, father," he exclaimed in broken accents—"Thou art only too kind, too fond, too indulgent, and I am too rash of speech, and deserve but little of the indulgence which thou givest me. Believe me, Micer Codro, it is thy loss that troubles me greatly, though I deny not that my own disappointments are also great. I cannot suffer thee to lose—I will not, if power of mine can ever amend it—this large amount which we have seen go down this day into the bosom of the Ozama. I will owe thee service, and toil for thee until thou art paid these moneys, though by the blood of the blessed Saviour, I see not how I shall toil unless as a follower of one or other of these men, to whom, in my day of better fortune, I denied all companionship."

"Thou shalt not do this—thou art born for rule, not obedience—to lead the triumph, not follow tamely the path of another. Thou hadst no days of better fortune, Vasco Nunez, than thou hast now—now, when thou seemest to have suffered the loss of all. Thy star never looked brighter to mine eye, or fuller in its form than it does now, and though I see not how its promise will grow unto ful-

filment, yet, nevertheless, do I nothing question but that such must be the case. I have called thy disaster one in seeming only, for truly I believe it so; nor will there be any thing marvellous if it should prove so. The ways of heaven are inscrutable to the blind and thoughtless beings whom they move: and man, erring ever and self-willed, flies hourly from the real blessing, esteeming it, through the medium of his blinding self-conceit, a curse and a bitterness. Better that the tempest should sink the Maragon in the quiet waters of the Ozama, than that she should sink with thee on the verge of that Southern sea, upon which, my soul tells me within, yon bright star of thy destiny is looking even now with a fixedness and fervour such as thine must be, my son, when, standing upon the mountain top, thou seest for the first time spread out before thy feet, and yielding to thy power, its sacred and seated up waters. Look! Vasco—fix thy glance upon yon lovely image. Seems it not in thy right to wear the face of some wondrous meaning. Shines it not forth with an expression as if, even now, looking forth upon that hidden ocean, it knew the object of thy quest, and longed for the hour when thou, following its gaze, shalt trace out the wild mountain paths and make thyself the heritor of the glory to which it would guide thy steps. Fear nothing, my son—it will be thy guide. Give not way to despondency, for its blessed promise shall sustain thee. Stand not in hostility to thy good fortune, for, of a truth, it is thy destiny to grow great in the eyes of Spain, and to achieve the conquest of a world which shall give thee a name like that of Cristovallo Colon, and an immortal memory among men, only less great than his. Adonai and Saddai—I call thee, father, by thy names of greatest power—I ask thee if this promise be not true?"

The eye of Vasco Nunez involuntarily turned with the finger of his enthusiastic companion, until it rested upon the pale bright planet that, occupying the centre of a cloud of stars, irradiated them with a foreign lustre while obscuring their native beams.

"Believe me, my son, and doubt nothing of the fortune which awaits thee," continued the old man, as he saw how earnestly the glance of Vasco Nunez rested upon the orb—"give thyself to the tide, and, as it bears thee, resist not, though it may seem for a time to sweep thee along to the

deep abysses of destruction. There is an arm to save thee when thine own is nerveless—there is an eye to guide thee when the cloud obscures thine own. What were the aim of man—his petty hopes and frail endeavours, if this were not the case? What achievement could he accomplish by his own unassisted strength of mind or body, of courage or of conduct? None. His toils were those of one who strove to impel his barge against the driving winds, and craved of the waters to forbear his riven planks. The path is shaped for thee and for all, my son, and thou mightest as well refuse to take the fortune that is assigned thee, as I to forbear that toil in thy behalf which is not less grateful to my heart because I feel it to be allotted to my destiny.”

“And doth the same star move our fortunes, my father?” demanded Vasco Nunez, curious to hear more upon a subject upon which his companion had never been explicit.

“Another, yet the same! The star which governs the fate of Micer Codro follows in the path of thine, though at a long distance; and thus will it, until—”

The old man paused, leaving the sentence unfinished. His features became agitated—his lip quivered, and an unbidden tear started into his eye.

“Until when—until what?” was the inquiry of Vasco Nunez, who was curious to learn the cause of his emotion.

“Until we separate, my son.”

“But wherefore should we separate, my father,” said the warrior kindly—“there is no reason for it—there could never be strife between us.”

“Never!” was the deep response.

“Then wherefore separate?” said Vasco, repeating the question—“I would not have it so; though in truth my connexion with thee hath brought thee nothing but evil.”

“It is the fate, my son—there is no other reason. But let this concern neither of us now. There will be a time for our grief at parting in its own hour. Man never wants a time for grief. Let this console us, that before that hour shall arrive, the southern sea, on which your bright eye looks with its golden fires, will lie at thy feet, and its waters, trembling and hiding among its reeds, shall murmur thy triumph to thy own ears. Not till then shall we separate, and, after that, what should either of us care to know?”

"Yet thou dost know, Micer Codro."

"Ay! I know my fate, my son—but of thine I am yet ignorant. Did I not tell thee that thy peril came from a woman—this is all I know."

"A woman! It may be so—thou hast often dwelt upon this theme, and yet my ears give thee little heed. My heart feels not the truth of thy predictions. How should it. Since the beginning of my manhood I have found my joys in woman only. She has been my sunshine when the day was dark—a star to my eyes when my own star was under a heavy cloud. Wounded and weak, she has nursed and comforted me; and I have no thought of her, no memory that is not grateful and soothing. Even at this moment, when I feel most ready to yield the strife to fate and forego the struggle after greatness, she has brought me the first gleam of hope—the first tidings of encouragement."

"What mean you, my son? can it be—has Teresa—"

"Teresa,—no! Yet, even there, my heart tells me I shall meet with hope. I have had a woman comforter already, and yet not Teresa. The poor Indian mother, Buru, whose son was slain by Garabito—she has been with me within the hour, and see what she has brought me."

"Gold,—guanin,—these are large bits, and of value, my son."

"The pagan has a soul of gratitude. She would give me all. Yes! she told me of more, and promised, with her sister, to bring me stores of it from the mountain where she dwells, in which she tells me she has yet greater quantities."

"And thou wilt go and seek her out, my son? This is truly a bounty of God. Said I not that thy star promised thee every thing. Adonai, the powerful! thy name be praised!"

"Ay, Micer Codro, but thou saidst also that the woman should be my fate—my danger! What sayst thou now?"

"Truly, I say not less now, Vasco—such is the written word. I do not say that woman shall not help thee, nor console thee, nor bring thee treasure. I say only that she will bring thee sorrow if not shame. But that is only the better reason why thou shouldst take the good which

she also provides thee. Why wilt thou not seek the spot which she has named to thee."

"And take from the poor savage the treasure which she has hidden, and which may buy her the favour of a stern master. No! No! Let the miserable woman keep her gold—it will serve her—it will yield but little help to me."

"Saints and angels, Vasco Nunez, but thou growest wilful," cried the astrologer with something more of impatience in his speech than he had ever before suffered to appear in his intercourse with his companion. "What! wilt thou refuse the help which comes to thee at the moment of thy greatest need, as if it were a boon from the blessed Virgin herself. Why, my son, thou forgettest—this help may restore thee, perchance—may rebuild and refit thy shattered barque; and, by its timely succour, with a prompt action, thou mayst yet get the start of these thy rivale, and with the better skill which thou hast over Ojeda and Nicuesa, and thy equal valour, find out the Southern Sea, and conquer its shores, ere their impatient eyes will gaze upon it. There are ships at Cuba vacant to be bought, and thou art not unfavoured by Diego Colon—let us seek the woman and take the gold which thou canst repay her at another season. It will be of little use to her, since, if she but shows it in sight of the greedy master whom she serves, it were a lost treasure for ever. Take her guanin, and cross to Cubanacan, where thou wilt find, perchance, some goodly vessel ready for the sea. Shut not thine eyes to that good fortune which speaks so truly the promise of thy star."

"Let the stars that promise provide, Micer Codro," replied the cavalier peremptorily to the earnest exhortations of the old man—"I will not take this money of the woman; but I will see Teresa, my father—I will now, in the hour of my desperation, speak that love which my heart had not courage to avow when my fortune looked triumphant. I can now speak to her with lips that shall not falter. Thou hast warned me that she loved me not—that she—thou hast even hinted, and I have forgiven it thee—that she was one of a base and selfish nature that lived only for its own worldly desires and small vanities. Thou hast done her a wrong, methinks, and I will show it thee. She shall know me as one utterly destitute, and as it would

seem, unloved of fortune. Her faith and thine, and it may be said that of Santo Domingo, also, has been far otherwise! I will inform her truly of my poverty, and teach her, farther, that I have come to esteem myself as one on whom the fates frown with a special hostility."

"And canst thou believe thus, Vasco?" demanded the astrologer—"Have I not told thee?"

"Ay, my father, though thy every word said otherwise! Can I else than think so? Hath not this been my fortune from the very hour of my birth? My childhood was destitute, hopeless, unfriended."

"Yet thou didst not perish!"

"No! nor would the cuffed dog, though he lived only on the blows that helped him to an appetite which they did not satisfy."

"Thou hast grown strong under them—thou hast even grown famous."

"Thou shalt count the value of this fame in maravedies, when thou wouldst take a loan upon my name from any notary in Española."

"Yet, though, in the narrow selfishness of their hearts, they deny thee their money—let them speak of valiant achievement or gallant deed to be done, and their eyes turn upon Vasco Nunez, and their lips say—this is the man."

"I will read to thee the meaning of that which in thy ear sounds like applause. It runs thus: There is danger at hand—there is a fool among us, who counts his own life as little, having little to live for. He hath a passion for blows, and a passion scarcely less strong for the idle words of praise. We will give him these soothing words, and he will seek our enemy and take those blows, which would else fall upon our cheeks. We have but to say, this is our dog—a fine dog, a famous dog—the best dog in the world at fighting;—and the blind fool becomes so! Read I not their meaning aright, Micer Codro? Is not this the measure of my fame, and will it yield me a maravedi in Santo Domingo?"

"Thou art chafed, Vasco, my son! thou chafest because the Spaniard lends thee not, and yet thou refuseth the money which the infidel woman gives. Wilt thou not seek the woman?"

"Teresa, only! I will seek her."

"I would I might persuade thee otherwisse, Vasco."

"Thou canst not—it were breath wasted, Micer Codro. I hope not that Teresa will wed me—I have scarcely a clear thought upon it; and yet—yet, my father, I trust me she will prove thee guilty of a false and cruel judgment."

"Amen! may it be so, Vasco: thou wilt see—we shall both see—I will do her no more wrong by farther conjecture; and I will pray earnestly that the step thou takest shall be ever a nearer one to thy favouring fortune. I will but implore thee not to seek Teresa until I have returned from a brief absence?"

"What! Dost thou leave Santo Domingo—now—now that I am wretched?" was the answer of the querulous warrior whom every thing at this moment seemed to annoy.

"It must be so, my son; yet I leave thee not. In spirit and in action I am still with thee. I will be absent from thee but a single day. Wilt thou promise me not to seek Teresa until I return? Say, the night following the morrow?"

The warrior laid his hand in that of the astrologer, and the latter, as if impatient for the prosecution of some new purpose just then risen in his mind, hurried away from the spot, leaving his companion still to muse over his vicissitude of fortune, and meditate the various doubts and hopes of its restoration.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CONSPIRACY—THE MATADOR.

THE astrologer, who knew the place of labour assigned to the tribe to which the woman Burru belonged, had conceived the determination of following her to the mountains in order to secure for Vasco Nunez the proffered liberality which he had so unscrupulously rejected at her hands. He reasoned with more coolness and less of youthful feeling on this subject than the cavalier. With this gold in quantity, he well knew that it could avail the Indians nothing, since the only persons to whom the ore was of value, were those who would seize it, on exposure, from their possession, as a proper spoil, without offering any equivalent, and probably bestowing upon them additional blows for the concealment which kept it from their grasp so long. To the adventurous Vasco Nunez, however, it was every thing, and the old man judged from the samples which the woman had already given that she had in store sufficient resources to enable him to cross to Cuba, and provide himself with a new equipment. He regarded the circumstance as only one of the many modes by which the destinies who had spoken through the star of Vasco Nunez would fulfil all their promises; and exulting with this quickening fancy, he set off on his journey without the delay of an hour after his separation from his friend. With singular powers of body for one whose years were those of ordinary man's decay, he possessed a courage no less singular—a courage which is, perhaps, the almost invariable result of a faith such as Micer Codro really entertained. Hardy and elastic, the length of the way was not a thought with him at starting, nor did the darkness or the danger discourage him with their obtrusive suggestions of fear.

He had already departed on his journey when the Cavalier—who did not conjecture his object—returned to the bohio.

Let us now repair to Garabito. Maddened and humbled equally by the defeat and consequent degradation to which the superior skill of Vasco Nunez had subjected him, we have seen him making his way for the hills, where he sought the country house of one Joseph de Ribiero, the chief of an *encomienda*, who dwelt among the mountains about two leagues from the city. Ribiero was a man after his own heart—a man well calculated to feel his degradation with him, and, if need be, to help him in avenging it. But their consultation produced no definite determination until they were joined at night by the bachelor, Hernando de Enciso. He brought them the first intelligence of the loss which their common enemy had sustained by reason of the hurricane, the wing of which had passed lightly over the region in which the *encomienda* lay. The misfortune of Vasco Nunez, while it rejoiced the mean spirit of Garabito, tended in no degree to moderate his hostility. His heart was set upon revenge, and nothing short of the blood of his foe, drawn in fatal sluices from his heart, could satisfy his hatred. But there was still some difficulty in his way ere he could procure this satisfaction. The blood of the timid Haytien, or the humbled Indian, might be much more easily drawn than that of the proud and fighting Spaniard; and the difficulty was increased when the destined victim was one like Vasco Nunez. What mode of vengeance was he to employ against a man who had already foiled his weapon with such superior ease, and whose exquisite swordsmanship was so universally acknowledged by the best masters of fence in Santo Domingo? This was a difficulty which they all felt equally, and for which, it was equally evident to all, that there was but a single remedy—and that—assassination! Yet, though this thought pervaded the mind of the three conspirators with equal strength, they had neither of them acquired sufficient hardihood in the more audacious character of the villain, nor had they yet arrived at that degree of confidence in each other, to declare their sentiments at first with open boldness; and it was only after the discussion of a dozen expedients—expedients of which none of them thought seriously even while they made them—that En-

ciso, having probed more keenly into their souls than they had yet done themselves, ventured to declare himself :

“ Señores, you will talk here all night and be no nearer than before to your business. Let me give you my conclusion now. Obando will do nothing for us, till blood be drawn. Had you suffered Vasco Nunez to puncture you in the arm or side, you had had your revenge ere this. Now, there is but one way—you must get a matador to your help, and do the business without witnesses. There is a fellow here, one Lope Ortoba who hath been employed in these offices before. For twenty pesos you engage his soul, and for five pieces more, you have what is of more value, his arm. He will strike for you, but you must see him do it. He requires that you should look on and point out the victim, else he will do nothing. He is a bold fellow and strong enough, single handed, to hold his ground with any wrestler in San Domingo ; but he hath no skill with his weapon, and what he does he must do without word or warning. Take this man, and get in waiting for Vasco Nunez. Ortado knows well enough how to hide himself for this purpose, and you can be nigh to help with a lunge or a stroke should the struggle be a close one, which it is scarce like to be if the matador do not bungle. What better would you have than this ? I can advise no better !”

In the secret minds of the two the plan of Enciso met with their ready concurrence, but the same pretence of virtue, arising from the natural caution of imbecility, which had kept them before from suggesting this remedy, now prompted them to a hesitating and feeble opposition to the scheme. But the cunning lawyer knew his men, and long accustomed to the study of the human brute, he had already divined the true thoughts of the two before him. He knew that their objections were no less insincere than he esteemed them untenable. Assured, therefore, that they would dismiss them in the end, he forebore pressing his views, and with a composure which took something of the air of indifference, proceeded thus :

“ As you please, Señor Garabito—the business is entirely your own. It must be for you, therefore, to say what will be your course of justice. It is your concern only, not mine. Yet, truth to speak, I am at my wit's end. I see not what you will do. You cannot meet Vasco Nu-

nez with the sword—that is idle. You are a good swordsman, but he is something more; and he has strength, with his slight, which is superior to thine, mine, and Ribiero's. You were but a dead man to cross with him a second time, and such measure I advise not."

The thoughts of Ribiero soon became those of Enciso, while Garabito, still unassured, or rather undetermined, paced the apartment in gloomy and speechless incertitude. Enciso put his hand upon his shoulder and arrested his progress.

"You are but trifling with your honour, Garabito, not to say, your safety. There is no choice before you. Nobody in Española looks to see you meet Vasco Nunez on equal terms—yet they all expect that you should avenge your wrong. You must wash out your dishonour in his blood. There is no help—nor should you desire to avoid it."

"Nor do I," exclaimed the other ferociously. "It is his blood only that I seek. Show me the way to strike him, give me but to know, and I will risk all peril, I care not of what kind, to procure me the vengeance which I seek. Do this, Ribiero—Enciso—and I will call you friends indeed."

"But have we not done so?" replied Enciso. "Following my counsel, you cannot fail. The deed is soon done, and the stain washed out."

"What I by this murderer, Ortado," replied Garabito with a shuddering sensation which must not be ascribed to reluctance so much as fear.

"Ay, the matador, who is always a respectable person when employed by men of honour. He is the agent of their honour, and necessary to it, when, in such cases as yours, a strong man and skilful swordsman presumes upon his superiority to inflict disgrace and injury. In such cases, there is no dishonour in employing such agents as will bring you the desired equality. As well might it be counted dishonourable and cowardly, that the Spaniards, numbering but few men opposed to the savages, should employ the arts of Spanish warfare and clothe themselves in escaupil, to protect them from their numerous arrows. You must dismiss these idle scruples, Garabito, if you meditate this revenge, for, in truth, it were as vain for you to cross weapon with Balboa as with the Cid Campeador

himself. If you really seek revenge for this wrong, your help is in Ortado."

"If I really seek revenge!" exclaimed the still indecisive Garabito.

"Ay!" retorted the other, "and truly, Señor Garabito, for a man who hath suffered a wrong so grievous, methinks you are mighty slow in urging your resentment."

"I would be certain only—I hesitate but that I may do nothing idly and with ineffectual purpose. I would see all my movements, and note every step heedfully that I may not miss my blow when I strike. That is all my cause of thought—it is not that I lack resolve, for I have sworn by the holy mother of God that Vasco Nunez shall die."

"A good resolution, and one, let me tell you, Garabito, that is most necessary to your station in Santo Domingo. The people look for it, and even the monkish and the drivelling, though they might blame thee for shedding blood, yet, if thou didst not, would cry aloud, 'that is he who lay under the feet of Vasco Nunez and offered no resistance.'"

"They shall not say this, Enciso."

"They will if thou dost not take thy redress. Can any thing be more easy? Thou hast only to place thyself and Ortado among the palm trees by the cottage of the Señora Teresa. She loves him, it is said—"

"It is said falsely!" cried the other, whose vanity was in arms at this suggestion.

"I know not that," said Enciso, who very well knew how to provoke his frown. "I know not that, and I believe it not, Garabito; and had you seen the two as this day I beheld them in the Plaza!—hadst thou seen the fiery eyes of Vasco Nunez, and the confident glance which he gave her!—hadst thou, again, beheld the free smile which she returned him, and seen how she hung upon his arm!—besides, they do say, it was his arm that saved her from the hurricane!"

"Would it had blasted both!" was the fierce exclamation of Garabito. "Hell's curse be upon them, Hernando, if this be true. But it is not true—it cannot be as thou sayest. It was only this morning that I spoke with Teresa. I came from her when I encountered with the woman, and drew this quarrel upon me by the provocation of

the accursed boy—and I tell thee, Enciso, that Teresa Davila spoke slightly of Vasco Nunez, and I could not mistake the sneer of her lips when his name was spoken. I well recollect her question—“Was he not fencing-master at Xeres de los Caballeros, and what should make him thus great in Santo Domingo?” Said she thus, and could she favour him as thou thinkest?”

“If she said thus, she did Vasco Nunez wrong. He is, it is true, a native of Xeres de los Caballeros, but he is of noble family, and brought up as page to Don Pedro, Lord of Moguer. He is master of fence, but yet no fencing-master.”

“Thou seemst to favour him in thy speech, Hernando,” was the petulant reply of Garabito.

“I do, and I counsel thee to slay him,” said the other with composure. “I so far favour him that I would give him the distinction of dying at thy hands, or under thy direction. Trust not the sneer or the speech of Teresa Davila—she is but a woman like the rest, and she will lip, like a wanton, the very man whom she seems least of all to favour. This is but one of the thousand arts among the sex. Thou shouldst be wise by this time beyond such deception. She will laugh at thy credulity, as, shouldst thou let this matter rest, will all Santo Domingo scorn thy cowardice.”

“It shall not rest!” said the other hoarsely. “I do but seek the means to make my vengeance certain.”

“And I give thee these means. What should hinder. Take thy fellows with thee at midnight, or take Oriado, who is far better for business of this sort than any of thy fellows—and when he leaves the bohio of Teresa deal with him at a blow. For, I tell thee, Garabito, sneer as she may, he seeks her nightly; and she yields him strains of love from her guitar, and sits with him beneath the banyan in the starlight; and their mutual voices melt into murmurs, so that no ear but their own shall make out their language, though, to all men, the meaning of such speech should be clear enough. Nay, I will not swear that his arm clips not her waist when the murmur needs to be enforced by a proper action.”

“I will stab him in her arms!” was the choking speech of the auditor, whom the words of Enciso, intended for this purpose, had almost goaded into madness—“I will stab them both.”

"Nay, nay! that were too much. But thou mayst stab him—thou must, or lose the favour—nay, lose the very countenance of every man in Santo Domingo. Thou shalt lie in wait for him as he comes from his mistress warm from her arms—perchance with her kiss yet warm upon his lips."

"No more—thou maddest me, Enciso. Thou hast a trick of the fiend in thy speech, methinks, which gives thee a strange power upon me. I will do it as thou sayst. I will slay him with her kiss upon his lips; I will show no mercy—none. And for Teresa—"

"Be not angry with her."

"What! not angry with her, when she deceives me?"

"Hath she deceived thee, Garabito?"

"Nay, I may not say that! There have been no words of love between us; but there have been shows of regard, and she hath seemed to incline to me while she spoke slightly of Vasco Nunez."

"Thou art young yet, Garabito! Thou shalt forgive Teresa, and count not these shows of love against her. For a woman she is well enough. It is the vice of the sex which vexes thee, and not of the person. Thou wilt have no occasion for complaint when thou hast slain thy enemy. Teresa Davila, if I rightly know her, is too wise a damsel to think for an instant of a dead lover who is of little use, when there are so many living ones to be had. I warrant thee against all such folly on the part of Teresa."

The treachery was resolved upon, and the farther conversation of the conspirators was devoted to the mode which should be adopted, for the more effectual prosecution of his crime. The suggestion of Enciso, which counselled the assassin to perform the deed when his victim was leaving the dwelling of the damsel, was congenial to the jealous rage of Garabito. Enciso gratified his own mean hostility to his noble enemy, by thus moving Garabito. His soul festered within him at the unmeasured and unmitigated scorn which Vasco Nunez had never forborne to bestow upon himself.

"And thou tell'st me that this fellow, Ortado, is even now within thy encomienda?" demanded Garabito.

The person addressed summoned a servant, to whom in few words he gave his commands. Within an hour the matador was in attendance—a broad-shouldered, bull-necked,

round-headed person, with black bushy brows, a thick unattail shock of hair, small keen dark eyes, that looked only through half-opened lids, a mouth large and thick-lipped, and limbs short, well and closely set, indicative alike of strength and activity. A prevailing sluggishness, however, seemed to hang upon and to impede his movements, and the half-doubting Garabito, who now looked upon the assassin for the first time, found it difficult to believe that one so seemingly apathetic should even venture upon a work requiring readiness and activity, or if he did, to believe that he could possibly succeed in its execution.

"Is this the man, Enciso?" demanded Garabito. Before the person addressed could answer, the matador spoke.

"Ah, ha! Señor Hernando, is it thou? Well, I have ever been glad to serve thee, and will write deep letters for you now. There is game somewhere, señor, but whose mark goes upon it? I must know for whom I kill."

"I thank thee, Lope," replied Enciso—"I have no use for thee at this moment myself, but I have counselled my friend, the Señor Garabito, to crave help at thy hands. There is game of his upon which thy mark must be set. He will give thee the '*conscience money*'—then tell thee where the game lies."

"Thirty pesos, señor, for conscience, and ten for the blood," exclaimed the assassin, turning to Garabito and extending his hand for that retaining fee in murder, which, as it was supposed to bind the faith of the professional murderer, was called the '*conscience money*'—the second sum named was the reward of the actual stroke of death.

"Thou hast raised thy prices, Lope," said Enciso.

"Not to thee, señor—I am ready to serve thee as before; but the Señor Garabito is a young beginner and must pay for his inexperience. Shall I go with thee aside, señor, and hear of thee thy business?"

"Nay, it needs not," answered Garabito, giving him the fee as he spoke—"these are all my friends, and know my whole purpose."

"That as thou wilt, señor," replied the assassin, "but ours is a business in which there are few friends; and there is no need that one should have knowledge of the business upon which he is not bold to go. But that I also have knowledge of the Señor Ribiero, and the bachelor, enough to make me easy that they should know our purpose, I

were very loth to take thy game in hand. The success of the matador is from his secrecy, and a false friend might betray him to the knife of that enemy, for whom he has his own in waiting. But the Señor Lope is my friend, and so is the bachelor, and if they only know thy business and none else, I am ready. Who is it that lives too long for the Señor's happiness?"

"Vasco Nunez de Balboa?"

"Ha! Vasco Nunez! When does the Senor Garabito command that he shall cease to live."

"Thou hast two days to slay him."

"Enough, Señor, I will make up the accounts with thy debtor and he shall pay forfeit. Thou wilt be with me, and see the business."

"Canst thou not do it without witness?" demanded Garabito with an emotion which he could not altogether conceal.

"I can, but will not," responded the fellow bluntly—"I have never done otherwise, and see no reason to depart from wholesome practice. The Señor cannot fear to look on what he is not afraid to command and what I am not afraid to execute."

"It is not fear!" replied Garabito quickly, and his contradiction alone would have furnished sufficient occasion to justify a doubt of its truth.

"Thy shame is the same thing with thy fear, Señor. I take no labour which my employer must not look upon when it is done. Thou shalt not say that I botched thy business when it is over, and it is part of my engagement, which I hold due to my conscience, that my employer do not seem to disapprove, by his absence, the thing that I do for him."

"He will be with thee, Lope," said Enciso—"it was only a doubtful point of honour in the mind of Señor Garabito, whether he should look on and withhold his own hands from the business."

"On that head let me assure the Señor," replied the matador with perfect confidence—"the point of honour is that he should withhold his hand unless I ask his aid, else would the business be none of mine, and I would be receiving his wages without executing his work—a thing utterly against my conscience. Has the Señor a desire that his enemy should die in one or more strokes. A ten-

der conscience sometimes prefers that the victim should first be disabled and permitted a prayer or two before he receives the stroke of mercy."

"No prayers—no time—no mercy!" replied Garabito, "and if thou canst slay him with a single stroke, then, in God's name, let it be done."

"It is done!" replied the matador, and they proceeded to make those minor arrangements for the execution of their bloody purposes, which, at this time, we need pursue no farther. Enough, that they laid their plans to their own satisfaction, and the result was that another day only was allotted to the life of Vasco Nunez.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE REBEL IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THE consultation of the conspirators terminated in their resort to the wine flagon, and their debauch lasted the better part of the night. Garabito, to the surprise of his attendants, who had formed their plans for capturing the rebellious chief Caonabo with a reference to the habits of indulgence of their master on such occasions, continued tolerably sober through the night, and gave them no opportunity of leaving him for their contemplated expedition. The reader will remember their conference on this subject. The outlawed cassique, whom it was their purpose to entrap, was a man no less wary than valorous. He was a Carib by birth, and, with all the inflexible valour of his people, he contrived to infuse a sufficient portion of it into the bosoms of his subjects of Maguana—the territory over which he ruled in the Island of Hayti when the Spaniards first appeared—to enable them for a long while to make head against their invaders, to baffle them in frequent enterprises and conflicts, and, though defeated and destroyed at last, to protract the period of their independence long after the rest of the island had been subjected to their inhuman invaders. His followers were either annihilated or in chains, his wife was a captive and a labourer; and his son, as we have seen, the victim of a most wanton cruelty; but the chief, himself, had baffled all the arts if not the arms of the Spaniard, and now wandered under the doom of outlawry, a convict, but still free! The price which had been set upon his head had tempted many in his pursuit, but he escaped all their arts, and, sometimes, even hurled death in a Parthian arrow, among his most forward pursuers. If it be asked why his wife had not shared the

flight of her husband with the young boy, whose timeless fate has occupied so much of our story, it may be sufficient to revert to the perilous and midnight wanderings which Caonabo was compelled to take in his flight from his enemies—of the difficulties of his own escape from a tyranny which hunted him with bloodhounds, and scrupled at no crime, no artifice, in the completion of its cruel conquests. The bald chances for escape of a warrior like Caonabo, who was strong of limb, swift of foot, fearless of heart and subtle in contrivance, opposed to such a systematic and superior power as that of the Spaniard, would have been utterly lost had he been encumbered with the care of the feeble woman and still feebler child. Their presence in the moment of danger would have served only to baffle his own speed and bring him more completely within the power of his foe; and, however much the proud spirit of the Carib might chafe within him at the necessity of leaving them behind him, he preferred to endure his own privations patiently, and to shut his eyes to the daily degradation and cruelty to which they were subjected in the encomienda of the Spaniard, rather than expose to certain ruin and the most inhuman death, both them and himself, by taking them with him in a premature flight. Little did the noble savage dream that the tender age of his child would be inadequate to the protection of his life from the brutal and bloody nature of that tyranny from which he himself fled in safety, but in fear.

But he had made his preparations for their final flight, not less than his own, and the hour was approaching fast when it was his hope to rescue them from bondage. With that passion of unrestraint—it might not be safe to describe it as a love of liberty, which implies a fine moral sense and a just regard to those duties which the desultory Indian never did perform—he had resolved rather to fly to the homes of other and unknown savages, than abide in his own, subject to the monstrous tyranny which now pervaded it. With this resolution he had wandered to the rocky parts of the seashore of Santo Domingo, over paths almost inaccessible to the Spaniard. Here, with his instruments of stone, he had contrived with great, and unwearying assiduity, to cut down a gigantic tree, one of the spongy kind called the Jaruma, which he proceeded to hollow out in the shape of a canoe. Oars he

made of harder wood, and by gradual and scarcely perceptible degrees, he had provided supplies of mandioc, maize, and water, in order to sustain himself and companion in the perilous voyage which he proposed to undertake in pursuit of his wild liberty in foreign lands. These arrangements were completed, and launching his boat from the crevice among the rocks in which his labour for many tedious weeks had been patiently carried on, he at length beheld it glide into the deep water, with a rapture only to be guessed by those who, for the first time, realize an achievement on which, while hope has doubted, the heart has been set with a resolute enthusiasm that seemed to declare it a portion of the very life of the labourer. Linger- ing for a moment upon the rock to which he had fastened the green wythes that secured it, his eye was stretched across the waste of waters in his gaze, as if to penetrate the distant worlds in which he had resolved to pierce—his soul seemed to freshen with the breeze that blew from the ocean, and flattering himself with a trust that has proved illusory to all his race, he stretched his hands in rapture towards the dim regions upon which he strove to look, as if the security was already found for which he was prepared to perish. He little dream- ed of the new trial which awaited him.

Night set in—the day of storm was over—the last hurri- cane had passed—and the mountains, for the first time in many months, seemed entirely free from the dim vapours that had covered them. The starlight guided the steps of the rebel as, springing from crag to crag, and over cleft and chasm, with a fearlessness that came from habit, he ascended from the shore to the hills which lined it, and proceeded on his way to the habitation of his wife and child. His were the past hopes of one about, as it were, to begin his life and fortune anew. He felt the utter hope- lessness of striving against the Spaniard, whose superior arms, science, and habitual warfare, rendered it obvious enough even to the most fervent patriotism that nothing could be done by a people feeble like the Haytiens, in op- position to their power. Yet this had not been left unat- tempted by the hero. He had headed no less than three several insurrections; more than once had his efforts been attended by partial success, and with the support of men not utterly enfeebled by inaction and the seductive

apathies that follow a life only spent in peace, such a chief as Caonabo might have prolonged the war for an indefinite period, even if he had not brought it to a successful termination. There were hundreds of fastnesses among the mountains of Hispaniola, which the feet of the invaders had never yet explored, and into the recesses of which, no opponent could be found sufficiently courageous to follow a fearless band who valued liberty more than life. But the warrior had no hope that looked to his own people. Yet he was not utterly without hope of vengeance, at least for the wrongs which they had suffered. In flying from Santo Domingo, he did not propose to fly from the Spaniard. He well knew that go where he would, their rapacious appetites would follow him. His comprehensive mind readily saw that, like the swarming locusts whom sterility at home has driven into foreign regions, and who must make the devastation which they fly from in all places to which they come, they would overspread the vast surface of the new country. His purpose was to meet them on fresh ground, and with new opponents. The Charaibeas, his own people, the fiercest of all the tribes of the new world, and the perpetual terror of the Haytien, offered to the sagacious Caonabo the material for bold resistance. To throw himself into their country, to guide their battles, or to follow efficient warriors in their conflict with the pale invaders, was the pregnant feeling of his soul. But this feeling was the secret of his own mind. The wife of his bosom, the beloved Buru, knew nothing of his purpose, except that he was to bear herself and boy to a shore of peace, where the Spaniard brought neither scourge nor shackle, and where the fruits planted by nature, and growing to their hands, were not denied to their enjoyment. Miserable woman! what were all these hopes, as she gazed upon the bloody spectacle before her,—the headless child who lay on the straw matting in her hovel! What cared she in that moment for flight, what fear had she then of servitude, what desire for that liberty, which, only the day before, appeared to be the blessing beyond all beside,—the boon dearer than life, and love, and youth—dearer than her own dreams of happiness in that hour of her morning when she first grew to the bosom of the chief and yielded him the young pledge of her true affection whom the tyrant had so mer-

cilessly slain. She had but one fear as she gazed upon the bloody spectacle,—she feared the presence of her husband!

The hour for his coming was at hand, and she went forth to meet him at an appointed spot. The moon, round and transparent, was rising brightly above the brown mountains, and the pale light lay like trembling water along their edges. She saw not the light that helped her progress as she stole from the valley in which stood the bohios of her tribe,—the little leafy mansions lay scattered like green dots of verdure in the distance, their miserable occupants either moaning over their condition of pain, or sunk in that sleep of the animal, which is produced in spite of pain, by exhaustion. Her own wigwam, as she looked backward, was within sight, and, though she did not see, she well knew what was its terrible possession. The image of her murdered child gleamed upon her fancy as she gazed, and covering her eyes with her hands, she hastened up the hill, and stood hidden among the slanted firs that crowned its summits. To her ears came the hoarse murmur of the ocean. The rocks seemed to vibrate and tremble under its chafing waters. She hearkened for a brief space, yet heard no other sound. But she remained not long a watcher. Detaching a small rock from the spot on which she stood, she whirled it with a practised hand over the precipice beyond, and a few seconds gave her back the token of its fall, seemingly, by the plashing sound which followed, into some deep lake or water-course below: A whistle reached her ears a moment after, and she advanced in the direction whence it came. The signal was followed by the appearance of a man on a projecting crag beneath, whose voice a moment after proved him to be her husband.

“Buru!” said the rebel, with a gentle utterance.

“Caonabo!” was the answer of the woman, but her lips faltered, and her heart grew faint, to speak only the single word. Well did she know what would be the next speech of the chief.

“The boy, Buru—Zemi!—where is he?”

To this there was no answer. The woman advanced a pace in silence, then remained stationary, and Caonabo drew nigh, and put his arm upon her shoulder.

“It is done, Buru!” he said in his own language, and

with that air of exultation and triumph which the success of his labour was so well calculated to inspire.

"The canoe is ready, and this very night frees us from the tyranny of the accursed Spaniard. Where is the boy—where is Zemi? He should be with thee, Buru. We should be even now upon the waters, sailing for the blue islands of the Charaibee. Go, bid him waken—bring him forth from the bohio, and cumber not thyself with any thing beside. I have provided the maize and manoca already, and there is little time for loss. Every instant of delay under the scourge of these bloody tyrants is a pang to the free spirit. Go—bring the boy—I will await thee here."

But the woman was motionless, and for the first time the chief beheld the tear that glistened in her eyes, and noted the speechless agony in her face. With a new anxiety he repeated his demand; clutching her wrist with a sudden grasp as he did so.

"Where is he—Zemi—the boy?"

"The boy!—the boy! Caonabo, is it the boy?" Such was the unmeaning and unconscious answer of the wretched woman.

"Ay, Buru, the boy! Hear you not!—know you not? Zemi, our boy! You should have brought him. Is he not here!—is he not in the bohio!—He should be. Go, then and bring him forth—bring nothing beside, I tell thee—leave the accursed guanin in the earth. Zemi only,—away! while I await ye upon the crag."

"Alas! for me—for the poor Buru—Caonabo—father—chief! Be pitiful! be merciful!—curse me not with thy tongue!—spurn me not with thy feet! I am but a woman under thee, but I love thee, and I would live."

She sank upon the ground as she spoke; she clung to his knees—she buried her lips in the earth beneath his feet, and grovelled before him, as he receded from her in astonishment.

"Spurn thee!—Curse thee, Buru! When has Caonabo done thee this wrong, that thou speakest thus strangely in his ears! Wherefore shouldst thou fear the anger of Caonabo! What hast thou done, woman!—Speak!—What of the boy!—what of Zemi, the son of Caonabo?"

"Thou wilt slay me—the poor Buru,—thou wilt strike!" she muttered as she lay.

The voice of the chief grew hoarse—the tones thick and husky—it trembled—his whole frame trembled.

“I fear me, Buru—I have great fear—harm has come to the boy!—What harm—where is he? Why hast thou left him behind? Lives he, woman!—Speak!”

“Alas! alas! ask me not, Caonabo, but kill me.”

“The Spaniard!—Ha!—The Spaniard! Wilt thou not speak, Buru? What harm has happened to the boy?”

“Alas, alas!” was her only answer, as crawling to his receding feet, she buried her face in the earth between them, while her arms clasped his legs.

“I will curse thee, woman—I will slay thee, of a truth, if thou speakest not. Thy fear comes like the arrow of the Charaabee into the heart of the chief. Speak, woman! What of the boy? Went he forth with thee to-day to the city of bohios—didst thou not take him with thee to the big canoes of the Spaniard?”

“It was thy word, Caonabo, that I should not leave the boy when I went forth at the bidding of the Spaniard.”

“Thou sayest truth! That was the word of Caonabo;—and thou leftest him behind thee, and the barking dog of the Spaniard has found him in the mountains!—Ha! is it this, Buru?”

“Alas! no. The boy went forth with Buru. Buru was heavy laden, for the Spaniard, Ribiero—”

“The curses of a long death be on him! What of him? He hath not scourged the boy with whips, nor put the red iron on his cheek! The boy, woman!—he hath not perished under the lash?—thou darrest not tell me that!”

“No, no! oh, no!—but—”

“Speak then! speak out!” cried the fierce chief, with something more of calmness in his tones. “If the boy has not perished beneath the lash nor the brand—if he lives—”

“Alas! alas!” Her exclamation silenced him for an instant; when he recovered himself his speech was more firm and slow.

“Buru, woman! is the son of Caonabo dead—that thou criest aloud in this manner?”

“Slay not the wife—slay not the mother, Caonabo!—Oh! master, thou hast said!”

A sudden shiver shook the frame of the strong man ; his hands covered his face which was lifted towards heaven. The woman moaned at his feet, to which she had again crawled, and which she clasped with despairing and convulsive emotion. The iron spirit of the warrior was dissolved within him ; but he uttered no word, and, save by the frozen and statue-like position which he kept, of an agony that stiffened the frame, he gave no sign of that sorrow beneath which his inmost soul was convulsed and writhing.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE LAST VOW OF THE CARIB.

"WELL! There is no son of Caonabo! there is no Zemi, and I have no loss!"

Such were the first words of the outlaw, after the fearful revelation which the mother had made him.

"And now, Buru, thou canst speak! I would know. The boy went forth with thee at morning to the bohío of the Spaniard. He fell among the rocks, perchance!—the hurricane smote him with its sudden wings!—"

He paused: there was something left unspoken:—he evidently felt that there were other sources of apprehension equally if not more serious than those indicated.

"He fell not from the rocks!—not the hurricane!" shrieked the woman; "no, no! it was the sword of the Spaniard—of the Lord Garabito!—"

"Is he lord of thine, woman, or of mine? Has the leg of Caonabo an iron around it,—is there a heavy chain upon his wrists? Shrinks the chief from the sword that slew the boy, Zemi? and shalt thou, that art the wife of Caonabo, call the Spaniard thy lord? I hear thee!—The sword of Garabito slew the son of Caonabo!—Well! I ask thee not wherefore—it was the mood of the Spaniard—he would have the boy to bring him water when he thirsts in the heaven which he slays for. May he be ready for it when the teeth of Caonabo are in his shoulder. Where lies the boy?"

"In the bohío of Buru."

"And shall the chief go to thy dwelling, woman, when the Spaniard hath put his dogs upon the track of a free warrior, and hunts him day and night to slay? Art sure that the murderer looks not for the father of the boy?—Comes he not among the hills with his bloodhounds?"

"The peace is on the hills—the peace of death is in the bohio of the woman, and our people come not forth because of her sorrow. The rocks were silent as I came. The bay of the bloodhound is not to-night. The Spaniard keeps in his city, for the hurricane hath been over his great bohio, and the big canoe——"

"No more,—I will see the boy. Let us to the bohio, Buru; I would look upon his face for the last time. We will not leave the boy to be food for the dog that barks. He shall go with us, though he knows nothing of the journey. His head shall rest in thy arms while my hand plies the oar."

"Alas! alas! The keen sword of the Spaniard smote the neck of Zemi."

"Ha! the neck, sayst thou!—Well, it matters not, neck, or head, or heart—the life is gone—there is no life in the boy, and there is no more sorrow. The sword of Garabito smote the neck, thou sayst!"

"And the head of the poor Zemi fell down among the rocks."

The outlaw stopped, pushed the woman from him to the full length of his arm, and gazed on her with looks of mingled horror and aversion. The bearer of sad tidings seems, in the moment of our suffering, very like their cause.

"Kill not the woman with thy look, Caonabo! Would not the mother have perished for the boy? Lo, you, father-chief—Buru's neck lay thus for the keen sword of the Spaniard, when his arm was raised to smite the boy."

She threw herself once more at her husband's feet in the same position which she kept at the feet of Garabito in the moment of his dreadful crime. The look which she had deprecated passed from the features of the chief as he raised her tenderly from the ground.

"No more, Buru. There is no death for thee in the hands of Caonabo! Thou hast done well, and the fault is in the chief. He should have taken the boy from thee, but that he feared pursuit, and dreaded to bring the Spaniard upon thy steps. Yet, even thou mightst have found safety in these wild places, and my arms should have borne thee among the water crags lying by the sea, where the scent of the hungry dog could not have followed thee."

"Thou couldst not, Caonabo. Thou hast not erred. The Spaniard would have overtaken and overcome thee, with the woman and the boy upon thy arm."

"That were not easy; and yet it might have been as thou sayst. But wherefore thy speech? Let us go forward to the boy. I tell thee, Buru, thou shalt bear him in thy arms until the water grows around us. Better that he should sleep in the reedy sea, than fatten the fierce hound of the Spaniard. Come!"

They proceeded together towards the cottage of the woman, and, while they went, she related, in language broken by her unsuppressed sorrows, the events of the day, and supplied those particulars in the narrative of her son's murder which her agitation had caused her to omit before. Caonabo silenced his anguish, whatever it might have been, as he listened to her story. The feelings of the man had already found all the utterance that the warrior deigned to bestow upon those sufferings, which he felt not the less because he was able so completely to restrain them. He was now the stern rebel only and self-devoted to revenge.

When they reached the top of the rock which overlooked the habitations of the tribe and from which the woman had descended on hearing the signal, they paused and prepared to advance with greater caution. The hunted Caonabo had long since felt the necessity of the utmost watchfulness and circumspection, and he now bent his straining eyes along the valley, which might be faintly scanned for a great distance beneath the soft, bright lustre of the moon. No human object was visible, no sound came up to his ears but the now faint murmur of the chafing waters of the sea beneath the freshening breeze of night. The cottages of the Indians, which dotted, at long intervals, the entire circuit of the plain, were all as silent as the grave. Their leafy roofs almost swinging in the wind, and half obscured by the shadowy gigantic trees which sometimes answered to the Haytian all the purposes of a dwelling made with hands, seemed, in the soft loveliness of that balmy atmosphere, as perfectly the abodes of innocence, as they had been assuredly the abodes of peace. Satisfied, from his narrow survey, that he might go forward in safety, Caonabo at once proceeded in the direction of his own cottage, to which as yet he

had scarcely ventured to look. It stood perched upon a little eminence, and beside the rim of a chasm, made by some throes of nature, and by which the rock seemed partially divided. The aperture was inconsiderable, and might be leapt readily by a vigorous man from side to side; but the depth was beyond the reach of plummet, and the eye vainly strained to penetrate to its bottom. It was in a spot so lonely and so high, that the proud Caonabo, the cassique of one of the most valorous of all the Haytian tribes, under the dominion of the great Behechio, who, at the landing of Columbus, was the supreme chief of the island, had made, eagle-like, his cave among the rocks, and for a long time found security from the incursions of the Spaniards. But the use of the bloodhound rendering escape more difficult, had made greater caution necessary to his safety, and he deserted his habitation when the encomienda of Ribiero, sustained by an armed force, was established among his native mountains and his people were partitioned off as slaves. Himself still free, it had been his unrelaxing toil to rescue his wife and child from the galling dominion from which he fled; and, as we have seen, his progress had been such as to enable him to make his preparations for departure on the night of the very day when the wanton sword of Garabito had deprived him of one of the beloved objects for whom his toil was taken. But this event did not lessen the necessity nor the desire of flight. He only lingered now to look but the last upon the boy, and, with one of those instincts in his heart for which the phlegmatic reasoner would in vain discover some apology which it does not need, to bear him away, unconscious as he was of all future harm, from the destroying and defiling hands of his murderer.

In silence as complete as that which prevailed over the valley, the rebel and his wife descended to her desolate habitation. Caonabo first entered, the woman following slowly behind with a grief renewed as she approached its object, and now expressing itself in quick broken sobs, which became hysterical as the corpse appeared once more before her eyes. But the father was silent in his sorrows. Drawing nigh to the bloody remains which were neatly laid out upon a sheet of bleached matting, the work of the mother's hands, he lifted one of the arms

which had been thrown out from the body, and placed it close by the side. His eyes calmly surveyed the features, which were dreadfully distorted, and then, after a pause of a few moments, he sat down beside the corpse upon the matting, and covered his eyes with his hands. The woman stretched herself upon the floor, with her face to the feet of the murdered boy, and her moaning alone disturbed the otherwise painful silence which filled the apartment. But when reflection succeeded to sorrow in the mind of Caonabo, the Carib spirit was awakened within him in all its majesty and fire.

"It becomes you to weep, Buru, for you are the mother of the boy, but it is for the father to avenge him. Keep you here till I return. I tell thee, woman, when next you look on Caonabo, the blood of Garabito shall be thick upon his hands."

"Whither go you, father—Caonabo?" she cried, seizing him by his garment, as he was about to depart.

"Away, woman, and watch thy child; this is not thy business. I go to the bohio of the Spaniard."

"He will hunt thee with his barking dog—he will slay thee with his thunder."

"I fear him not, neither his thunder nor his dog. My heart leaps and struggles within me, and calls upon me for his blood. They look not to see me among them, and sleep securely in their bohios. Sleeping or waking, I will drink the blood of Garabito, and make my hands red within his heart. Look to see me thus, Buru, when I come to thee again. The ghost of the Spaniard shall follow the son of the Charaibee to the smoky valleys of his sleep."

Thus saying, and without farther speech, the bold rebel darted from the dwelling, leaving the afflicted woman to new sorrows, arising from a natural apprehension for his safety, in the daring enterprise which he meditated of revenge.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE HOPE IN RESERVE—THRESHOLD OF EVENTS.

THE night passed away, and the conspirators were each busy with his particular design. The matador employed by Garabito, to avenge his wrongs upon Vasco Nunez, though he joined the debauch with his employer, in the *encomienda* of Ribiero, gave not greatly away to its excesses; and, before morning, he had summoned before him a trusty villain, whom he used as a spy in all such affairs as that now upon his hands. This creature was an Italian by birth; a deformed, insignificant-looking imp—crawling, silent, watchful; the quick sight in whom, would never suggest itself to one unsuspecting of mankind, who looked but passingly upon the unintelligible, dead blank of stare, that made the prevailing expression of his countenance. But there was no keener-witted or sharper-eyed villain in all San Domingo; and for years the same murderous employment which had proved profitable to the matador, Ortado, had found, in Pavini, a convenient and unscrupulous assistant. The only drawback to his value, in the estimation of Ortado, was his utter want of courage. He loved to be at the shedding of blood—he seemed to find a strange pleasure even in the strife, when it did not involve himself; but a moment of peril was with him, instinctively, the signal for flight; and the demand for help at his hands which, in some instances, Ortado had been compelled to make, had ever found him incapable of giving it. This defect, however, did not materially impair his value in the regard of the matador. "I ask him not to strike for me," was the remark of Ortado, whenever the imbecility of his assistant

was the subject—"that is my business, which I receive pay to do, and my conscience commands that I leave it to no other person; but Pavini is the eye of my dagger, and he never fails to guide it to the right place. The sabueso has no keener scent for his victim, and loves not better to snuff up the thick blood with his nostrils. It is his eye that I hire, not his arm."

The spy appeared at the desire of Enciso—who seemed to be familiar with the mode of proceeding of the matador—before the company, to receive the commands of his master.

"The Señor Garabito," said Ortado, making at the same time a motion with his head, which indicated the designated person to the eyes of his assistant, "hath need of thee, Pavini. He will give thee a token of service."

The Italian stretched forth his open hand to receive the reward, and the fee which custom had established, was put into it by the docile Garabito, to whom the bachelor proved an all-sufficient prompter.

"Thou knowest the Señor Vasco Nunez de Balboa?" demanded Ortado.

"The Knight of the Dog—that hath Leonchico?" was the answer.

"The same. Thou knowest his bohio?"

"Ay,—as I do my own."

"Away, then, and know if he be in it. If he be, take heed when he comes forth, and follow him whithersoever he goes. When thou hast lodged him, come to me at the casa of Gil Perez. Away."

"Should the dog follow his master?" demanded Pavini.

"It is well thought on; Leonchico is an enemy that should be cared for, if he come upon the ground. But this will hardly be, if Vasco Nunez seeks the Señora Teresa. He will leave him fast in the bohio."

"It may be; but—"

"Thou art at thy old fears, Pavini," interrupted the other, "with thy 'buts' and precautions. What wouldst thou further?"

"Should the dog come forth?" said the other, repeating the apprehension against which his employer had provided no remedy.

"Well, should it be as thou sayst, speed thee then to the slaughter-farm;—give him three more pesos, Señor

Garabito, that thy work be not half finished;—go to the slaughter-farm of Bolaze, on the Jayna, which is nearest to thy need, and get from him a gallon of warm blood, and as much carrion as will gorge the hound; let him scent of it from the blood, so that he may find the meat at a good distance from his master. But beware that thy hands reek not of the taint, nor thy garments, for then, of a surety, Leonchico will not go beyond thy own throat to satisfy his rage. Thou wert but a lost man to bring the beast upon thee, and good though thy heels may be, they will not carry thee where thy heart would have them. Wouldst thou more?"

"Nothing; at the casa of Gil Perez, thou sayst?"

"Ay,—what wouldst thou say?"

"Thou hast a debt to him, of which the knave speaks something freely."

"Have I not the means of payment, thou infidel! He is thy friend—tell him I have blood-money, and laugh at all his clamours; but forget not thy better business; away."

Let us at the same time leave these precious villains, and seek the cavalier in his bohio. His thoughts kept him awake all that night, and at home all the ensuing day. He had no wish to go abroad into the thoroughfare. He had now but little or no business in the market-place, and his pride revolted at the idea of meeting with the sneer of those who had so lately envied him, and the mocking pity of those whom he despised; the obtrusive sympathies of his rivals, and the suppressed but exulting spirit of triumph among his foes. The absence of the astrologer left him without any companion but his faithful dog, and he, as if conscious of his master's sufferings, crouched close at his feet, and looked up with a keen, earnest glance into his countenance, as if to ask in what way he could help to alleviate them. The cavalier well understood the mute appeal of his shaggy friend, and his heart warmed with new hopes, as he felt the unspoken fidelity of his brave companion.

"Thou at least art true, Leonchico. The man falters in his duty, and betrays his trust. The tempter wins him with gold, and he weighs the blood-drops of the heart's best affections in a light scale when set off against the yellow tribute of the mountains. The woman, on whom he leans with love, glides away from the heart which

breaks when she leaves it, and betrays the strong man, even as the harlot of Sorek, into the hands of his enemies. But thou hast never betrayed thy master, neither in peace nor in peril. Thou hast stood beside me, and gone before me, in the hour of danger; and when thou couldst not help, thou hast yet soothed my sorrow with a sorrow like my own. Ah, Leonchico, shall there be a time for us yet? Shall we have more battles—shall we win more victories together?"

The dog rose and shook his bristling mane, and gnashed his teeth, and lifted his paw to the knee of his master, as if in assurance that such a period must yet come when they should again triumph together.

"But thou shalt serve no other master, my brave friend. If the day comes of our relief, and I may command, then shalt thou partake with me my perils as before; but never again will I hire thee, whatever be my necessity, to serve in battle for the profit of another. I will not sell thy life, when I scorn to sell my own. No! no! I must be precious of thee, as of myself, for I have no other friend but thee!"

A few moments' reflection brought a feeling of self-reproach to the mind of the speaker. The manifest injustice of his soliloquy was apparent to himself.

"I do Micer Codro wrong. What friend hath been truer or kinder than he? Hath he not given me all, and, when the seas swallowed up his treasure, had he any reproaches? It were a shame and a sin to forget his love, which has not grown jealous in my prosperity, and which sinks not away in the hour of my misfortune. Even now, though I marvel much where he can wander, yet I well believe he is working in my behalf. God help him, but he hath little need. I am one of those whom the fates mark for their sport and merriment, and this mockery of my star, in which he so much trusts, I know not whether to answer in scorn or in bitterness; when he fills my ear with the idle promises which have been already baffled so long."

The reference to the astrologer necessarily reminded him of the promise which he had given him not to seek Teresa till his return, and the restraint which had been thus imposed upon him grew more and more irksome as

the day advanced, and when night came on was to be endured no longer.

“He hath said to me that she loved me not; nay, he hath striven to make her seem in mine eyes one of whose love no heart can be secure. Bright and beautiful as he confesses her to be, he yet—what shame!—esteems her heartless; as if it were in nature that such monstrous contradiction should exist—as if the blessed mother of God should suffer the venomous temper of the gay, shining and glossy snake, to fill the bosom of one so shaped after a dream of heaven, and with a face in whose beauty only, the most hopeful of heaven might find sufficient charm. It cannot be; and as for this doubt which presses upon me still, spite of my hope, that she loves me not, even as he declares,—there is no better season for assurance than this, when the storm has gone over my fortunes, and there is no temptation, or in my greatness or in my wealth, to persuade her into a yielding which she had not otherwise resolved. Now, if she loves me not, will she forbear the capricious paltering of the vain-minded woman, and deprive me of my idle hope and unprofitable dream for ever. But if she love—if the poor cavalier, strong in himself only, and his unquestioned truth, shall have won upon her secret regards, even now, at this moment of my utmost destitution, will she joy to speak, and the very poverty which I profess will make her heart only rejoice the more that she has any thing to bestow. What triumph to show this to Micer Codro when he comes—to tell him,—‘Thou hast done her wrong, and thy knowledge of the woman’s heart is no less vain and erring than that which thou hast gathered from the stars.’”

With such hopes and fancies as these, it was impossible that the cavalier should refrain from the interview in which he promised himself so much. He sallied forth, and took his way towards the bohío of the maiden; the spy, Pavini, following his footsteps to the dwelling, at a cautious distance; then, when he had seen him lodged, hastening away to his superior at the casa of Gil Perez.

“Now, Señor Garabito, thou shalt say where thy enemy shall lie to-night;” said the matador to his employer as he beheld the entrance of Pavini. “If I rightly

caught thy desire, thou wouldst have him die at a blow—thou wouldst not have him account to thee, nor speak—”

“Nay, give him not a word—a single blow, my good Ortado—deep, fatal death, at a stroke;” was the reply.

“Ah, well, that is soon over; but there are many cavaliers who engage me in branding their cattle, who have a strange pleasure to listen to their last words, their very groans, thinking them sweetest music. I glad me thou art not one of these. To my mind, such a desire hath a look of malice and bad feeling in it, which I could not love. Thou art the better gentleman as thou dealest with thy foe so that he hath little pain. It is enough for the satisfaction of one’s honour that he knife his enemy; there is a baseness to hack the goodly person with unnecessary wounds. But thou wilt dip thy finger or thy napkin in his blood?”

“Ay, the whole hand!” was the fierce reply. “His blood upon my hands only can efface the dishonour of my soul.”

“Amen!” exclaimed the matador decisively; “let us away. Thy hand to the mug, Pavini, and thine eyes may sleep when thou wilt.”

“An easier work than is thine,” responded the leering Italian, now licensed to debauch. “So, Gil Perez, bring me a flagon of thy best, and let me hear no voices. I drink best in a corner, and when no one afflicts me with speech or observation. As thou wouldst have it, Señor Garabito, and the blood soon upon thy hands.”

The matador left the casa, followed slowly by Garabito. The condition which made him a looker on, if not a partaker in the deed, was more irksome to his spirit, than altogether comported with the idea of true courage which filled the mind of Ortado. He looked behind, and muttered as he went,—

“Truly, there is nothing so noble after all, in striking a fair blow at a stout heart, when the blow is to be given for one who is neither stout of heart nor strong of hand. This Señor Garabito—but, what matter? I have his thirty pieces, and the gold is good, however base be the hand from which it comes. Diablo! the moon is almost too bright for business; I will have to blacken my dagger. Thou loiterest, Sir Caballero; and yet, if thou look before thee, the bohio, that holds thy foeman is at hand.”

The tall groves that encircled the cottage of Teresa Davila were before them, and the moon, faintly shedding her scattered drops of silver through the thick foliage of the plantain and the palm, gave them glimpses of the white dwelling itself, as it nestled close in the deepest shadow of the wood. The heart of Garabito sank within him, not with a feeling of compunction or reproach, but one of absolute fear. The very idea of contact with Vasco Nunez—with one by whom he had been so easily overcome—was productive of the keenest terror in his mind; and it was with difficulty that he could preserve the look of confidence which his pride demanded he should wear at such a time, as the matador bade him remain behind for a space, while he went forward to reconnoitre. He shrunk behind a gigantic ceiba, whose trunk would have concealed a dozen, while Ortado, stealing from shade to shade, in the direction of the bohio, soon disappeared from his sight.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## DANGERS IN THE PATH—OMENS IN THE SKY.

THE departure of Garabito with the matador, had necessarily released his men from their attendance upon him. Ortado asked for no witnesses but the one most interested, to assist and to conceal his crime. These fellows, who, as we may remember, had also their schemes of treachery, as well as their master, were free, in consequence, to put them into exercise; and filled with glowing anticipations of the vast reward which had been offered by the governor Obando, for the capture, dead or alive, of the outlawed rebel Caonabo, they commenced their journey when night had set in fairly, for the bohio of the woman, his wife, among the mountains. To prevent suspicion of their object, they took a circuitous route which somewhat delayed their progress; and plied their way with infinite labour, but equal industry and patience, up the broken piles and abrupt ledges of rock which lay between, and led them to, the abiding places of the emasculated tribe in the encomienda of Ribiero. They were both properly armed to the teeth with sword and dagger, and whatever doubts they might have had of finding the rebel cassique in the cottage of his wife, they had little or no fears of success if they did so. Confident in their own strength, and no less so in the notorious imbecility of the timid and unsinewed tribes over whom their people had triumphed with such infinite ease, they did injustice to the man whom they sought, when they assumed, presumptuously, that the daring and intractable rebel was to be overcome with the same ease with the feeble and submissive slave. The cupidity which prompted the scheme of the conspirators was also the parent of that audacity which led them upon the adventure with so small a force.

Sanchez alone had some doubts as to their capacity, but these were soon silenced by his companion.

“What!—thou fearest, Sanchez? Thou smell'st the danger, and hast a misgiving of thy own strength, joined to mine, in the encounter with Caonabo. It is too late for thee to fear, nor is there a reason for it. The outlaw is one to fight, yet not with us. He is good at bow and arrow, yet we shall give him little chance to use them, if we hold to our purpose, and shorten the strife to the close business of knife and dagger. Even if he were match for either of us singly, he were no match for both. We are all that is needful, and help that we need not would only lessen the reward, the whole of which we need. If the fight be a hard one, the reward is good. Wouldst thou have the victory easier and get nothing for it?”

“But the slaves of the encomienda,—there are some twenty-five men of this village! Should they hear the summons of Caonabo whom they love, or his cry, they would rise upon us.”

“Not they—not they! the sight of Spanish steel would send them howling to their fig trees. Were they all like the outlaw, the case were otherwise. He hath fought with D'Aguilar, and once got advantage upon him, which had been fatal, only for the timely coming in of the dog Leonchico, which belongs to the Senor Vasco Nunez. The dog had taken Caonabo himself by the throat, but that the fearless rebel leapt headlong into the sea, and disappeared among the broken rocks that fence the shore in this region. The most serious wound of Leonchico came from the arrow of this same Caonabo.”

“Would the dog were with us now,” muttered the more timid Sanchez; “there were less doubt of our success?”

“Of a truth, that were the very thing to make it doubtful. What! to tell the rebel of our coming, and leave him to flight. Truly, mi amigo, thou knowest not thy own necessity, and left to thyself, wouldst play but a sorry game, even with the help of a fool's fortune. Art thou yet to learn the plan which I have striven to make clear to thee already? Must I tell it in thy dull ears once more?”

“Nay, I know that, but it does seem to me that a third companion were not amiss. Thou hast not spoken

to the danger from the other savages,—the slaves of the encomienda. What if they come out upon us?"

"Nay, thou hast not heeded me. I have answered thee on this head more than once. I will once more inform thee, and I pray thee to give ear at this time, for the hour approaches when thou wilt need to have thy wits about thee. Pass we through this gorge upon which we are now entering, and we ascend a little hill which rises at the mouth of it above; when we shall have reached that hill, the bohios of the infidel are in sight."

"Thou knowest thy path, Pedro, I trust."

"Have no fear, I have trodden it an hundred times, when Garabito was chief lieutenant of the repartimiento, and the infidels that inhabit here have a lasting and seemly recollection of my person. All that I ask of thee is to keep a still tongue in thy head—a task which I well know is among the most difficult that I could set thee—a ready knife in thy hand, and a keen eye to counsel thee the fit moment when to use it—a labour which, I trust, is far less difficult than all the rest."

"I thank thee for so much," said the other; "of a truth, I believe that I can use dagger with the best when the strife is needful, and if my speech be something free when there is no need of better weapon, I am still in hope that it may rest when the other is wanted. But still thou sayst nothing of thy plan to keep these heathen slaves from coming out upon us. How dost thou propose to do this?"

"By going in to them. Thou wilt see that all the bohios are far apart, each under its own fig tree. We have but to seek these dwellings singly, and give warning to those within. Let them but see thy face and mine, and behold our bared weapons, and hear our commands, and there needs no more. We shall then move towards the bohio of Buru, the mother of the boy whom Garabito slew to-day and the wife of Caonabo. He will be there, I doubt not then only will our strife begin."

"But what are the commands which thou wilt give, to make these slaves keep within while we strive with Caonabo?"

"None, save only that they shall do so, on pain of death."

“ They will hear his cry,—they will give ear to his summons, rather than to thy commands.”

“ Amigo, thou knowest not the infidel of San Domingo. It were pain enough for him to rise only from his sleep, after a day of toil ; but when thou tell'st him of the peril, he sleeps the sounder. I will say to him, look on my dagger, thou shalt eat it, if thou com'st forth before morning. He likes not such food, he will see the day peep through the leaves of his banyan ere he presumes to peep out upon it.”

“ But should Caonabo be in some of the bohios which we first seek—should we meet him ?”

“ Then our strife begins, with all its difficulties, in that instant, unless it be that we discover him within, ere we show ourselves, when we must only wait his coming forth. But, he knows their cowardice, and hath fears of their treachery ; and it is my thought, that he suffers them not to know of his visits to the woman. We shall find him this night, in his own cabin, if any where;—and now keep thine eyes about thee, for the gorge opens upon the hill. Seize upon the tufts before thee, and let the bush conceal thee as thou ascendest. Do as thou seest me, and show nothing of thy person until I bid thee—the bohios are in sight.”

“ Seest thou aught, Pedro ?”

“ The dwellings of the infidels only. The slaves sleep, methinks ; but it will need that we look into each. Keep thyself within shadow, and let there be no more speech. Hast thou risen ?”

“ Behind thee—I am close. Go forward, I see as well as thou.”

“ Take then thy dagger in thy teeth, while thou crawl'st after me : it will stop thy speech—but of that we have no need. The keen steel must be our best speech until the business be ended.”

The conspirators maintained excellent watch as they advanced toward the bohios, and on the broken path before them ; but they looked not once behind, and knew not that as sharp, although not so hostile an eye, was maintained upon their own movements, as that which they kept upon the dwelling of Caonabo. The person who followed them was no other than the venerable astrologer, Micer Codro, whom we may remember as

having left his friend and companion, Vasco Nunez, on learning his rejection of the offer of the Indian woman. With that devoted zeal which he had ever manifested in behalf of the fortunes of the cavalier, from the first hour of his acquaintance with him, he resolved that, however the latter might disregard the resources of the woman, he was not to be suffered to scorn the gifts of fortune; for, in this light alone,—as an intimation of the stars—did he regard the offer of her gold which Buru had made him.

“The gold is of no use to the woman,”—so he soliloquized—“and it may retrieve his fortune—may procure him a ship from Cuba; and help him on to the pearly ocean of the south, which is even now awaiting his progress. It is but a sickly feeling of Vasco Nunez, that which makes him deny to receive the gift of the woman. It is well that I know the path to the encomienda of Ribiero—there is no danger, since the guards of the repartimiento are strong. I will go to her as the friend of Vasco, and, doubtless she will yield to me the treasure for his use which she would have bestowed upon him.”

We have seen his progress with this object. Ignorant of that of the two Spaniards before him, whom he beheld for the first time as they ascended the plain, he yet reasonably argued that it must be characteristic of those which so commonly and so brutally distinguished the greater number of the conquerors in all their intercourse with the natives. It was now the fear of the astrologer that their presence would be hostile to his success. Perhaps, they too had been apprised of the hoard of gold which the woman had proffered Vasco Nunez; and which, in the extremity of her grief, she might unconsciously have disclosed to others. This thought afflicted him. Gradually his curiosity became enlisted, as he followed the conspirators, and he pressed onward after them with a vigorous perseverance, that might not have been expected from his years. At the foot of the gorge he saw them ascend it, and he redoubled his speed, as, rising above the hill at its mouth, they suddenly disappeared from his sight, in the neighbourhood of the Indian settlement.

At that moment a mountainous mass of cloud, expanding from the smallest speck rolled over the surface of the moon, and from the deep, well-like ravine, through which he was moving, he saw the stars suddenly start out be-

fore his sight, and look down upon him with their most perfect radiance.

"Adonai!" exclaimed the astrologer while his heart trembled within him, and his knees shook, "what is it that I see?"

The star which he had assigned to his companion was now in the seventh mansion of the moon. His fears increased as he looked upon its varying aspects. His lips opened to utter broken exclamations—fragments of speech, which, though significant enough of the apprehensions in his bosom, were yet imperfect of themselves, and deficient in every other signification.

"He hath surely left the dwelling—there is confusion in his thoughts, and fear! Fear in the heart of Vasco Nunez! No! no!—it cannot be. But the aspect changes—Ha! it is the fear of woman! The edges of the star grow dim—the points break and bend! The waters fill my eye—I see not—I see nothing. Oh, Vasco Nunez—my son—wherefore hast thou left the bohio—thou hast left it for evil—there is treachery in waiting—there is danger on thy path—I look again—an evil planet crosses the centre of the star—it shapes itself into a dagger, and lo! as I look, thy star moulds itself around it even as a grasping heart. Saddai the Celestial—Methuellon of the seraphim—Razael of the cherubim, leave not thy charge to the evil demon of the west—to the mighty Paymon, who hath power under this sign. Stand before his presence, oh, Michael, that keepest the virtues from harm—strengthen the shield before his bosom, so that the dagger reacheth it not!"

The old man sank upon his knees; and never was prayer more fervently uttered than that which mingled, in the wild and superstitious forms of that half benighted period, the gibberish of the dreamer and the impostor with the pure and intelligent supplication of the Christian and the man. Tears were in his eyes while he prayed, and the thick drops stood out upon his forehead. His eyes meanwhile were never for a moment taken from those aspects in the heavens which had wrought so deeply upon his fears, and awakened in him the most intense apprehensions. His fears and feelings broke forth in fragments from his lips.

"The forms move not. There is no change, which

shows that the treachery still works, and is in waiting—now doth humility clothe the face of the star of Vasco Nunez—is it shame—is it sorrow? He bows—he kneels—wherefore! Can it be that he prays for life from the hand which holds the dagger? It relents not—the sign of death still reigns in the house of life. There is no relenting—there is no mercy! And yet there is a change. Thy star is pale no longer. It burns red. There is anger in the heart of Vasco Nunez—there is anger, and there is pride and strength. He bends no longer—he rises—now the points lengthen and ray out; and the bright edges are no longer dim. But that bloody dagger under the sign of Paymon keeps its place. My heart trembles. The malice works, and the keen point is at the centre of the heart. It hath no handle—it is all blade. That should seem as if it were a death from accident, since there is no hand to guide the dagger. Ah! I can see no more—there is nothing but confusion in my eyes.”

The astrologer sank prostrate with his face to the earth as he turned from those aspects which so awakened his fears and feelings. But his anxieties were too great to suffer him to remain long in this state of apathy. Once more he looked up, and shrieked aloud.

“The blow is given—there is hand and dagger both—the blow is given—I see it, and the blood-drops gather on my sight. I see nothing beside—the lights are gone—the stars are all swallowed up in blood. Oh, Vasco Nunez, Vasco Nunez—son of my soul—light of my eye—child that I have followed and watched from the time thou wert a silent page in the castle of Moguer, even to the present hour—wherefore did I leave thee? why didst thou go forth against my prayer? Have they slain thee in truth—is it from thy heart that these drops trickle? Alas! I may not know—the cloud goes from the moon—thy star and the hateful planet that assails thee, all have departed. I may not press this journey. I must back to Santo Domingo. There is no gold for Micer Codro, if that bright star be set in blood.”

Let us return, also, to the city and resume the narrative of those transactions which we left in as great doubt to the reader, as to the astrologer, who seeks his information from a more sublimated source of intelligence.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## WEAKNESS OF THE STRONG MAN—SUIT AND SCORN.

THE appearance of Vasco Nunez in the bohio of Teresa Davila did not discompose or disquiet the maiden. She received him with a quiet unconscious indifference of manner, which, to one a mere looker-on, and not interested to blindness by his own passionate emotions, as was the case with the cavalier, would have been at once conclusive against his suit. But the manner of Teresa was not a thing in his eye or a thought in his mind, while he gazed upon her superb and majestic beauty. The glance of her dark, keen, flashing eye, disordered and confused his own; her glossy and streaming ringlets, half-confined and half-freed among the twisted pearls that were folded in orient wreaths among the luxuriant tresses of her raven hair, seemed to mislead his thoughts into intricate and wandering mazes like their own; while her tall, and finely rounded figure, flowing with grace and dignity, imposed upon him a feeling of inferiority that almost prompted him to fall before her where he stood, and worship afar without aiming at any nearer approach. The heart of Teresa Davila, though without any sympathy with that of Vasco Nunez, was yet fond of admiration, and the expressive hesitancy of the cavalier as he came into her presence, was a tacit tribute to her charms which at once brought all the smiles into her cheek. She graciously motioned him to approach, and addressed him in language, which, though customary in that season of unmeasured compliment and strained courtesy, was readily enough construed by the hopeful heart of the cavalier into a more decided expression of encouragement.

“What, you have come at last, Señor Vasco! Methinks you have waited for the last clouds of the hurricane to disappear, before looking after the poor damsel who owes you thanks for helping her through it. I looked for your presence last night; Don Diego should have been here also and the Señor Garabito. But though Ninetta tuned

the guitar, none came to hear the song. I grew angry with you all from sheer weariness of myself."

"Even as the rich man wearies of his own treasure for which all other men thirst. Ah! Teresa, thou shouldst not weary of thyself, if thou wouldst find other keeper for thy charms. Why shouldst thou be burdened with so weighty a trust? Thou shouldst have a treasurer, lady; one with heart so loyal, that there were no fear that he should desert his charge or defraud it of any gem, the smallest in thy present possession—one, who, to the pious fondness of the holy priest, serving at the altar, should add the uxorious passion of the miser, which would ever prompt him to lock up his sacred trust so closely that the spoiler should sooner penetrate his heart than the invaluable casket in its keeping."

"Ah! it is well to speak thus, Señor Vasco," responded the maiden with something of a sigh, "and there were no damsel in all Spain but would listen to such grateful counsel; but where, think you, could I find treasurer so to value such poor charms as mine, and if found, how am I sure that he would prove the loyal and devoted person whom thou describest?"

"There are sure tokens, sweet lady, by which to distinguish such person. Is there one to whom thy presence is a continual pleasure, and thy absence a continual pain—to whom thy smile is as a beam of blessed light from heaven, springing suddenly out when the prevailing cloud before, has hung black and heavily over all the skies—to whom thy frown is like the aspect of that black despair which tells the desolate that he is hopeless of all the things most desired of his heart? Nay, dearest Teresa, why should I speak to thee in these vain fancies. The time is come when my words should be those of the man—when my heart must be as resolute in its tenderness—in its love—as it should ever be in strife and danger. It knows no greater danger than it fears at this moment—it has never struggled with a greater strife. Hear me, dearest Teresa, while I speak to thee of such a man—of one who will treasure thy charms for thee, deep in the warmest cells of his bosom, with such jealous watch, that none shall steal, none shall assail, none shall desecrate, and he himself shall not only keep watch but worship while he watches."

He sank before her upon his knee, and clasped her hand

servently as he bowed. The position in which he knelt, distinguished by a natural grace which made even humility a dignified and pleasing object, was eminently grateful to the vain heart of the maiden, and though she strove to disengage her hand, her efforts were feeble, and the faint smile upon her lips amply testified that the annoyance of his addresses to her sense of propriety was not so great as the tribute was pleasing to the vanity of her capricious mind.

“Rise, Señor Vasco, do not thus, I pray thee—we shall be seen,—the curtains of the bohio are withdrawn. I will call Ninetta.”

“Nay, nay, call not—rise not—I will not suffer thee, Teresa; and I care not though the whole world looked on and listened to the fond truths which my lips would murmur to thee now. Hear me, Teresa, there is that within my heart which commands me to speak, and the blessed Virgin grant that there be a something in thine which shall incline thee to hear. A day past, and I had not spoken thus—I had not dared. But now that I am destitute, defrauded of fortune, and almost hopeless in respect of wealth—nay, of that which is more dear to me than any of the world’s wealth save thee, almost hopeless of fame,—I am become bold to speak. I come to speak to thee of the love I bear thee, and have borne thee, from the first moment that my eyes were kindled by a beam from thine, when thou didst first come with thy uncle to Española. I love thee, Teresa, with a passionate love, which, methinks, would find death in thy denial; and—nay, rise not—look not thus, dearest Teresa.”

“Oh, señor, this is most strange; why wilt thou speak thus, and do thus: leave me, I pray thee, I had not looked for this. I must call my damsel.”

“Thou must not—thou shalt not, till I am answered. Hear me, Teresa,—day after day for many months have I followed thy steps, and hung about thy form even as its shadow, until men whispered, ‘the bold spirit of Vasco Nunez hath utterly gone from him—he is a warrior no longer.’ Glorious visions of greatness were mine, and hopes strengthened by study and experience, promised me triumphs beyond those of any among the thousand cavaliers going forth from Spain to the new countries. Why did I forbear to press these hopes to their confirmation? why did I fail to prosecute the triumphs which they promised

me? Thou wert the cause, Teresa, the blessed cause, and for thee I became a sluggard, and for thee I suffered days and weeks to pass, preferring rather to look upon thy surpassing beauties, than to gather the rich gems and the yellow gold that lies in waiting for the eye of the European on the shores of that Cathaian sea. In a sudden and single moment, as thou sawest, the tempest swept the seas and the waves sucked down into their recesses, the good ship which was to bear me to this conquest, and all the long gathering aids by which my greatness was to be achieved. In my destitution I have grown free to speak, and I speak to thee with the boldness of a heart that is confident as it is loyal, and fears not to declare its truth when that truth speaks only in love. My heart is thine, Teresa; it hath been thine, as thou must have seen, for a long season. Give me thine, I pray thee, and the storm shall be forgotten, and the loss of this treasure will be as nothing in my eyes, to the greater treasure which I shall then possess in thee."

The cavalier paused. His rapid speech, which poured forth the voluminous and long accumulating feelings of his heart in a torrent that would not be stayed, as it could not be stifled, forbade every attempt at interruption on the part of the maiden. But she did not seek to interrupt him. The homage was too grateful to her pride. While he spoke in accents, which, though rapid as thought, yet trembled with his almost convulsive emotion, the bright fires blazed from her eye more keenly, her glance was uplifted, her head slightly thrown back upon her shoulder, and the upper lip, gradually curling into an expression of beautiful scorn, truly indicated the cold selfishness and morbid vanity of a heart that knew not how to feel a single sentiment in common with that nobleness of spirit, which proffered itself so completely to her love. While he gazed on her his heart by degrees became conscious, though in part only, of the true expression of those proud and lovely features. He could not mistake, without being duller "than the fat weed that hugs itself at ease at Lethe's wharf;" the collected indifference, not to say the cold pitiless contempt, conveyed in that inflexible eye and utterly unchanging cheek. "Surely Micer Codro hath spoken rightly," was the thought, the palsyng thought, that rushed through his brain as he looked upon her. "This woman hath

no heart; she regards the passion which shakes me as with an ague, with the cold indifference of stone; nay, it would almost seem that scorn was settled on her lip."

He started to his feet as this conviction entered his mind.

"Thou hast not spoken, *señora*—I have not heard thee! Speak to me, Teresa; let me not mistake thine eyes, and do injustice to a heart which I so much worship. Tell me that thou lovest me,—that I do not live in vain."

Teresa answered this appeal, but the cold dignity and the measured utterance of her lips betrayed the speech to have been carefully studied, and as much intended to wound the cavalier as to convey an answer to his prayer.

"Thou hast done me great service, *Señor Vasco*,—nay, wherefore should I spare the confession! thou hast saved my life."

"Saved thy life, *señora*!" replied the astonished lover; "saved thy life, Teresa!—ay, and I am happy and proud that it was thy life, and that it was saved by me;—but I have spoken, nay, I have thought, nothing of this. Oh, wherefore shouldst thou?"

"And should I not be grateful to thee for this service?" replied the maiden; "of a truth, I am, and I would have thee believe it, *Señor Vasco*; it were a sad injustice to thee if I were not grateful, for I believe thou didst put thy own life in peril for the safety of mine. But, truly, thou shalt not persuade me that the consideration of thy service to me in this respect did not move thee to thy prayer but now."

"Can it be, that thou think'st me thus base, Teresa?—dost thou hold me the lowly clown, to demand a reward for that service which the noble gentleman is every where sworn to render unto the weak—to woman, to childhood, to age. Oh, Teresa, thou hast not surely dwelt on this? thou hast spoken it without thought, without deliberation. In truth, thou dost not think that I have found courage to claim thy affections, only because it has been my good fortune to have saved thy life?"

"But I see not the baseness or the shame, *Señor Vasco*," replied the maiden, "even if it be as I have said."

"There is both shame and baseness, Teresa, and I pray thee to acquit me of it. I were no gentleman to make demand of such reward for any service, save that of the heart. The love which I proffer thee, dearest Teresa, in return for

thine, is the only claim which I have upon thee. Speak to that—to that only—and say that thou requitest the claim.”

The cavalier resumed his devoted posture at her feet, and would have resumed possession of her hand, but she withheld it with greater resolution than before, and rose in turn from the cushions on which she had heretofore kept her seat.

“This must not be, Señor Vasco—thou dost too much press upon me; I have not thought upon these matters. I am but a young maiden to think of love; and I fear me, that were I to speak now, it would give great vexation to my uncle, and to my father, who is in Spain. Leave thy quest, I pray thee, to some other season; meanwhile, I do not deny that thou shalt see me as before.”

“It must not be, señora—my heart is too much in it for delay. I could not again seek thee as before. I could not brook to see other cavaliers basking in those smiles, which are as dear to me as life. It is in desperation that I speak; and coming to thee as I do, as one short of fortune, and I may say almost frowned upon by fate, it cannot be, if thou hast a feeling for me in thy heart, that thou canst forbear to unfold it in a moment so precious and so perilous to all my hope. I ask thee not to wed me now—I ask thee but for thy love—thy promise to wed me, when I may claim thee, even at the hands of thy father and thy uncle.”

“Alas! señor, thou knowest not the pride and haughty spirit of Don Pedrarias Davila. He hath been too long the favourite of the Court, where they call him *El Galan*, to brook easily that his daughter should wed without his knowledge, or pledge her troth to one of whom he will make no count, if he be not of the nobility. He hath no terms with his pride, and he is haughty, even to a saying, among the royal household. It were not wise, it were not well, with me, to do or say aught which should move him to anger against me.”

There was much in this reply to disquiet and annoy the cavalier. But he answered with a greater degree of calmness than he felt, and it was only by a strong effort, that he put such restraint upon his excited feelings.

“And if he be proud, Teresa, I am proud also; and if he be noble, I am not less so, though the fortunes of my family be poor. But I tell thee, señora, that if thou wed me, then will I make his pride do me homage, and his no-

bility shall vail to mine, for then will I achieve a name and a triumph, which shall go through Spain like the sound of a mighty bell, emitted by the hand of a god, on the pinnacle of a high mountain. I am bold in this promise—I feel its truth striving within me, and upon thy answer doth it hang, whether this thing be soon or late in the performance. I say to thee, dearest Teresa, that thy father's pride shall grow loftier by means of my performance, and he shall look to thee as the spring of a greatness, to which he has never yet dared lift his own eye."

The lofty form of the cavalier seemed to rise and expand with the kindred feeling in his soul, as he gave utterance to these glowing promises, not of vanity, but of the confident and conscious greatness within him. But the weak mind, and the inferior spirit of the woman whom he sought, failed to rise to a due appreciation of the noble being before her. A feeling of petty pride, to which she had been familiarized from infancy, was outraged by his speech, and his offence, alone, occupied all her thoughts.

"Thou speakest but slightly of Don Pedrarias, Señor Vasco—but I forgive thee, for how shouldst thou know aught of one who hath ever been a chief and favoured noble in the court of the royal Ferdinand. It will be time enough when thou hast achieved the greatness which is now thy brag, that thou shouldst speak scornfully of my father's pride and station; but thou wilt forgive me, if I desire not to hear such speech till then, and then—"

"Thou wrong'st me—thou art angry, dearest Teresa—I meant not to scorn thy father, or speak with slight of his pride and station, which, alike, I honour. I would only assure thee of an equal pride, and of a station which I shall secure, and which shall justify thee to him, and to all others, for the heart which thou wouldst bestow on me. Wilt thou not hear me, Teresa?"

"Not now, Señor Vasco—I honour thy worth, and owe thee many thanks for the succour which thou gavest me but a day past, but I am not permitted to give myself. I am but a young and thoughtless maiden, and to such it is forbidden rashly to bind themselves with vows, which are sometimes but irksome fetters, not the less heavy because put on with their own hands. I have said, thou mayst see and seek me as before, but—"

"It cannot be, señora!" replied the cavalier, in slow

and solemn accents. "The boy may trifle thus, and delay the day of his strength, and suffer himself to be baffled with specious words that have little signification to the man. I am now thirty years old, senora, and I begin to feel all the seriousness of life. The duties of my own mind, my thoughts, feelings, my ambition, all press upon me; and I feel that to leave thee in doubt, will have no other effect than to keep me still the loiterer that I have been for a long season—won to linger by a smile or a sigh, and flattered into a forgetfulness of the realities of life by a blandishing look, or a kind word, at the moment when the heart is most soft and pliant for seduction. Thou hast known me long, and canst as well determine at this moment as at another, whether it be possible for thee to give thy heart to my keeping. Once more, dearest Teresa, I put mine own before thee—once more I implore thee to receive my vow—to yield to my prayer, and, giving me thy full and free pledge of affection, send me forth, with a glad heart and fearless spirit, to the conquest of the mighty ocean of the south."

"Thou art too serious, señor—too solemn in what thou sayst; and there must be time given me to grow grave with the thoughts of this matter. Now, señor, the brightness of the moon, which sprinkles her silver drops among the leaves of yonder fig, invites me to gayer moods. Come, I will give thee thy favourite ballad of *El Marques*. Here, Ninetta."

She struck the little gong beside her, as she said these words, to summon her Indian female attendant, and while her eye seemed to sport with, and find pleasure in, the fixed and mournful gaze of his, she sang, from the ballad of the Marquess of Mantua, a passage or two, that the cavalier could scarcely fail to appropriate to himself.

"Lo que dice el caballero,  
Razon es de lo contar,  
Donde estas, señora mia,  
Que no te pena mi mal?"

"Teresa?" was the mournful expostulation of the cavalier—"Is it thus, Teresa?"

She laughed, but continued:—

"O no la sabes, señora,  
O eres falsa, o desleal!"

He fixed his eye intently upon her—his lips were pressed together with energy and resolve, and the agitation which had made him tremble at every moment of utterance before, now passed entirely from his features.

“Teresa,” he exclaimed, “farewell—we see each other for the last time.”

“Nay, señor, you are angry—”

“No, Teresa, sad, sorrowful, full of pity and regret, but no anger. Farewell, we part for ever.”

He rushed from the apartment as he said these words, and disappeared among the trees.

“Ah, well!” exclaimed the maiden, throwing herself among the cushions,—“give me the guitar, Ninetta, the man has almost made me as dull as himself; and to think that I believe his threat or care for it. For ever, Ninetta—said he not for ever?”

“Yes, ‘part for ever,’ senora—‘part for ever,’ replied the Indian, her white teeth gleaming through the dark lips which shrouded them closely the moment ere she spoke.

“For ever, indeed! the man means three nights, and the beginning of next week will be sure to bring him. Well—

‘O mi primo Montesinos:  
O Infante Merian!’

There will be many others to supply his place, though where the Señor Jorge could have been the while—and Don Diego?—

‘Donde estais todos vosotros,  
No venis a me ayudar?’

Though, to be sure, I care as little for them as him. Love indeed! and yet it is something strange that I have never yet loved—is it not, Ninetta? You have loved, have you not—your people used to love, did they not?”

“Ah, yes, my lady, till the Spaniard came, we had nothing else but love.”

“It must be pretty employment certainly, if it did not grow tedious sometimes. Señor Vasco is in a very dreadful passion. I fancy I see him now rushing against the trees, and stretching out his hand and swearing by Sant Iago, and striking as if the Charaibee was in his path.

'Caballero con tal fuerza,  
Pienso no se puede hallar!'"

The song of the maiden was interrupted by a thrilling shriek from without, which rang through the apartment, and utterly swallowed up the sounds of the guitar.

"*Madre de Dios!* what a cry is that! Oh, Ninetta, what can it be. Again—it comes again. It is the shriek of one in pain—the pang of death! Again! again! Saints and angels be with us! Would the Señor Vasco were here! We alone, Ninetta,—my uncle!—it may be his voice—his scream—he is in danger and there is no help for us. Should it be the rebel Caonabo! Ah, Ninetta, do not leave me—do not desert me in this danger. If it be Caonabo—he is one of thy people—thou wilt save me. Let him not do me harm, for I have been ever kind to thee."

The proud woman was utterly prostrate. She clung to the Indian, and acknowledging her woman dependence all the while, she prayed for the return of Vasco Nunez. In that moment of fear, she would freely have given her love to be secure of his protection.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## VENGEANCE BAFFLED—VENGEANCE TAKEN.

THE dreadful scream which she heard was one of agony indeed, and of a thrilling danger, but it threatened Teresa Davila with none. Let us leave her, therefore, and return to the place where we left the treacherous and cowardly Garabito, waiting, in equal terror and impatience, for the coming of the matador who had gone to reconnoitre the dwelling where his destined victim, like the moth about the flame, still lingered in unprofitable pursuit, losing time and risking life. After remaining some time absent, Ortado returned in some hurry to his employer, having, in the meanwhile, succeeded in obtaining a glance at the greater part of the scene between Vasco Nunez and the woman whom he sought, which we have just described.

"Dispose yourself, señor, he will be here anon," were the words of the professional assassin.

"You have seen him, Ortado?" demanded Garabito.

"Ah, that I have, and seen him too, nearly as low to earth as my cross shall bring him."

"How! what mean you?"

"He knelt to the proud señora, and got her foot instead of her hand. Were the man not blind as all your silly lovers are who run after women, he must have seen the scorn in her eyes, even if the words of her mouth did not fill his ears. Were a cavalier wise this business of love-making would always fall on the señoras; they need us more than we need them, and it is against nature and reason that the strong should bow to and supplicate the weak. The thing will be changed some day, and, indeed, I know not that it is not already changing, señor. I know some damsels who do nothing from night to morning, but look after the

men; and, *diablo*, had they strength enough, would seize, in spite of one's teeth, upon every good-looking fellow they met. I have been in some danger more than once myself from these man-devourers."

"And the *senofa* hath refused Vasco Nunez, thou sayest—but I knew that well enough before. I thought as much from the speech which she made to me when we spoke together last."

"What! thou thinkest thy own chance better with this harpy?" replied the plain-spoken matador, as he inferred from the self-complacent manner of the other's remark, that his vanity was growing higher than his head, according to the Indian proverb. "But thou blindest thyself, *senor*, even like Vasco Nunez. This woman hath no care for one man more than another, only so far as he may help to give her place above the other man-devourers of her sex. She is one of a kind, *senor*, and would freely marry your poor matador, Ortado, to-morrow, if he could show her that the power was in him to give her place in the ceremonial higher than Donna Inez or the *Senora* Margarita, or any other damsel who hath cocked her nose against the heavens when the brag was the common business. A toss of a *castellano* with thee, *senor*, that thou gettest an answer from this proud woman like that of the *Senor* Vasco."

The vanity of Garabito was annoyed by the bluntness of the matador, but the moment was not one for controversy.

"We must be away and prepare ourselves, *senor*, for this man, and send him to the devil as we best may. We need give ourselves no trouble about the women—they will find their way to him as Eve did, without any assistance. Keep you here beneath this tree—I will advance to the short banyan that stands within the path, and my dagger shall pick his teeth ere he gets round it. From this place you can see the whole, for the moonlight will shine upon my back. You will know the proper moment to look, when the light streams from the *bohio* as he comes out. It will not be long to that time if I might judge from the *senora's* answers and the *senor's* looks. And now, see with both eyes, *senor*, for a better brand was never made by matador than I shall make for you."

"But should you fail at the first stroke, Ortado?" was the timid suggestion of the coward.

"Try a second," coolly responded the assassin.

"He will grapple with you!"

"Then comes your turn; set in while I cling to him, and make your own mark. Cut the sinews if you can't get at his vitals easily—hamstring him."

Garabito could say no more, but a cold sweat stood upon his forehead, clammy and thick, as the matador left him to take the place determined on. His knees shook beneath him, his pulse bounded with a flickering irregularity, and as the moments passed rapidly to the completion of the interval between the preparation and the deed, the nerves of the base creature grew more and more unsteady and unstrung. The delay was not great. The door of the bohio opened, and the ruddy gleams of the light from within fell among the leaves and upon the path along which a moment after he beheld his hurrying victim. A thousand darting lights gathered before his eyes at the same instant, and he felt that any struggle between the murderer and Vasco Nunez would find him utterly incapable of giving the least help to his emissary. His strength failed him with his sight, the point of his sword sunk in the sand at his feet, and he sank forward with a stifled respiration, for support upon the tree behind which he had been concealed.

Meanwhile, the same light streaming from the cottage which had warned Garabito of the approach of his enemy, announced to the matador to put himself in readiness for his victim. This warning had no such effect upon the assassin as upon his principal. It was with him a slight matter of business, and frequent employment, and a mental constitution of natural hardihood, had steeled him to a cool, deliberate indifference of mood, which preserved him from every exciting emotion, whether of hostility or fear.

When he saw the figure of Vasco Nunez along the path, he passed one arm entirely round the trunk of the tree behind which he stood, thus making it not only an impenetrable shield for the protection of his breast, but a sort of pivot upon which his body might revolve at pleasure. His right hand, grasping the dagger, was free to act upon any part of the narrow passage which remained between the banyan and the grove opposite, which a thick undergrowth of shrubs and pruned palmettoes rendered almost impenetrable, and made it almost absolutely necessary that the little pathway should be pursued by the footman under any

circumstances. No spot could have been better chosen for the work of the assassin; and the matador regarded the affair with as little doubt of the result, as he would have had touching the most ordinary and unimportant occurrences of daily life.

Defeated, disappointed, denied—angry with himself and with all the world, and hopeless alike of both, the noble, but down-spirited, cavalier drew nigh, unconscious of danger, and perhaps, in that moment of despondency, as utterly indifferent to the death which threatened him, as he could be in the thick of battle, with all his blood bounding in tumultuous sympathy with its storms and terrors. His sword hung unnoticed in its sheath—his hands were clasped together and thrust out before him—his eyes upon the ground, and his whole person as utterly unguarded, as if he had studiously made himself bare to the murderer. The arm of the matador was drawn back as he approached, that the blow might have due force in descending; and already the person of the victim had half mingled in shadow with the tree which hid from him the danger, when a sudden and terrific shriek—a shriek of agony and a bloody sweat—the same cry of horror and of pain which inspired Teresa Davila with such overwhelming dread—startled the dreary and deep silence of the scene, and, in an instant, drove from the musing and morbid mind of Vasco Nunez, the enfeebling incertitude of thought and despondency of feeling which had made him nerveless as he went, and heedless of his way. He recoiled in the first moment of his surprise, and thus avoided the blow, when another forward step would have planted the dagger in his bosom. The cry which continued to ring through the woods was no less surprising to the matador, and his eyes were averted from his victim, instinctively, to the spot where Garabito stood, and whence the alarm proceeded. That instant was fortunately employed by Vasco Nunez to rush forward, and the murderer failing in his first plan—which depended upon the use of a single instant—like the lurking tiger baffled in his spring, slunk back into the thicker woods, and hurried, with a caution that looked very much like cowardice, as well from the man whom he had pledged himself to slay, as from the miserable creature who had employed him. But his flight was not the result of cowardice, but of a calm, deliberate prudence, which was habitual. He had

seen enough, in that single backward glance, to justify him in shrinking from a conflict which promised to be too unequal to leave him any hope from its result. He beheld the base-souled and mean-spirited Garabito crouching upon his knee, imploring mercy from one who stood over him, with a steel already reeking with his blood. The assailant was of gigantic size, and in the imperfect light of the moon, flickering among the trees, he seemed to dilate supernaturally to the eyes of Vasco Nunez, as well as to those of the matador. The broken words of Garabito, imploring his life, reached the ears of the former, and he hurried forward with mixed feelings of scorn and pity. But the words of the coward were silenced by the repeated blows of his antagonist, who, striking him beneath his feet, buried his weapon in three rapid but unnecessary thrusts in his bosom; then, crying aloud to Vasco Nunez as he came forward, but without waiting his approach, he apprised him of the true murderer.

"It is Caonabo, the rebel! It is thus that he laughs at his enemies—it is thus that he drinks the blood of the Spaniard. Would you follow on his footsteps?—Come! He flings the blood of your brother in your face—he laughs at your thunder, and your barking dogs! Ha! ha! ha!" Thus, howling to Vasco Nunez, whom he regarded in common with all the Spaniards, as a foe, he fled among the trees, and as the cavalier advanced into the plain of the city, he beheld him darting up the little eminences by which it was environed to the north. Standing on one of these eminences, the fierce Charaibee looked down upon the city, and his hand was stretched over it, as if in maledictions. But his words came not to the ears of Vasco Nunez, whom a sentiment of respect, if not awe, fixed to the spot, in mute survey of the bold savage, who had baffled so many of the Spanish captains, and had dared at last to descend from his secret mountain passes, to wreak his private vengeance in the blood of his foe, even in the streets of the guarded city. His fine, lofty figure, raised in the moonlight—his daring valour, and the imposing and not ungraceful attitude in which he stood, commanded the admiration of one, who, like Vasco Nunez, was much more of the cavalier than soldier; and was too deeply imbued with the sentiment of romance, peculiar to the time, not to feel admiration for the hardy virtue of the Indian, whose

patriotism had survived his people, and whose courage had never faltered, though death, for many seasons, had dogged his footsteps, and for ever hung upon his path in blood. While he gazed, the rebel sunk from sight, melting as it were into that pale hazy atmosphere, against which he had seemed but a moment before to lean. Vasco Nunez returned to the spot where he had seen the struggle, to recognise his own cowardly foe in the victim, and to find that he was dead. In a moment, the recollection of the woman's wrong, and her murdered son, rushed upon his mind, and though he knew not the connexion of Caonabo and the victim, he yet found it easy to conceive that the rebel came as the avenger of the boy.

## CHAPTER XX.

## CAPTIVITY.

By short but difficult paths, only known to himself, the rebel soon regained his hills. Once more he entered the bohio, where the remains of his murdered child still lay, in the charge of the humbled and wretched mother. She was stretched at length, even as when he left her; her lips at the feet of the corpse, and pressing upon the rushes which strewed the cold earthy floor of the hovel. She rose to her feet respectfully at his entrance, but his attitude and appearance filled her with affright. His eyes glared with the tiger's ferocity—his lips were half opened, and the white teeth looked threatening and gleaming from below; while his hands, stretched over the mangled head of the boy, seemed to drop with the blood with which they were completely dyed. His wild laugh of rage and satisfaction was her first, and, for a few moments, her only salutation.

"Get thee in readiness," he cried to her, after a brief space, in the language of the Charaibee—"get thee ready to depart. Let the cotton garments shroud the limbs of the boy. He knows not,—but he shall share our flight. Better that the seas swallow him, than that these accursed Spaniards give him to feed the dog that barks."

"Oh, Caonabo, father, chief!" cried the woman, in the same language, "what hast thou done?"

"Dost thou ask?" he answered fiercely. "What should I have done, woman, but dig deep with my knife into the heart of the pale wretch who slew the boy? Should I have slept ere this was done, or couldst thou? And the spirit which his murderous hands made escape to the green islands, should he have gone without a dog to follow, or

a pale slave to give him tendance? Peace, and bring forth the garments—let his limbs be shrouded in the white cotton.”

Thus saying, he sat down by the side of the boy, and his bloody hand rested upon the mangled head of the innocent victim, whom he had so soon and certainly avenged. That he grieved, could only be known by the intense earnestness of his gaze, fixed the while on vacancy; he shed no tears, and uttered no lamentations. In the mean time, the woman busied herself in drawing forth from some secret hiding-place a few yards of the cotton cloth which was manufactured in the island long before the coming of Columbus. A portion of this she cut off, and was about to restore the residue to the hiding-place, when the stern voice of the cacique commanded her to bring it all.

“Would you lay up store for the Spaniard, Buru?—let the boy have all the garment—he will ask no more at thy hands.”

These words awakened her lamentations anew, and while she lifted the stiffened limbs, and swathed them in the stuff, her tears, accompanied by close, thick-crowding sobs, literally streamed down upon the unconscious boy, for whose untimely fate they fell. For a while her sorrows were expressed without interruption from the chief, but the keen ears of the rebel, quickened by the continual pursuit of the bloodhound and the foe, were suddenly struck with other sounds than those of his woman's lamentation.

“Stay, Buru,” he cried, while he thrust his ear to the earth—“hearest thou nothing?”

“Nothing, father, chief, it was a bird that flew—it was the little mona that jumped in the fig tree.”

In another instant the rebel had started to his feet. His eye glared with fury upon her.

“Woman, thou liest! it is no bird, it is no mona,—it is the Spaniard and the hound that are on the path of the chief; it is thy forked tongue that has betrayed me to the hands of my enemies. Thou!”

These dreadful words, which were uttered in low and suppressed accents, sank deeply into the heart of the now doubly wretched woman. She fell at the feet of the rebel, who had naturally become suspicious of every thing and every body, in the perils and the flights to which he had been for so long a term subjected; and with upraised hands

clasped before her face, solemnly assured him of her fidelity and truth. But he spurned her from his feet with indignation, while he replied to her in words of accusation beneath which she seemed to wither upon the ground.

"I see it now, Buru; it is by thy art that I am in this strait. The Spaniard who has bought so many of my people, has also bought the wife that lay upon my bosom in the long night. Well didst thou know that to see the boy Zemi, alone, would I have come into thy habitation; and thou hadst him slain that I should not fail, like an unwary beast when he hears the scream of the young one, to go headlong into the same trap of the hunter. I will not slay thee, though thou liest in my path and the sharp knife is in my hand; but the blood of Caonabo be upon thy head, woman, if he escape not now from the Spaniard."

Her supplicating and assuring words were unheard and lost to his ears by his own movement. Grasping his knife firmly in his hand he threw open the door of the hovel, in the hope that time might still be left him for escape. To find himself out upon the hills was to find himself, he well knew, in perfect safety. But his hope was baffled when the door was unclosed. The two Spaniards stood ready at the entrance, and the moment that he made his appearance became the signal for strife. They threw themselves at once with concentrated energy upon him, and their united force precipitated him to the ground. The dagger was wrested from his grasp in another instant and he lay at the mercy of his enemies, and under their persons, before Buru had arisen from the ground where she had prostrated herself in deprecating the anger and suspicions of her husband. When she recovered from her surprise, she rushed upon the Spaniards with a reckless disregard to her own safety and with all the fury of a tigress. But the commands of Caonabo arrested her rashness which, most probably, would otherwise have ended only with her life. He bade her forbear all provocation, and while the daggers of the two Spaniards were at his throat, he calmly asked her one or two questions, which as they were expressed in the language of the Charaibee, were incomprehensible to his enemies.

"What does the infidel say, Pedro," demanded his companion, "in his heathen language. Should we not slit

his pipe and put a stop to such abominable sounds, as I doubt whether it be altogether right for Christian ears to hear. What do you stop for—why not put an end to the business? Dead or alive, it is all the same to us, and the head of a dead rebel is easier to carry than the heels of a living one."

"But there is the triumph, Sanchez," replied the other, with a deliberative air. "There is the grand entrance into Santo Domingo, and the people turning out to look on the rebel; and then comes the execution, and the display of the troops, and the salute. I doubt not that his excellency the Governor will give us a speech and public thanks before the people, when we shall have taken by our own strength of arm a rebel so powerful, and brought him without hurt to the place of public execution."

"And what does all that come to, Pedro. A fig for the troops and the display; and, to speak truth, I do not care so much for the execution either, since I have seen enough of that sort of business to make it no strange thing. As for the thanks of his Excellency, let them be words of the purse, and I am satisfied."

"We shall have both, Sanchez, both words of the purse and of the lips; but as thou wilt. I see thou hast a fear of so troublesome a charge as of a living infidel, and, though I see not the danger, and but very little increase of trouble in taking him to Santo Domingo, it shall be even as thou sayest; so run thy poniard into his throat, which it already threatens, while mine makes acquaintance with his ribs. It is a business soon over."

These cool resolutions which were well enough understood both by Caonabo and his wife, renewed the desperate fury of the latter, who threw herself upon one of the Spaniards with a force which nearly cast him from his firm seat upon the breast of the rebel, and clung to his weaponed arm with a tenacity from which he could not set himself free, without losing his advantage over Caonabo. But the words of the latter, who fortunately maintained his coolness all the while, again operated to compel the forbearance of the woman.

"Stay!" he exclaimed in Spanish, and this word seemed quite as much intended for his conquerors as for his wife. A sentence addressed to her, however, made her release her grasp upon the Spaniard, while the two enemies

seemed not unwilling to hear what he might have to say to them. Caonabo had soon discovered from the brief dialogue which they held together that their aim was money, and knowing the price that had been set upon his head, he conceived a hope of escape by practising upon that cupidity which he perceived to be stronger than any hope of praise or distinction in their minds.

"Hear me," he said, in imperfect Spanish—"would you not have gold—gold which shall make you chiefs and lords like the governor Obando. You shall have it. You shall have ten times the amount in gold which Obando hath offered for my head, if you will only set me free. Give my limbs freedom upon these hills and turn back your eyes when I fly, that you may not see my course, and I will seven times fill your hats with the best gold upon the mountains."

"Thou art but a shallow infidel if thou thinkest to beguile us with such a cheat as this," was the reply of Pedro. "What should we see of thee, or of the gold which thou promisest, if we were to suffer thee to have this start. Thou wouldst dive down into thy sea-side hollows or crawl up to thy bird-nest heights among the cliffs, and laugh at us vainly trudging after thee from below."

"The gold shall be in thy hands before I ask of thee to set me free. Thou shalt put thy cords upon my limbs while I guide thee to the secret hollow where it sleeps."

"Ha! but that is a better story!" exclaimed the Spaniard looking significantly upon his companion as he spake. Their eyes met, and in the scornful and contemptuous smile which settled upon the noble features of the rebel, it could be seen that he had divined their mutual but unexpressed thoughts of deceit, and readily understood their plan of treachery and final murder. The poor single-hearted woman, Buru, did not lack for understanding on the subject also, but without marking the sinister expression of their faces, she cried aloud to her husband in his native tongue—

"Oh, father, chief, Caonabo, they will take from thee thy gold, and slay thee after."

"Peace, woman, do I not know it. Canst thou tell me of a Spaniard, and of a Spaniard's promise, without telling me of a traitor and a treachery. I know that they will do this, and, I fear me, thou wouldst help them; but is

there other hope? It will be something gained, woman, to be out upon the hills, where, though my hands be tied, my feet are free, and one bound will place me in hollows, and upon crags, where these dastard creatures dare not come, or would fall and falter at each step. Trouble me no more with thy artful speech, for I doubt, woman, that thou playest me false, like all the rest."

"Alas, father, Caonabo—thou dost me a cruel wrong."

"Let me see this, as I will to-night, and by the bloody head of the boy, Zemi, I will do thee right," was the reply.

"He speaks of his son," said Pedro to his companion, hearing him name the child—"What sayst thou, Sanchez? the offer is fair enough. We bind his arms—thou hast cords in thy pocket—thou wert always well provided—we bind him, and he leads us to his gold. We set him not free till it be sure in our grasp: Seven hat-fulls—thy hat is the largest, Sanchez—there is more good in having a large head than I was wont to think before—seven of thy hat-fulls, Sanchez—why, man, the reward of his excellency is a fool to it."

"Ay, and we can have that also," replied the other, in a whisper.

"Humph," said Pedro, also in a whisper, "but of that say nothing yet. It is agreed that we take the offer of the infidel."

"Ay! canst thou scruple? It is our fortune, Pedro—seven hat-fulls,—and I will take the nose of Señor Garabito in my fingers to-morrow. The man's man shall be his own master after that."

"Keep thy exultation for the morrow," replied the other. "Hark ye, Caonabo, we take thy offer. Thou shalt give us thy seven hat-fulls of gold, and as much more as thou wilt, and we will set thee free. But we will bind thy hands until the gold is before our eyes, and set thee free when we have it measured, and in possession."

"Will I be sure that thou wilt free me then?" demanded the rebel, who could ill conceal the scornful tone of his voice, and could not altogether hide the bitter smile of hatred and contempt which gathered about his lips.

"Dost thou doubt what I tell thee, infidel? Dost thou think I have no conscience? Have I not told thee? Wouldst thou have me swear this thing?"

"The Spaniard will swear to Caonabo," replied the rebel quietly in Spanish—then looking to Buru, he said in the tongue of the Oharaibée—

"I will belie him to his own gods—he shall swear;" and he watched with keen eyes and contemptuous scorn, while the two Spaniards lifted the cross to their lips, but by a mean and vulgar artifice interposing their thumbs between, swore solemnly to free their prisoner when he should have complied with his golden promise.

"It is well," exclaimed the savage—"Now place your cords upon my arms, and light torches, while I lead ye forth to the spot where the gold lies hidden."

This was soon done. The cords were placed securely upon his limbs,—torches were lighted, each of the Spaniards providing himself with one, and in a few moments more, the chieftain stood erect upon his native hills, with a heart growing more confident with every tread of his firm feet upon the earth. A voice of hope and of a strong reliance in his own good fortune, whispered in his bosom as he went forward.

"I feel that I must be free. It cannot be, that I, who have baffled the bands of the Spaniard and his dogs so long, shall fall at last under the knives of such base creatures as these. With the movement of my feet I feel my freedom—to the right and to the left there are gorges—some deep—deeper than the sea. Better that I should leap headlong into these, than be tied to their stakes of fire. Ho! Spaniards—my lords—the gold is on the path before us. Follow me close—I will lead you to the spot. Fear nothing. I have no weapons,—and see you not my hands are bound with your cords—I cannot fly."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE SPANIARDS WITH THEIR GOD.

It was with something of a submissive feeling that the Spaniards followed their savage captive along the hills. The native command of a superior spirit, and a mind ennobled by the mountain walks of liberty, asserted itself pre-eminently over them, from the moment when they emerged from the cabin in which they had made the rebel chief their prisoner; and though without a thought in their minds of the danger of entrusting so great a degree of freedom to their captive, they were yet oppressed in spirit with a conviction, which they declared not to each other, that he was now far less under their control than before. Had it become, on a sudden, a resolution with them to despatch him, though it might not have proved an impossible, they would yet have found it a more difficult thing than they could have imagined it at the moment when they had him actually in their grasp and beneath their daggers. With a quick superior mind, this consideration would have been the first, before the prisoner had been released from his captivity. It is the vulgar mind only which has no foresight, and never dreams of preparation.

Caonabo was no-less conscious of the advantages of his new position than were his enemies. Indeed, his consciousness had preceded the proposition by which he had contrived to persuade his captors into the concession, through which alone it could be duly felt. Yet he studiously forbore giving to his enemies any occasion for fear or suspicion. He walked before them slowly, and with sufficient humility—paused when they commanded, and in all respects strove to impress them with the belief that he himself was utterly hopeless of any escape, except through their indulgence. In this way he led them towards the

rocks that lay in many places jutting above the sea. At moments, the torches gave back to the Spaniards the aspect of grim and gloomy crevices—huge shadows rose suddenly in the air above them, and they could hear, at places that seemed almost beneath their feet, the roar and rush of waters, that were driven in by the swelling tides of the ocean. The rocks trembled as they went forward, and without being awakened to any fear of their captive, they began to be conscious of apprehensions necessarily arising from the remote, the gloomy, and desolate recesses into which he led them still deeper at every step. The more timid Sanchez drew nigh to his companion as he felt this growing conviction, and communicated his fears in a voice subdued to a whisper.

“Demonios! But this fellow will lead us into pitfalls, Pedro, that will carry us down even into the sea, which I can hear now rushing under the very rock on which we tread. This promise which he makes us of gold by battlements, he can never perform. He only desires time—he would lead us into danger, and escape us when we need him to help us out. Better that we should content ourselves with the offer of Obando, than lose it all by rashly trusting to this cunning rebel. Do we not already know his art? how he baffled Colon, the admiral, and D’Aguilar? we must not trust him farther.”

“By St. Anthony of the fishes, Sanchez, but thou hast my very thought. I had but now this notion myself. There is danger to us, as thou say’st. Look, when I wave my torch—see what an infernal chasm lies beside me, upon the very brink of which this savage leads us, and he carries no light, and his hands are tied, yet he walks as if he never felt a fear. It were easy for him, practised as he is in these mountain wanderings, to leap the chasm which we fall into. Hark ye,—get thy dagger ready while I bid him await us.”

The waving of the torch displayed a yawning gulf on the right hand of the speaker, along the edge of which his companion had been walking ignorantly for several minutes. The timid Sanchez started back and almost exclaimed aloud with horror, as the glaring light displayed the black depths and fragmented jaws of the cavernous abyss, and his hand trembled with his nervous apprehensions, even while he grasped his dagger, and put himself in readiness

to use it at the bidding of his comrade. Pedro was about to call the name of the rebel chief, and to command that he should halt, when the latter, as if by instinct comprehending the nature of the whispered dialogue which the two had just finished, anticipated his speech, and thus addressed them in broken Spanish :

"Now, my good lords, Spaniards, the place where the gold lies is close at hand."

"Ay, that is good news enough ; but the way is a rough one we must travel for it. Is the worst over, or have we any more of these infernal pits to scramble through ? If we have——"

The speaker concluded what he had to say in a whisper in the ears of his comrade. The reply of the avaricious Sanchez betrayed a change of mood and resolution in his mind.

"Why, as he tells us that the gold is nigh at hand, we may as well make sure of it first. We can use the steel when we have got what we came for. I am for going forward."

"Well—lead on, infidel, but let thy pace be something slower. I have not been sure of my feet for the last ten minutes—these are ugly rocks, and you tread quite too closely upon the hollows that are thick around us, and seem to lead down into the very bottom of the sea."

The rebel detached a stone from a precipice on which he stood, and the sullen plunge which immediately followed, as, bounding from rock to rock, it found its way at length into the waters, confirmed the apprehensive conjecture of the Spaniard.

"The sea lies under the rock, and Caonabo has lived upon the two. His gold is hidden among the crevices which lead down to the waters. Your eyes shall behold it now. Wave your torches before the path, lords Spaniards—you shall have gold which the governor Obando cannot win."

The words of the rebel, still uttered in broken Spanish, filled the hearts of the adventurers with enthusiasm. They drew nigh to where the Indian stood, and did as he directed. The blaze of the torches revealed to them a narrow fissure, which seemed formed by a rent in the rock, the consequence, most probably, of some volcanic eruption. Two ridges of the rock on which they stood, rising in juxta

position, revealed to them a sort of mouth, sufficiently wide for the entrance of one man, or perhaps two, and might have been the sheltering place for long seasons of the rebel himself, not less than of his treasure.

"I see nothing but what seems the jaws of some bottomless pit," exclaimed the greedy Sanchez. "Beware how thou triflest with us, savage, or the burning pincers shall tear thy quivering flesh, and the wild horses shall draw thy limbs asunder. I see no gold. I see nothing but the barren rock."

"Wouldst thou have me hide my gold on the top of the rock, where the chief of the *encomienda* may turn it over with his feet?" was the calm reply of the rebel, in the tones of whose voice might have been perceived a degree of contemptuous serenity, which the words themselves failed to express. "What thou seest," he continued, "is, indeed, but the mouth of a cavern only, but in that cavern the gold lies hidden in greater amount even than I have promised thee. Suffer me to descend and I will yield it to thee from below."

"By the Blessed Virgin, no!" exclaimed Pedro;—"that were but a fool's act, were we to do this, Caonabo. Thou shalt not overreach us in this fashion. Do thou stay where thou art until I descend, Sanchez; keep an excellent watch over the infidel, and let him taste thy dagger with the first movement which he strives to make beyond thy control. I will enter the cavern, and lift the treasure to the surface. It is not deep, Caonabo?"

"Not twice thy length, my lord."

"Is the place easy of descent?"

The reply was affirmative, and taking his dagger between his teeth, and waving his torch before him as he went, Pedro commenced his downward progress, and was soon lost to the sight of his comrade from above. But his occasional inquiries and remarks found their way upward, and apprised the two of his progress. After a few moments spent in search, his joyful exclamation announced to his companion the success of his pursuit, and every succeeding moment brought new intelligence of the treasure and its probable value, which led the greedy Sanchez into the most extravagant antics and expressions of joy. He pressed forward to the jaws of the cavern—waved the torch before him, and stooping, strained his avaricious eyes in the

vain hope of piercing the solid earth, and seeing into the dim recesses through which his comrade had gone. Meanwhile the keen eyes of the rebel watched his movements, and his stealthy footstep followed close behind him.

"Canst thou not bring the gold forward, Pedro—let me look upon it as well as thyself," was the cry of Sanchez, whose heart beat, and whose limbs trembled, with an almost spasmodic anxiety. "Look to the infidel, Sanchez," was the counsel of Pedro from below, and for a moment it commanded the attention of the former so far as to move him to resume his position and aspect of watchfulness. Caonabo, with the first movement of Sanchez, sank back into the inflexible stiffness of the statue, seeming, in eye, joint, and muscle, to possess as little consciousness or life. It was not long that the watchfulness of the greedy Spaniard could be preserved, and the placidity of the Indian arose from a perfect knowledge of the nature of the race which he dealt with. His apparent quietude and resignation soon lulled the suspicions of Sanchez into sleep, and when his comrade from below brought forward a heap of gold—for the treasures of a tribe had been stored away in this place by command of the cassique,—and placed it on a ledge of rock which formed one of the steps of the descent, he again stooped over the prize, watching it with a gloating gaze that betrayed the most intoxicating delight, when every returning movement of his companion increased the treasure. By rapid degrees he finally passed into the entrance, and sinking down on one of the steps, began to handle the yellow heaps which had seduced him into an utter forgetfulness of his charge. To attain more perfect freedom in this new employment, he laid his torch beside him at the entrance, the blaze illuminating the recess below, and reflected back from the glittering heaps, almost dazzling his own and the eyes of his companion. The latter again renewed his warning, but it came too late. The rebel was prompt to use the advantage which the indiscretion of Sanchez had given him. Lifting his foot above the neck of the stooping Spaniard, he thrust him forward with a single shove, then, almost in the same instant, placing his corded hands above the blaze of the torch, he held them inflexibly in the flame, and though the flesh seethed and scorched, did not shrink from the torture until his bands were burnt asunder. This was all the work of an instant. The cry

of Sanchez as he went headlong down into the pit, warned his comrade of the danger which threatened them both. He rushed upwards to the light, but the body of the latter, floundering in his path, obstructed his way, and just then the torch from above was extinguished by the rebel.

"Ha! thou infidel—beware, I tell thee," cried Pedro from below, in accents in which rage and apprehension might be equally discernible. "Beware what thou doest, lest I have thee bound to the stake, and make the faggots feed upon thy flesh."

"Dog of a Spaniard,—beast and reptile—base and worthless as thou art!—I defy thee and I spit upon thee. Thyself and thy companion are now my prisoners, and by the Horned God of the Charaibée thou shalt perish where thou art. Didst thou think I had faith in thee to lead thee to my treasure and think to be set free by thy hand? No! In your secret souls I saw your resolve. I knew your falsehood and your baseness, and even when ye whispered together the fate which ye meant for me—even then had I resolved upon your own. Ye are in the dwelling with the only god ye serve—he is around ye,—bright and yellow, and in abundance! Let him save ye—let him show ye another pathway out, for never do ye emerge into the light of heaven by that which carried ye down. I send after ye a door of rock, through which neither your strength nor your daggers shall ever force a way."

With words that were shrieks, the two Spaniards poured forth threats and entreaties, while they strove together in their mutual endeavours to reach the entrance before the rebel could effect the purpose which he declared. In their efforts, they grappled with each other—their hands were upon each other's throats.

"Back, Sanchez, ere I strike thee with my dagger."

"Nay,—back thou, lest I use mine. Am I not before thee? wherefore should I give thee way?"

The Indian meanwhile had placed his shoulders to the massive rock that lay on one side of the cavern's mouth, and which had probably been before employed for the purpose of securing the entrance. Already it hung upon the verge, and a moderate force was all that was necessary to heave it into the yawning chasm. A light hand was laid upon the shoulder of the chief.

"Ha! what art thou!" he demanded of the intruder. The voice which answered him was that of Buru, and the language was that of the Charaibée.

"Spare them, father, chief, let us leave them and fly. Their torches are gone out—they cannot find the path to follow us. Spare them!"

"Out hag—traitress,—dost thou speak to me to spare—spare the Spaniard—spare the bloodhound which has preyed upon my people, and with a tooth yet dripping with the blood of thy own child! Back from me, woman, lest I fling ye after them, and set the rock upon ye all. Back, I say—thy prayer has proved thy treachery—thou art sold to the accursed race! Tempt me not further, lest I spare not even thee."

The words of anger reached the Spaniards below, and, though they did not comprehend the language, they yet found some hope in the circumstance.

"What fools are we to be striving together here," said Pedro, "when we stand under a common danger. Go forward, Sanchez, in God's name, and I will follow thee, but rise quickly or this infidel will do as he has threatened. Here, to the left, thou art groping against the rock."

The reply of Sanchez was silenced by the heaving of the rock from above, and the mountain shook to its base as the massy wedge rushed into the mouth of the cavern, completely sealing up the entrance, and shutting them, in a living grave, for ever from the sight of day.

Their hollow cries and clamours reached the fierce cassique, and his wild laugh rose pre-eminently loud over the plaintive entreaties of his Christian-hearted wife. She still implored him to spare his enemies—even when his vengeful act had placed it beyond his own power to do so—for no single-handed mortal could withdraw the huge mass which had now become firmly socketed in the yawning jaws of the cavern.

"Away, fool, if not worse than fool. Away, woman, I trust thee no longer! Why hast thou betrayed me—why hast thou sympathies for such as these? Their hands are even now wet with the blood of thy child."

"Not these—not these—said I not it was Garabito?"

"They are all Garabitos—they are all Spaniards. Ha! ha! ha!—hearken to their howling. They plead for mercy, who have never been known to show mercy. Now, Spaniards,

I tread down your prayers as I tread upon your heads. Look to your yellow god that is with you—let him help ye to freedom if he can. I leave ye the gold ye love and the death ye fear.”

Speaking these words he leapt upon the mass which he had hurled above their heads, and stamped upon it with savage intoxication, as if he might thereby more effectually secure the fastening, already far beyond their power, even when united with his own, to remove. Then, while their shrieks and curses rose fast and furiously to his ears, he bounded away with a light step, which the woman vainly sought to overtake, in the direction of his cheerless cottage.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE FLIGHT TO FREEDOM.

He fled: heedless of the piteous cries of the woman which pursued him, imploring mercy no less for the Spaniards than for herself, he fled with a speed which enabled him to overpass in a few minutes the painful surface of rock and gully, which it had been the toil of a goodly hour for the three to traverse but a little while before. Regarding her as a traitress to his trusts,—as one who had betrayed him through those miserable weaknesses which he well knew were too common to her people, and had been the chief cause of their degradation, he gave no ear to her entreaties, and if he answered her at all, it was only to reply with accusation and bitterness to her alternate language of pleading and endearment. Her feeble limbs and less perfect knowledge of the way soon placed her far behind him, and he had penetrated his cottage, gathered up the mangled form of his boy within the shroud of cotton which she had provided, and was coming forth from the hut when she encountered him at the entrance. She fell at his feet, she clasped his knees with her arms, and bedewed the earth with her tears.

“Slay me,” she cried, in her own language—“slay me with thy keen knife, my father, but cast me not from thee while I live—while I now see thine eyes and hear thy voice, and know thee to be the father of the boy whose bloody form thou bearest to the sea. Let me look on him to the last, ere the waters swallow him. Let me bear him on the bosom which has suckled him—let the arms clasp him which clasped him nightly while he lived, and should be suffered to clasp him still, even when neither of us live. Oh, father—oh, chief, wherefore shouldst thou deny me

this?—wherefore shouldst thou think me false to thee?—now, now, when thou art all that the cruel sword of the Spaniard has left to me. I am at thy feet, Caonabo, and I pray for death at thy hands. If I am false to thee, I am not fit to live—if thou believest me so, whether I be false or true, I do not wish to live. Let thy knife go quickly into my heart, or sink the stone into my head, that I may not see thee depart in anger, or hear thy bitter voice of injustice and reproach.”

For a moment the strong man seemed moved. He paused, and though he lifted the child high on his shoulder, and above her reach, he yet looked down upon her with a countenance, in which it was difficult to say whether anger or sorrow was most predominant.

“Oh, woman, how hast thou deceived me! I believed in thee over all thy people. When the bloodhound was on my path, and his deep-mouthed bay went after me along the narrow ledges of the mountain—with the Spaniard goading him on with his spear, while the blood, dripping from my own side, told him where to follow,—when all my tribe fled from me, and some, the more base and timid, led the foe to the cavern where I slept—and would have sold me, for their own safety, to the tyrant whom they should have torn asunder, even as the tiger rends the carcass in his jungle—even then did I come to thee with confidence and love, and had no fear that thou too wouldst play me false!”

“I did not—father, chief, Caonabo—by the God of the blessed Islands of the Charaibée, I swear I have been always true to thee—I have kept the secret in my heart, and no Spaniard ever plucked it thence. I am true to thee as ever, and though thou slayest me with thy steel, which shall seem to me less cruel than thy bitter words, even in the last speech of death, I will declare to thee my truth. Believe me, Caonabo, as thou art the father of the boy, I have spoken nothing but the truth.”

“Peace, woman! if thou speakest thus, I will even fear that this too is a falsehood, and cast the boy—doubtful of its father—from the shoulders which maintain him now.”

The woman groaned and grovelled at his feet, burying her broken words in the earth with which her lips now mingled. He continued:

“I cannot doubt that thou hast betrayed me. None but

thou hast known that I came to thee by night. Thou hast gone to the city of the Spaniard, and the son of a chief—thy son—my son—is slain by his wanton sword. Then thou comest to me and whisperest with the cunning of a serpent but with the voice of a dove—There is peace on the hills,—the peace of death! There is no enemy—no Spaniard—he sleeps in his bohio, and his soldiers sleep around him. When I enter thy cabin, lo! the murderer of the son is there with a keen knife ready for the father. Away from my foot, woman, lest I trample upon thee!”

“Let thy foot be heavy on my neck, Caonabo—heavy to kill, but I will not leave thee—I will cling to thee though thou slayest me. Nay—spare me not. I ask thee to slay—I beg for death at thy hands. If thou slayest me, thou givest me back the boy, though I lose all in thee;—but if thou leavest me life, thou takest him from me with thyself, and all the thoughts and things which might lift the heart and lighten the burden of the slave. Thou wilt drive me to beg death from the Spaniard, and deem it a lighter hurt than that which my heart has had from thee.”

“Let him give thee what I deny. I will not slay thee. If the Spaniard strikes thee, let it be a blow for me, and thy treachery is fitly paid. Away from my feet!”

With a sudden grasp of the hand, he lifted her aside, and with just sufficient violence to free himself from her grasp. But the mountain fawn never leapt more lightly after the footsteps of its bounding dam, than did the poor Indian after the cassique. Once more she grasped his knees,—once more she sank at his feet, and renewed her entreaties. But now he yielded her no word. Breaking away with the haste of one who flies from the embrace of a foe, the fierce rebel hurled her down upon the path over which he fled, and her face lay prone among the rough rocks, while the blood gushed from her nostrils with the blow. Still she cried as he went from sight—

“Go not, Caonabo—go not till thou hast given me death. I have lived for thee and for the boy only, and if these be gone, I would not live. Go not—go not!”

He heard not her supplications. He gave them no heed. He was gone. The swift tread of his departing footsteps touched her ears no longer; and then, starting from the earth with a shriek that pierced the drowsy ears of night, and awakened a thousand mournful echoes, she rushed after

him down the rocks. But the way grew difficult, and a sudden conviction forced itself upon her, that it was now impossible to overtake him ere he reached the boat toward which he flew. With this conviction came a new determination to her mind—a determination that he should still accord to her the death for which she had prayed, since she might not be suffered to accompany his flight. Changing her course, she ascended the hills down which her steps had hitherto tended. She kept on a course which led to heights hanging directly above the ocean. There was one beetling rock under whose cavernous base the seas chased in constant violence—its sides rose up like a mighty wall above the waters, and its top was crowned with a peak that jutted out like a huge misshapen demon, crouching, as if ready to spring, and keeping a perpetual and far-piercing watch over the vast ocean-stretch of gray that lay before it. Bare and bleak, this narrow eminence, sharp and irregular, without barrier to guard and scarce foothold to sustain, had probably never been touched by any human footstep. But the danger of such a pinnacle had no discouragement to one sick of life, and hopeful only of its loss. A single bound placed the broken-hearted but still agile woman upon its narrow edges, and with a hand shading her eyes, she gazed down along the huge dark sides of the rock, until her glance mingled with the white foam that rose momentarily, fresh and curling aloft among the crags, from the constant strife between the billows and the steep. The night was bright with many stars that made the now unvexed surface of the sea a perfect mirror, and looked into it with faces of a tender brightness that seemed to purify its turbulence, and, as it were, aimed to impress its ever-restless bosom with a hallowed calm like that which the romantic worshipper cannot but believe the lasting possession of their own. Even where the shadows of the rock darkened the surface of the ocean, their chastened points of light were still visible; and, darting among them, after a little space, the keen glances of the woman beheld the frail bark of her husband, hollowed out with his own hands from the spongy trunk of the jarruma, glide from under the shelving mass where it had lain concealed, in readiness for the moment when he should be prepared to start upon his precarious voyage in pursuit of liberty. The light dip of the paddle was lost in the murmur of the waves that dashed up

among the rocks beside him, and the narrow and frail fabric stole forth like a thing of fairy from the frowning embrasures of the mountain. Already had the vigorous arm of the rebel impelled his vessel from the shore. He had parted from his Haytian home for ever. Its soft lights and balmy skies, and golden fruits, were forsworn, and the home or the grave before him was such only as the implacable god of the Charaibée was willing to vouchsafe to one who had defied the superior deities of the Christian, in defying himself. He shook its dust from his feet in holy indignation, and with the corpse of his son before him—to be given to the sea, when he should have lost sight of the scene of his murder—the proud and desolate rebel turned his back from the mountain which had so long afforded him a refuge, when all Hayti had denied him a home. A sudden scream from the heights above him warned him that his separation was not yet complete. Well did he know the tones of that mournful voice, and the appealing terror of that single shriek came to his soul in a language of reproach, which it had failed to possess before. He turned with involuntary haste as he heard it, and his eyes were lifted with the earnestness of a sympathizing spirit to the brooding eminence from which it came. He saw in the dim starlight the slight and symmetrical outline of that form which had borne the unconscious child at his feet. Her hands were stretched forth at once to himself and heaven. He heard the broken accents—the pleading prayer that asked for pity—the bold assurance that insisted upon her truth; but, of a sudden, his heart that had begun to yield, grew hardened within him. He waved his hand impatiently, as he cried aloud in answer to her prayer—

“To the Spaniards and their yellow god in the rock,—I cannot believe thee, woman. Thou speakest with the tongue of the serpent—the truth is not in thee!”

The action of his hands, the dip of his oar, and the forward shooting of his boat, rather than the words he uttered, too perfectly declared her doom. She saw that he consigned her to forgetfulness, and to those foes who were quite as much feared by her as they were hated by him. With a single glance behind her to the shore, her hands naturally lifted all the while to those heavens where the gods of heathen and Christian are alike supposed to dwell, a single involuntary prayer to the natural principle of good, in which

all human nature confides as by a natural instinct, for that mercy which her husband had denied, and she bounded from the steep—far as her light limbs could bear her—forward—in the course of the little bark which had refused to receive her. Involuntarily, with the sudden plash of her descending body into the water, the motion of the strong man's heart seemed almost utterly to cease—the oar trembled in his hand above the billow which it failed to reach, and, as if convulsively and without a thought, with his next movement he brought the boat round from its course, and his eye beheld, but a few paces before him, the unstruggling form,—sustained briefly by her garments,—her hands outstretched, still imploring for that indulgence which he had so frequently denied.

“Father,—chief—let me clasp the boy once more!”

These were her only words. The fierce, proud, suspicious savage was overcome. Her last act had convinced him of his injustice. A single stroke of the oar brought his bark beside her, and his arms lifted her into the frail vessel which now carried all his fortunes. She sank down beside the corpse of the child in a happy stupor which knew nothing but that she was once more the trusted wife—sharing the hopes and the perils of her lord, and not denied that last look upon the dead and that last embrace to the beloved one, which are, perhaps, the chief earthly consolations which death suffers to the surviving. Without chart or pilot—without guide, or book, or compass—with nothing but those observing instincts which made the Caribbeans the terror of the sea in that early period and region, let us leave the rebel to his fate, assured as we are, that his present danger, though involving the fear of storm and shipwreck, were as nothing to those which had hunted him for weary seasons with ferocity and hate, and threatened him with the most savage forms of death, in the wanton tortures of the *auto da fe*, the common agent of Spanish bigotry and crime.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## PRECAUTIONS AGAINST PEBIL—NEW PROMISES FOR THE FUTURE.

THAT night of strife and perilous events was not yet over, and it will be fitting that we return to Santo Domingo, leaving the flying rebel to his fortunes on the sea, and look into the progress of such other parties to our story as have a claim to our regards. We left Vasco Nunez after his brief pursuit of the cassique, a wondering spectator of the scene in which the assassination of Garabito had taken place. The dead body of that miscreant lay before him beneath the tree where he had harboured himself for the prosecution of his meditated crime, but which had been fated to behold his own sudden and deserved punishment. The noble enemy whom his scheme had threatened, stooped down and inspected his wounds, and carefully felt his heart to ascertain if help could yet be made available to life. His own generous and unsuspecting nature never for a moment conjectured the motive of Garabito's presence in such a place, for any dishonourable object; and could he have found any sign of life in the bosom of the victim, his succour would have been bestowed as readily as if demanded by his most precious friend. But though obviously beyond all help of man, and skill of art, the generous cavalier found no little difficulty in resolving whether to leave the body where it was, or to convey it for the remainder of the night to the shelter of his own bohio; and his irresolution increased duly with the degree

of deliberation which he bestowed upon the subject. To retire in silence leaving the body of a Christian man without watch or tendance, and to the possible attack of the mountain wolf, was scarcely justifiable to his own mind, particularly when he remembered that that man had been his bitter foe. To bear him away, and to be found with his blood upon his hands or his carcass upon his shoulder, was to subject himself to those suspicions of his murder, which would have been natural enough when the conflict was remembered which had taken place between the two only the day just past. While he stood musing and yet bewildered, the tread of a light footstep reached his ears, and before he could place himself within the shadow of the fig to which he retired, a third person came upon the scene whom he at once recognised as the astrologer.

"Micer Codro," said the cavalier in a low tone while he re-advanced to the place of blood—"thou art come in season to resolve me."

"Thou livest! Jesu be praised—God is merciful—he hath heard the prayer of a sinner. Oh, my son, bitter have been my thoughts—great my fears—wonderful and many the troublous doubts which I have had of thy fate to-night. I dreaded that the uplifted dagger was in thy heart; nay—did I not see the stroke? did not the blood stream before and darken up all my sight? Tell me, my son, by what holy help didst thou escape the danger? Who turned aside the dagger? who came to thy succour in the dreaded time? Speak! name the good being that I may put another Christian name in the prayers of a hopeful sinner."

"Thy words are strange, Micer Codro; what danger is this of which thou speakest? I have had no peril—I have had no strife; and seest thou not, this is the body of mine enemy—of Garabito."

"Then he hath been in watch for thee, and thou hast slain him!"

"Nay—arm of mine hath not been put forth in anger since thou left'st me. I am guiltless of his blood."

"Hah! can it be—and this? How is this—Wherefore?"

"I know not. I heard the shriek of one in sudden pain as I left the cottage of Teresa."

"Thou hast sought her—thou hast seen her, then, and she——"

"Is nothing to the poor cavalier of fortune!" was the bitter interruption. "We will say nothing more of her. Let it be enough that, in justice to thee, I declare thy knowledge of the woman's nature to be better than my own."

"Yet I would, my son, thou hadst not sought one so vain and insensible. I would——"

"Spare her thy reproaches—we will speak not of her henceforward. As I have said, when I left the bohio, I heard the cries of one in a sudden agony, and hurried to the spot. There I saw this man upon the earth, and another flying from him. I pursued the murderer but he gained the hills ere I could compass the space between, and failing in his pursuit I returned to the victim, whom, until now, I knew not to be Garabito. Ere thou camest, I was in doubt whether to bear the body with me."

"Touch it not!" was the sudden exclamation of the astrologer. "Wouldst thou be questioned for the deed, as assuredly even now thou wilt if thou fliest not. Thou must fly, Vasco Nunez—the hills must hide thee until thou canst shake the dust of Española from thy feet; for, of a surety, will the officers of Obando be upon thee, and that selfish tyrant will gladly find fault in thee to wreak his bitter hate upon thy head. They will fix this deed upon thee."

"Nay, I defy their malice. I have used no weapon this night."

"And what will thy bare assurance avail thee? Be sure there has been a scheme set here for thy destruction. He who slew Garabito was, perchance, thy friend. Why was Garabito here—had he sought the Señora would he not have gone to the bohio? But he sought thee—he sought thee to slay thee in the dark as thou camest unheeding from her habitation;—and look, is not this the drawn sword of the assassin? Look, my son, does not this speak for the murderous purposes of the villain, set on, perchance, by the vain, cruel woman herself?"

"Peace, Micer Codro—thou speakest like a madman, when thou speakest of her."

"Do I not know her, my son?"

"No! even now thou dost not know her, if such is thy knowledge. But I pray thee, speak of other persons and

things. It is true, this, which I saw not before, is the sword of Garabito; but he seems not to have struck a stroke with it against his enemy. It hath no fresh tokens upon its blade."

"He hath been taken from behind," replied the astrologer, who was busy inspecting the body. "See, the knife hath gone down—a death, itself—between the neck and shoulder. The assassin hath marked out special places for his strokes. There are three, and any one of them were beyond the succour of the leech. Be sure, his weapon hath done thee service—Garabito hath lain in wait for thy coming."

"I had not feared the coward were it so, but it cannot be—a creature so worthless had not spirit even for the secret business of the matador. His nerves had yielded at the sound of my footstep—he had never lifted weapon to my heart. No! no! He hath had no such purpose—an enemy hath overtaken him as he drew nigh to the bohio—and—but how idle is all this conjecture. Shall we not take the body with us or give notice to his friends of the place to find it?"

"Neither, my son. Let it lie, even where it was left by the murderer—and do thou speed with me to the rocks where I can put thee in secret till the truth be known and thy safety made secure. There is a mystery in this matter, and I fear me, a secret purpose among thy enemies to entrap and to destroy thee. They will place this deed against thee even couldst thou show thy hands white, and thy blade undarkened by blood. Get thee in secret and I will glean intelligence for thee of what they do, and what may be done for thee. If thou hast many enemies, as the lofty have ever, thou hast also friends among those to whom the noble soul and the high purpose is dear, and they shall be busy in thy behalf. But in flight alone canst thou find safety now."

"They will assume the flight as countenance for the suspicion. 'Tis the guilty alone that fly," said Vasco Nunez.

"Alas! would this were true, but the world's history proves against it. 'Tis the good that most fly from the guilty, who are always bold in numbers, and by their clamours strengthen themselves in evil while they drive the few, the timid and the good, from the field which they thence cover with blood, and make loathsome with the

licentiousness of their crime. It is no shame to fly from these when it is not in thy power to contend with them. The friends of Garabito, and Obando himself is a close one, are thy foes already; and his death in the close neighbourhood of the bohio of Davila, which thou art known to seek nightly, and which many eyes may have beheld thee seek to-night, will, when thy strife with him is remembered, be strong presumption against thee. Fly, then, if it be for the rest of the night and the morrow only, until it be known what is said of the deed, and if thy name be spoken when it is hinted among the people; I, meanwhile, will go abroad and bring thee tidings, it may be of good, which shall enable thee to come forth in safety."

The arguments of the astrologer were those of plain sense; and though for a long time resisted by the cavalier, who felt some shame at a flight which argued guilt and savoured of timidity, he yet yielded at last to the solicitations of his companion, and prepared to fly while the night lasted, to the secret places in the neighbouring mountains, with which a war with the cassiques had already made him familiar.

"I will but take Leonchico with me," said Vasco Nunez, as he moved from the spot, followed by his companion, in the direction of his own dwelling. "They shall not make the dog answer for the flight of the master, and if they follow hard upon our footsteps in anger, there shall be two foes to encounter instead of one; but thou speakest of signs that affrighted thee, Micer Codro—and wherefore didst thou think that I stood in danger from mine enemies? What didst thou see in the heavens—in the aspect of that star which thou hast so fondly assumed to be mine own? Speak, my father, and if thou canst find for me a present promise of good in its ever-changing aspects, then declare it quickly to my ears, for never, since the day when my feet first pressed the deck of the caravel which was to bear me to the strange lands and waters, hath my heart sank in sadness more grievous than is that which afflicts it now. Never did I more perfectly need the consolation of a friend, and the promise of the future than in this dim and troublous hour."

"And never yet hath thy star shot forth more favouring glances than I gather from its aspects now. Strange and sudden are its changing glories. But a little while, and it

spoke of the dagger of the assassin, hanging upon thy path, and pointed at thy breast. Now—let us forward my son, for crossing lights dazzle my eyes, and sudden malignant fires start up and shoot along the path of thy fortune, betokening still pressing danger, though the aspect of thy own star would seem to declare that a heavy burden of evil had already fallen from thy wing. I see dangers, but thou shalt escape them—troubles conflict with thee—the strifes of men who hate and men who fear, and men who have not yet learned to follow and obey thee. But the day springs suddenly up with a new joy, even from the deepest and darkest caverns of the night; and, strange as it may seem, now that thou art helpless and beset—with friends that fear to serve, and enemies prompt to pursue—yet wert thou never nigher to the bright fulfilment of thy hopes, even when the Maragnon lay ready to thy command on the quiet bosom of the Ozama. But let us onward, my son. I would look at the blessed faces above from the mountain peaks to which thou fliest. I would read more closely this chronicle of thy life, to which my own desire no less than my own life, is inseparably linked for ever.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## REPININGS OF AMBITION IN FETTERS.

MEANWHILE, the matador Ortado sped in silence and swiftness towards the encomienda of Ribiero, from the bohio of whom he had issued but a few hours before with the most sanguine assurances of success given and entertained by all parties. It was neither his wish nor policy to fly, leaving his employer without succour in his danger. But a moment's reflection convinced him that he had no alternative—that his show of help would lead only to his own exposure and consequent risk, and could be of no sort of avail in behalf of the wounded man. The necessity was indeed pressing, or so seemed to him at that moment, for his own escape. At the first fearful shriek of the victim, which drew his eyes away from the approaching cavalier to fix them on his employer, he beheld the latter, already down upon his knees, severely wounded, and completely at the mercy of an enemy who yielded none, and who appeared, and was himself, entirely unhurt. He saw that Garabito offered no defence, and was only praying for his life. Even his approach must have failed to stop the unscrupulous blow—the second, and, perhaps, the third,—which he saw descending; while the probability was, that, in the very first, the dagger of Caonabo had already drawn the life-blood from the bosom of the victim. The instant conviction of Ortado persuaded him that the assailant from behind was in the employ of Vasco Nunez who was rapidly advancing in front—that the plans of Garabito and himself for the assassination of the cavalier had been betrayed or otherwise discovered; and that the blows which had levelled his employer to the earth, were the result of a

counter-ambuscade which their destined victim had prepared for themselves. Nothing, indeed, could have seemed more reasonable to the professional assassin than thoughts like these. The simultaneous coming of Vasco Nunez with that of the unknown assailant in his rear, seemed to denote a co-operation of party which was utterly conclusive of this conviction. He stood, under these circumstances, between two enemies—both utterly unharmed—both strong powerful men—one of them the most expert swordsman beyond all odds in all San Domingo, and the other, most probably, a chosen soldier—he, without any weapon but his dagger, and without any inducement to a desperate fight, excepting the engagement with his employer which implied no struggle; and which, now that the latter was most probably beyond all power of reproach, seemed to the cool murderer a matter as foolish as gratuitous. Having lost, in the single moment in which his eyes had been averted from the approach of Vasco Nunez to the spot where Garabito cried for mercy, the opportunity for striking the cavalier; and as the latter had hurried, in that brief space, beyond him, and in the direction of the strife going on in front, leaving him unseen,—the cunning assassin, congratulating himself on a degree of good fortune as unlooked for as undeserved, quietly sunk back into the adjoining thicket, and made his way out from the grounds in a direction as far as possible from that where the danger seemed to await him. Taking for granted the death of Garabito, he did not loiter in the neighbourhood with any desire to obtain assurance of the fact, but sped at once towards the place where he well knew the friends of his employer were still assembled,—as anxious, he well knew, as Garabito had been himself, for those tidings of the death of a hated enemy which they had little doubt that the murderer would bring them. They heard his story with looks of stupid consternation, and, for awhile, surprise and horror had complete mastery over all their faculties. The Bachelor Enciso was the first to recover himself.

“Had Jorge Garabito been but half a man,” he said, “this never would have happened—if he had kept with you or beside you, Ortado, and made good play for the one while you did the business of the other. But he was in truth no less a coward than a fool, and we should not lament him for an instant, but that his death baffles the plan

to ensure that of Vasco Nunez. You do not hold yourself bound, Ortado, by your pledge to Garabito, to make good the stroke against his enemy?"

The question which Enciso only insinuated was quickly answered by the matador.

"Jesu! No! How know I that the Señor Garabito hath not forgiven all his enemies, and the Señor Vasco among them?" replied the devout assassin.

"He had scarcely time for that, if your own account of the affair be true," returned the lawyer.

"And this may be his great sorrow now—even at this very moment, my masters—in the world to which he hath gone. If it were in pity for his soul only I should be bound to take no life in his behalf. But this shall be a question for the father Francisco; and the money which I have taken from the Señor Garabito, for that part of our business which is left undone shall be paid honestly into the coffers of Holy Church. Besides, thou knowest, Señor Hernando, that I strike no blow unless the party who desires it look also on the performance. Now, if the Señor Garabito will but signify by his presence such a desire—"

"Pshaw, man, no more of this. Thou shouldst have been a lawyer, and I doubt not will yet be a shaven monk, preparing heathen savages for the stake by fifties. It is understood that the pledge is taken from thy dagger and, so far as thou art willed, Vasco Nunez must go free."

"Even so, señor," was the reply. "I like not to seek a second time when my first blow is baffled, and such a penalty taken for the attempt as hath followed this venture. Besides, I never strike men on my own account. That were but a profligate squandering of my resource. If thou wouldst have me try this cavalier a second time, thou shalt pay the reckoning, señor. I say not that I will not do what thou devisest for the customary charge."

"Thou art but a sorry Jew, after all," replied the Bachelor, "and thou gettest not thirty pieces of mine for a matter which the Governor Obando shall execute at cost of the King."

"How! the Governor?" demanded Ribiero.

"Ay, the Governor. Dost thou not hold Garabito to be a dead man—a man slain by the stroke of the assassin?"

"Nay,—of this there can be little question."

"And who hath slain him but Vasco Nunez of Balboa? Is not that thy faith, Señor Ortado, thou of the Christian conscience and the tender hand?"

"That he hath had it done, Señor Hernando I cannot even doubt," replied the assassin,—“but if the question be asked of me, did Vasco Nunez strike the blow, I were bound, as a lover of the truth, to answer nay.”

"Thou art over-scrupulous, Ortado, but thy distinction availeth thee but little. The dagger reaches the heart, but who thinks to make the keen steel liable for the blood it draws? What alcalde mayor decrees the gallows to the unconscious knife. It is he who sends the dagger home to the heart—it is he who hath willed the deed, that the law esteemeth guilty of its performance, and dost thou not believe that this deed came of the will and the order of Vasco Nunez, and was performed under his own countenance and direction? Dost thou not think that if Vasco Nunez had encountered with Jorge Garabito in the spot where his emissary found him, that his own hand had struck the blow which was given to the hand of another? Speak, if such be not thy thought—nay, thy solemn conviction, Ortado—I defy thee as a man of sense and of truth to hold any other.”

"This surely is my thought, señor, and my solemn conviction. I gainsay it not. Said I not this when I first brought ye the tidings of this affair?"

"It is enough for thee to say, and enough to finish all the business of this insolent pretender. This star of Vasco Nunez shall sooner shine above his gory head upon the block than behold him master of that fabled sea of the south of which this dreamer Micer Codro points daily to the money-lenders of Santo Domingo. Thou shalt say these things to the alcalde mayor, and by noon to-morrow, the alguazil shall be on the track of this flaunting cavalier. He shall weep that he ever left his cabbage-garden at Salvatierra.”

The resolution of the conspirators, thus made at the suggestion of Enciso, was proceeded in without delay; and, as the astrologer had predicted to his friend, while persuading him to a seasonable flight, with the announcement of the business of the ensuing day, there was a hue and cry in Santo Domingo after the supposed offender, and nothing but his premature escape could possibly have saved

him from the harpies of the law. Obando, the Governor, by whom he had always been disliked, as well because of his sterling independence of character, which forbade that he should truckle to power when unallied to native superiority of mind and spirit, as because of his greater reputation and popularity,—was glad of an opportunity, by exercise of his legal station to degrade and bring to punishment if he could, a person over whom he could obtain advantage in no other manner. To the ordinary process of the law in criminal cases, he added new terrors and powers by construing the offence of Vasco Nunez— even supposing him to have committed the murder—into something of a treasonable character—resting this charge on the strained assumption, that, as Garabito held an inferior office directly from the appointment of a king's officer, he had been slain while actually in the service of the sovereign,—and consequently in resistance to the crown. Special agents drawn from the established military of the place, were despatched in various quarters in his pursuit, and for some nine days or more, the chief topic of interest among all classes, was derived from the thousand rumours of his flight and escape, which the garrulous always invent for the wonder of the gossiping. But the interest gradually died away as each new story proved untrue, and other circumstances of greater public importance soon superseded the stirring business of the present. The two fleets of Ojeda and Nicuesa set sail for the respective divisions of that—to them—terra incognita,—which they had divided without having seen, and to which they had attached boundaries, when they yet lacked all knowledge of its character and limits. The unfortunate cavalier, Vasco Nunez, saw the tops of their distant vessels from a lonely cavern that looked out upon the sea, and bitterly did he upbraid his fortune as he felt those misgivings of their success in his own projects, which even his knowledge of the deficiencies of the two governors could not wholly overcome.

“Some favouring wind,—some happy accident!” he murmured to the chafing billows at his feet, “will bring them to that hidden sea. They will gather the spoils of that unknown ocean which I gaze on even in the dreams of night—their prows will break the stillness of those secret waters and penetrate to that empire of the sun beyond, which, I well know, touched by his latest smiles, must

teem with a wealth of gold and gems, to which the tidings of Marco Polo and Cathay were burdens of slightest profit. The fierce, headlong, and rude-minded Ojeda will stumble upon treasures of which he had no thought! The vain, womanly Nicuesa—a gentler spirit, and a nobler man—will glide into rivers that open on his sight when his heart sinks in weariness, and when he lacks all purpose and design. He will ascend with unconscious prows the deep avenues that lead to worlds which I have long since traversed with the wings of my thought; and the fortune which strives to baffle the persevering effort and the bold design, will, with a like hostility to desert, bestow her crowns and her treasures upon those incapable, who yield all the labour unto her and do nothing and are nothing of themselves. What need have I of concealment? wherefore should I fear the threatened death and the tortures of Obando? I have nothing now to live for, and I should not fear to die. Better, indeed, that the heart should cease to beat with the anxious hope and the fine aspirings, when the limbs are shackled by their own impotence, and the arm may not be stretched for the proud conquest which the eye beholds in the distance, which the mind only can overcome. I would, Micer Codro, that thou hadst not persuaded me to flight. It might have been that I had found passage in the fleet of one or other of these captains, and though I lacked all lead and command in their armament, I had yet been suffered to look upon the empire which it had been my thought to conquer and to sway."

The promise of the astrologer, at such moments of despondency, scarcely sufficed to console or soothe even for a moment, the spirit which hope deferred had at length so sickened of life.

"Thou tellest me that I shall conquer and shall sway them yet. Alas! my father,—I can believe nothing now but what promises new sorrow and disappointment. Canst thou tell me of flight from these lonely rocks, and this accursed city in which my heart has been crushed, and my mind has been baffled, and all my purposes have been set at naught? Help me to flight, I care not whither it tends, so that I may rid me of the weight of wo and of despondency with which the very air of Espanola seems oppressed and burdened."

"Be not impatient, my son. Know we not, that as

there are no two leaves entirely alike, even upon the same tree, so there are no two hours the same, even in the same day. The successive minutes grow with successive changes, and the cloud which darkens the watery sky at morning, becomes a glorious canopy under the glances of the scorching sun at noon."

"Ah, Micer Codro, these pictures of thy fancy move me not. These ships of Ojeda, and of Nicuesa—their tall masts are fading fast in the blue world of distance—their passage fills my heart with bitterness. They glide to the ocean and the realm which should have been mine—the favouring breeze wraps itself in their bellying canvass, and makes itself a home within them, as it impels them to that which they seek in Veragua. The sun smiles on their progress and guides them on their path. They go to renown and conquest,—while I—I who have told them of the empire which lay under that golden light, and have grown confident of its achievement as my own—I grope among the rocks, and howl at their departure, and curse the fortune which has defrauded me of my right—bestowing it upon a stranger. Look upon the stars, Micer Codro, and say if thou canst tell me of worse fate than mine, in all their capricious chronicles?"

"Ay—theirs!—the very leaders whose fate thou hast but now envied, even theirs is a worse destiny than thine. True, the favouring wind swells their canvass, and the sun smiles along their path, and the applauding clamours of the blind multitude follow them, with admiration little short of that homage which is due only to Heaven. But the wind will fall out of their sails, and strive against them—the sun shall withdraw his light from their path—the fierce tornado will strive with them in unknown waters, and this applauding multitude shall hear of their disasters with groans and hisses, and feel the pleasure of a base heart in the downfall of the daring and the great. Cease thy complainings, Vasco Nunez, they do thee harm, and take from thy otherwise perfect nobleness. It is not for the resolute man to chafe like the weak woman at the sudden storm which drives him back from his course, or leaves him shipwrecked on the shores of a heathen empire. He must buckle on his armour, and awaken all his spirit, and gird up his loins for an enduring struggle to the last, even though he be overcome and lose the triumph. But other shall be thy fortune,

Vasco Nunez. The promise which I have made thee so often before, I repeat to thee again. The cloud which shows thee now but a face of gloom and threatening, will turn upon thee its edges of golden light to-morrow. Fear nothing, but give thyself to the hours which are yet to come."

"Look, Micer Codro—dost thou behold Leonchico? how, perched on yonder rock, he too is watching the departing vessels. Methinks, he regards them with an anxiety not unlike that which fills the breast of his master. He, too, has his dreams of strife, or at least employment. He chafes at the inaction which eats like rust into the soul, and leaves it worthless and without strength or motion. Go forth, my father, and bring me tidings, if thou canst, of better things. Help me to fly from this dreary dwelling, lest, in my disquiet and despair, I fling myself into the waters, glad to escape, even by death, from an existence without life and maintained without desire."

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE PROGRESS OF THE RIVALS—VASCO NUNEZ ON THE WATERS.

IN such manner, day after day, and week after week, did the impatient spirit of Vasco Nunez repine at his confinement. To the generous spirit there is nothing so painful and oppressive, as the lack of stirring and manly employment; and to one, having such hopes as the cavalier in question, and plans of such vast extent, and purposes of such daring achievement, his present state of inglorious restraint fretted his soul into fever, and made him querulous and unjust to himself, and to the friends who were still striving, though secretly, in his behalf. No one laboured for him more assiduously than the venerable astrologer, to whose watchful care he was indebted for provisions no less than wholesome counsel, and warming promises of better times. The old man never once relaxed in his kindnesses, and his confidence in his own glowing predictions in the cavalier's favour, seemed, indeed, to gather new strength and ardour at those very moments when the fickle fortune appeared most inclined to baffle them. But it needed something more than fair promises and friendly words to restore the buoyant spirit of hope to the warrior who had been so lately and so severely tried by fortune. He listened without reply to the enthusiastic fancies of the aged man, whose words scarcely penetrated his ears, and failed utterly to sink into his heart as formerly. Stretched at length, among the low crags that rose beside the sea, and were sometimes half-buried in its waters, he maintained a mournful watch along the gloomy waste, his eyes peering far into those obscure resins into which his fancy had already gone with the eagle-speed of a conqueror. When he replied to the venerable man who sought to soothe and

strengthen him, he averted not his eyes from the mournful watch which they maintained, and his words were few, and his thoughts, such as those of a mind which was far away in other realms, and filled with occupations foreign to the dull inaction of the miserable life he led. Nor did the sluggish necessity under which he groaned fail to impress itself upon his personal aspect. His eyes grew sunken and dim—his cheeks sallow, and the thick beard, untrimmed and unheeded, spread itself over his face, making wild and frightful those noble features, which had been esteemed no less beautiful than manly. The same indifference of mood to the ordinary matters of his appearance, extended itself to his garments, and but few could have recognised the once courtly cavalier in the savage and seemingly unconscious figure that sometimes crouched like a hungry vulture along the steeps that hung above the sea, and sometimes lay out-stretched, heedless of its rising waters, along the narrow ledges that encountered and broke the first rude assaults of the swelling surges. With a seemly similarity of mood, the devoted hound, who had so long followed the fortunes of his master in days of more activity and better reward to both, crouched with him on the steeps, or lay beside him on the ledges, or with an instinct that is sometimes of more avail than any human reason, watched the sinuous and secluded pathway which led to his place of refuge, ready, as it were, to warn him of danger, and meet death in his defence. But the pursuers never reached him in the shelter to which he fled, though strife and overthrow itself at times seemed far preferable to the impatient spirit, pining with its constrained inactivity; and weary weeks and months finally went by, until the prisoner among the rocks, as effectually a prisoner as if he had been the tenant of the dungeons of Obando, began to apprehend that he had been utterly forgotten, both by friends and fortune—that the day of his release was gone by for ever, and the dreadful decree of stagnation had gone forth against him, leaving him to a life of such apathy as that of the weed, that sinks and rises only with the heavings of the sluggish sea, on the green edges of which it sleeps and festers for ever.

But the hour of change was at hand; that change which is alone constant, among all the things and thoughts of life. One day, when he least looked for better hopes, the vane-

nable friend who had clung to him without regret, and toiled in his behalf without faltering, brought him joyful tidings which promised him relief. News had reached San Domingo of the armament of Ojeda and of Nicuesa; and the desponding spirit of Vasco Nunez, which no word of his companion hitherto seemed able to awaken or enkindle, now leapt with the keenest emotions as he hearkened to the narration of his rivals' fortunes. His impatience to hear the tidings scarcely suffered the old man to proceed.

"But thou hast not said, Micer Cadro, who hath brought this intelligence. Can it be that Ojeda hath returned from his enterprise? He hath not surely made discoveries of such profit in such little space."

"No! he hath done little, if the truth be told, either to profit his fortune or his fame. He hath been rash and headstrong, as thou saidst he would be, and hath been in grievous peril and suffering, from which nothing had saved him but the timely succour of the Señor Diego. Juan de la Cosa, whose sober counsel he scorned to take, hath been slain by the Caribs, and though the ship which Ojeda sends brings many captives, and much gold, it will count as nothing against his losses, which have been great, and his sufferings, which are marvellous to hear."

"Let me hear them. But first, give me to know what hath been the course of Ojeda. What point did he first make after departure from San Domingo?"

"Cartagena—thou knowest the place."

"Ay—I sailed with Bastides when it was first discovered by the Spaniards in 1501. La Cosa was his pilot then. The people are Caribs, with swords of palm-wood, and poison their arrows. The women fight with a lance. He had need to keep close watch among these savages, who are no such timid wretches as these Haytien islanders."

"They soon taught him this, for though la Cosa counselled Ojeda to leave Cartagena for the shores of Uraba, the headstrong captain landed with his troops, and demanded the instant submission of the savages."

"They answered him with darts and defiance, and the battle soon followed, as one may swear who knows the fiery temper of Ojeda. Well—"

"The Indians were routed and fled—the Spaniards pursued, taking gold and prisoners at every step, till when

their hands were fullest, they came to a stronghold of the enemy. This they overcame, slew many, scattered the rest, and dispersed themselves in pursuit."

"The madmen! what followed then—an ambuscade?"

"As thou say'st, thousands of savages suddenly rushed out in troops from all parts of the forest, and the scattered bands of the Spaniards vainly strove to come together. But they were overwhelmed by numbers, and sank on every side beneath clubs and poisoned arrows."

"And Ojeda—he fell not?" demanded the impatient Vasco Nunez, his blood rising into heat at the narration. "He did not perish, nor could he fly at such a moment! what then, what did he?"

"With the danger, he drew those immediately around him to the shelter of a small enclosure. Here the savages beleaguered him. It was here that La Cosa perished and all, marvellous to relate, but Ojeda himself."

"How escaped he?"

"By sallying forth amidst the enemy like one whom they could not harm, and disarming the danger by seeking it in its home. The Indians terrified by his deeds, his skill and fleetness, left him an open pathway for escape. But of seventy Spaniards that followed Ojeda in this mad incursion, but one escaped, to bear the last words of La Cosa to his captain."

"What of him—what of Ojeda then? Did the savages fail to pursue him?"

"Days after, the people from the ships found him, after close search, half dead among a thicket of mangroves, growing on the sea-side. He was lying among the rocks, and though speechless from cold and hunger, he yet bore his sword in his stiffened hand and his buckler on his shoulder."

"A most headstrong, but a gallant fool. I rejoice me that he lives. It were a pity so brave a man should perish by such miserable folly. Were he wise and more temperate he were well fitted for great things. But thou hast not spoken of Nicuesa—it does not seem that he gave succour to Ojeda in his peril."

"His perils are not yet over. They brought him, feeble and spiritless, to the sea-shore, and while they were yet administering to his wants with food and wine, the squadron of Nicuesa came in sight. This troubled Ojeda, when

he remembered the challenge he had given, and the harsh threats which he had so freely spoken against his rival—and hiding himself again within the woods, he bade his people conceal from Nicuesa the place of his retreat. But the Señor Diego, like a noble gentleman, forgave his follies, bade them bring Ojeda to his vessel, and joined arms with him to revenge his losses upon the savages who had occasioned them. This done, the spoil was shared evenly between them, and they separated, the Señor Diego taking his course for Veragua, while Ojeda steered for the gulf of Uraba, as he had been counselled by La Cosa from the first. Here he hath chosen a place for his town, and hath built a wooden fortress, and houses for his people. The place he calls San Sebastian, because of the arrows by which the Caribs hath given him such lessons to remember. It is to this place he hath summoned the Bachelor Enciso, as to his seat of government, the Bachelor having already the appointment of his *alcalde mayor*."

"The encouragement is small for one better skilled in argument than strife, and Enciso will soon discover that the toil were more profitable, even if burdened with less honour, to glean the spoils of the infidel at second-hand, from the adventurer who hath risked his life to procure them, than to peril his own person against the Caribs—what saith he at these tidings of Ojeda, and the summons to his judicial dignity?"

"The captives and the gold have reconciled him to his fortune. He is a person possessed—already he speaks in the tone of one having power over thrones and principalities. He hath employed all the criers to gather recruits for Ojeda, and with the profits from the sale of captives and the gold sent by Ojeda, he hath begun to lay in large stores and munitions of war in compliance with the demands of his governor. Ere long he will be fit for sea, having a stout vessel already at his command, half manned, and needing but little farther preparation to hoist sail and anchor for the voyage."

"And how am I to be served by all this?" was the abrupt question of the cavalier when the excitement in his mind, occasioned by the narrative of the astrologer, had so far subsided as to leave him in a fit mood for reflection.

"Fortune favours even the headstrong fool, and the greedy, avaricious pettifogger, while she defeats my pur-

pose, and denies my hope. I would thou hadst not told me of these things, Micer Codro; if I am to perish here, as little useful or active as the rock I sleep on, yet with a burning impatience within me like that which sometimes heaves the rock into the heavens in storm and thunder, better that I should know nothing of these strifes and triumphs of men more blessed by fortune. Better that Ojeda should find the southern sea, and Nicuesa glean the treasure from the regions of the sun beyond, yet no tidings of their triumph reach my ears, than that thou shouldst goad me with my own loss in the story of their mighty gain."

And he turned once more to the sullen and dark ocean that lay shadowed before him under the frown of the overhanging mountain, with the sullen mood rising anew in his bosom which it had before possessed, and a spirit doubly desponding because of these tidings of the partial successes, or at least, the freedom for enterprise of others, for which his own heart so earnestly repined. The devoted astrologer, with the indulgent affection of a parent, laid his hand upon the arm of the down-hearted man, as he replied—

"But thou art not to perish on these weary rocks, nor, my son, art thou destined by the blessed fortune, to waste more precious hours in this constraint, which seems to me not less than to thee, like a consuming bondage. The tidings which I have brought thee, have a meaning for thy ears, and an interest in thy fate beyond what I have yet spoken. What sayst thou to a flight from Hispaniola where death only awaits thee, to the very region of Uraba where Ojeda hath placed his government? What sayst thou to a flight in the ship which Enciso is preparing for those golden regions?"

"But can this be done?" cried Vasco Nunez, leaping to his feet with a new vigour in his limbs, a new light in his eyes, a fresh spirit in his soul—"do not mock me, Micer Codro, with false hopes; I tell thee, if thou dost—"

"I do not mock thee, Vasco Nunez—this can be done."

"Hath Enciso said—"

"He hath said nothing. He shall know nothing of thee or of our purpose—not at least, until we are far from San Domingo, and there is little prospect of our soon return. Hear me—we have friends engaged in this armament, who

look to thy skill as greatly important to the success of any expedition in Veragua. They will uphold thee even against Enciso, should he, when at sea, attempt to do thee injury. With their assistance we have secured the favour of Valdivia who will proceed as second in command to Enciso, and by whom, when his chief is absent, thou shalt be admitted to a secret place in the vessel where thou shalt be secure."

"I like not this stealth—this secrecy :—and to be within the power of a creature like Enciso, alone with his creatures, and without power to contend with them,—it is a humbling necessity alone that can bring me to yield to this," replied the proud-spirited cavalier.

"And is there more humbling necessity than that which keeps thee here,—a fugitive threatened with death, if taken, for a crime of which thou art innocent? Can there be a more humbling necessity—than that which deprives thee of thy strength and thy courage, and thy conduct and thy spirit, and fetters thee to inaction, and the loss of fame and fortune? While thou sleepest all day on these rocks, thy rivals are striding with the wind to the southern seas and mountains which they inhabit—while thou scruplest to avail thyself of the only chance which fortune hath offered thee for months, the daring Ojeda is rushing through the savage tribes that border the gulf of Uraba; and, crossing his province of Veragua, even the delicate Diego de Nicuesa is winning his way to that hidden sea—"

"No more, no more, Micer Codro," cried the cavalier, interrupting him—"thou madd'st me with thy fancies, and the very dog growls with a fury which he cannot otherwise speak, as if he also knew the goading power of thy language. Do with me as thou wilt,—though were it the vessel of the foul fiend himself, it would move me with no more disquiet to enter it, than it now moves me to enter that of Hernando de Enciso."

"And God himself works—we have it from undoubted lips—by the powers of evil. Shall it be that one of his creatures should refuse the help which comes to us from an agent of sin? Let us use the evil for good, my son, and the evil is good; but know we not that it is in man's power so to toil as to make sinful of sacred things, curses of blessing,—nay, Satan hath the very forms and attributes of

Heaven. The good is in the hands that touch, not the thing that is touched—in the purpose of the mind, not in the deed of limb or weapon; and when thou knowest that the steps which thou takest on board this vessel of the base Enciso, is a step described for thee by the stars—by the hand of Heaven itself—then is there nothing in thy employment of his agency which can do thee hurt or dishonour."

Such were the arguments by which the astrologer strove to reconcile Vasco Nunez to the necessity which was before him, of escaping from his peril and restraint, by employing, in secrecy and stealth, the means of another and an enemy. The necessity itself was a stronger argument than any offered by the old man's philosophy, and sorely troubled to the last at the humiliation which he naturally felt in resorting to such an expedient, Vasco Nunez, availing himself of the cover of the night, descended to the city of San Domingo, and was received by friends who awaited him, on board the vessel of Enciso. There he remained hidden from the searching eyes of the Bachelor, until after his sailing, and when they had gone too far to admit of his being brought back to San Domingo. Two days after the dialogue just narrated, our hero was far upon the seas, making his way to that land of promise, as a fugitive, which he once hoped to penetrate as a conqueror. And who, misguided by present aspects, shall say he comes not as a conqueror even now? Who shall pierce the future, and describe that capricious Fortune, unstable as the waves, uncertain as the winds which had so long baffled his barque of hope, and which now bore him on his course rather as a convict than a favourite? The coming hours grow with events which the past hath never promised; and the vessel which, laden with golden treasures, sinks to the deepest hollows of the sea, still rises to the surface, when lightened of the burden for which it was built by the cunning hand of man. Well had the astrologer spoken to the cavalier, when, in allusion to the security which attends the destitute, he said—"By reason of thy lightness shalt thou fly, my son, and as thou art buoyant in thy spirit, shalt thou float. Cast from thee these clouds of thought and of apprehension that weigh thee down when thou shouldst fly, and yield thee to any breeze, blow from whence it listeth, which will bear

shee onward. He who hath naught to lose, can fling bubbles into the jaw of fortune, and the very defiance of such a spirit, like that of the careless cavalier to the capricious dame, will sooner bend her to thy purpose, than thy prayers or thy repinings. Hadst thou made this thy rule in approaching Teresa Davila—”

“Name her not to me, Micer Codro,” replied the cavalier, in cold, stern accents—“I would hear of her no more!”

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## ARRIVAL AT TERRA FIRMA—LAST DAYS OF OJEDA.

WHEN he had been some days at sea, the fugitive Vasco Nunez, impatient to behold once more the waters over which he sped, and feel the sense of that freedom which he had been so long denied, emerged from his place of concealment in the hold of the vessel. The surprise of the Bachelor Enciso at beholding this unlooked-for apparition was only exceeded by his rage at being thus outwitted. But even his anger gave way to a sentiment of exultation as he reflected that he now had in his power the man whom he most detested, one whose flight from justice had put him fairly without the pale and protection of the laws, and whom he might therefore subject to any fate without himself incurring either the charge or the consequences of cruelty. Bending his eyes, therefore, on the placid countenance of the cavalier, with a smite of bitter meaning, he addressed him in language which at once apprised the latter of the cause of his hostility, and prepared him to expect all the vengeance of a mind capable of harbouring a hatred which, at another time and under other circumstances, he had never had the boldness to express.

"This, truly, is an unexpected honour, Señor Vasco. It is not now as when I first sought you with fair proffers to unite our fortunes. You are no longer the great captain, with a noble vessel and a gallant armament. Since that time you have lost ship and crew, and have become a fugitive from justice. Think you I am ready now to help you in your flight from Santo Domingo, when you received my proffer with scorn, and met all my advances with a haughty indifference. Shall I, remembering the proud contumely of your carriage to me in times past, give you

aid now to avoid the stroke of justice which awaits you in *Española*."

The insolent language of the Bachelor aroused nothing but indignation in the bosom of the cavalier, and though Micer Codro, Valdivia and his few other friends on board the vessel drew nigh in anxiety and apprehension, and prayed him to yield to the press of circumstances and speak fairly to one who had him so completely in his power, they failed to produce in his mind that conviction of the necessity of any such course, which, to a less excitable temper, would have seemed obvious enough. He answered the haughty speech of the bachelor with equal haughtiness, and advancing a pace while he spoke, he showed by his carriage a disposition to make any issue with his enemy rather than bow to one whom he had long since learned only to despise.

"And my words and carriage are like to be no less scornful to you now, Hernando de Enciso—now that I am a fugitive and threatened by the laws, than when I had ship and seamen at command. It is the base spirit only that crouches to the storm, and swaggers and swells in the day of its prosperity. I am still the same Vasco Nunez now that you found me when you made me your pitiful offers of which you speak, and which I should again scorn as I then did, considering not so much the value of your proposal, as the worthless source from which it came. Were you a noble cavalier, I should give you other language—I should have asked your own privity to my flight at first, confident to have obtained without pause, from a soldier and a man, that favour, which, it is well known by all, had never been accorded without price in gold, by a slavish, trading spirit, such as thine. Thou thinkest, that, as I am in thy vessel, I am at thy mercy; but thou hast yet to learn, that a brave man with arms in his hands, and confident of his soul's honesty, can match weapons with a dozen of the base slaves who may strive against him at thy command. Nor do I doubt that there are many in thy bark—many brave soldiers and generous seamen, who would feel shame to behold a noble gentleman beset by numbers. If thou hast the soul of manhood in thee, revenge thy own quarrel. We are both armed—take to thy weapon, and St. John of Jerusalem look down upon the fight."

The face of the bachelor grew absolutely livid as he listened to this scornful language. The foam gathered upon his lips, his frame trembled, his arms were stretched forth, and his hands shaken in fruitless rage, at the fearless cavalier who stood in calm defiance before him. Sudden he strode away from the spot, and paced twice or thrice to and fro, in the forward part of the vessel. At length he returned to the place of quarrel, and with features which, though they had lost their turbulence, were perhaps, from this very cause, more entirely those of malignity and dire hate, he again gazed upon the fugitive.

"Look!" he exclaimed after a brief pause in which his eyes had striven, though vainly, to daunt those of his fearless enemy. His finger pointed to a bald, black speck—a solitary island that rose along their path, one of the hundred that stud the entrance of the Caribbean Sea.

"I will not slay thee, Vasco Nunez—I will shed no blood of thine, though thy insolence might well justify me in such use of my power upon thee, and thy cruel murder of Jorge Garabito might well deserve it. But, thou shalt neither offend my person with thy audacious presence, nor cumber my vessel with thy bloody fortunes. On that rock will I leave thee—there, it shall be seen what destiny heaven appoints to thy sins, for to its winds and waves will I surrender thee, and thus rid me of all charge or trouble of one, whose boast it is that no misfortune can humble, and no dangers make him afraid. Thy wits and valour will avail thee against the sea-bird and the shark, and that bright star which Micer Codro hath chosen for thee from among the rest, it will guide thee, I trust, to richer treasures of the deep than any that ever I may hope to gather on the shores of Veragua. Ho! there—man a boat for the Senor Vasco."

The cavalier drew his sword, and at the glitter of its polished blade the brave dog Leonchico started to his side. The bachelor also drew his weapon, but he sank back a pace, so as to place his person within the protection of a group of his officers.

"Thou shalt find it somewhat to thy cost, Senor Hernando, what thou doest, for by the blessed Saint John of the wilderness, I will not suffer hand upon my person that is not lifted in amity."

"Ho! there!" cried the now furious bachelor to his

soldiers, some of whom were gathering about the capstan ;  
“ get your matches lighted.”

With the utterance of this command, springing forward like a vulture upon his prey, Vasco Nunez, at a single bound, threw himself upon his enemy and before he could lift weapon, or issue a second order, drew him apart from his men, he, struggling with a feeble fury all the while, but unable to escape from the vigorous and unyielding grasp which his threatened victim had set upon him. This sudden and resolute movement produced a startling sensation on board the ship. The friends of the two parties at once placed themselves in readiness for a regular fight & *outrance*, and a few of the more forward followers of the bachelor prepared to advance upon the cavalier. But a timely warning from the latter made them pause, as, receding from the centre of the ship, he placed his back against the bulwark and drawing after him the still struggling Enciso, as if he had been an infant in his grasp, he bade them beware, that another hostile movement would ensure the death of their commander. It was in this state of things that some of the less heated minds on board of the vessel interposed to prevent the fatal mischiefs that were threatened by the affair. They remembered the great valour and experience of Vasco Nunez, and looked upon his appearance on board, however equivocally obtained, as an event too fortunate to be disregarded, and as a happy augury of success for their enterprise.

“ It were a pity,” said they among themselves, “ if Hernando de Enciso be suffered to work his will upon so noble a cavalier ; and even though he succeed in his desire to destroy him, yet, armed as he is, and brave to desperation, could not this be done without great peril to many others. Besides, who so well acquainted as Vasco Nunez with all the shores of Terra Firma, which he traversed with Rodrigo de Bastides, from Cape de la Vela even to Nombre de Dios. It were a blind casting away of God’s blessed providence, if we reject the counsel and service of such a man.”

Armed with these considerations, which, to the selfish mind of the bachelor, they well knew would not require any great or persuasive argument to make of due force and efficacy, they interposed in the affray at the very moment

when the conflict seemed inevitable, and by dint of promise and entreaty effected an amnesty. Enciso gave a sullen consent to an arrangement by which Vasco Nunez became a sort of recruit in his service—though it galled the proud spirit of the latter to concede as much—with the full permission, however, should it please him better, to pursue that course, to leave the armament of Enciso for that of Nicuesa, or any other cavalier whom fortune might send upon his path. The friends of Vasco Nunez congratulated themselves on having achieved so much, but he himself looked upon the service as one calculated rather to do him hurt than benefit, and, perhaps, to restrain his own progress, by an engagement to which he could not himself incline, and which he greatly feared might defeat other more hopeful purposes. He well knew that his only hope had lain in the momentary command which he had obtained perforce of the person of his enemy; and did not cease to fear that availing himself of a more convenient season, the base-spirited commander would not fail to employ his emissaries to destroy a person who had exposed him to such shame and peril. But, though sullen and unfriendly, Enciso made no farther attempts to do his enemy harm, and the armament reached the port of Carthagena, where Ojeda had had his first encounter with the natives, without farther subject of difference between the parties.

Here, the intelligence which awaited them, soon superseded, by its pressing and painful importance, the farther consideration of their quarrel in the minds of all parties. The story of Ojeda was nearly at an end. He himself had departed, desperate in fortune and despairing of the future, on his perilous return to Santo Domingo; and from the lips of the afterwards renowned Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, whom he had left in charge of his government, the bachelor Enciso listened to a narrative which made him forget for a while that he had any worse foe than the fortune which had so far beguiled him from the peaceful, if inglorious, occupations of the law. It appeared that the restless Alonzo de Ojeda, after he had founded his capital, proceeded to invade the surrounding country in search of gold, but he fell into frequent ambuscades, his followers were slain in numbers around him with poisoned arrows, and he himself wounded by the same envenomed weapons.

Borne back to his fortress in equal anguish of mind and body, he had now only to contemplate his approaching fate, by the horrible death of agony under which his companions had perished in raving torments. But the courageous warrior was capable of a degree of endurance, to which he himself would never have subjected them; and one of the peculiar symptoms of this poison from which he suffered—a cold shooting thrill that passed at moments through the wounded part—suggested to him a remedy which seemed scarcely less desperate than his hurts. He caused two plates of iron to be made red-hot, and applied in that state to the wound. This terrible application he endured without murmuring or shrinking, having refused to be tied down under the operation. The desperate remedy succeeded—"the cold poison, in the language of *Las Casas*, being consumed by the vivid fire." Incapable of farther enterprises, until he was recovered from his wound, he resolved to return to *Santo Domingo*, to procure supplies and assistance for his colony. It will not be necessary to our purpose to trace farther the history of this rash but courageous adventurer. It is enough to say that he reached *Española*, after a series of vicissitudes and dangers which savour of romance, and under which most persons would have perished. He had failed to realize his own expectations or confirm the glowing promises to his creditors and the public, with which he set forth from *Santo Domingo*. A cloud rested on his fortunes which never dispersed, and he died finally, in utter obscurity, of a broken heart. Such was the humility, in his last moments, of one who in his day of prosperity was the most imperious of men, that his latest prayer is said to have been that his body might be buried in the very portal of the monastery of *San Francisco*, so "that all who entered might tread upon his grave." It is to be hoped, for his soul's sake, that the humility which came too late for the succour of his early fortunes, and which, coupled with his noble courage, great skill, and singular hardihood alike of mind and body, might have distinguished his adventures by a success worthy of these noble qualities—was yet in season for that final struggle in which, though death be the victor, he is yet only the agent of a greater, with whom to conquer is to reward, and to take prisoner and secure,

is to bind with cords of love, and enthrall only in a realm the very atmosphere of which is spiritual and intellectual freedom. Happy had it been for Alonzo de Ojeda, if this humility, which only came with baffled fortunes, long disease, and the world's scorn and contumely, had but filled his mind a few years before it was unavailing for his earthly prosperity. Then had the lives of hundreds, whom his rash and headstrong enthusiasm led to an untimely and horrid death, been spared, perhaps for more useful and successful labours, and a calmer and better end.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## CHANGES OF FORTUNE.

THE miserable remnant of that proud armament with which Ojeda set forth from San Domingo, scarce thirty men, with the single brigantine commanded by Pizarro, was before the Bachelor. The melancholy review of this little band might have discouraged a much stouter spirit than that of Enciso, from a farther prosecution of his enterprises in a region where such cruel fortunes had awaited them. But the vanity of his heart got the better of his understanding, and the desire to put in exercise his judicial authority in the government which had been assigned to Ojeda, from whom came his appointment, resolved him to prosecute his voyage. It was not without great difficulty, and only by a peremptory assertion of his authority, that he prevailed upon the suffering crew of Pizarro to return with him to the town of San Sebastian from which they had departed, as they believed for ever. But his own misfortunes began with his arrival at the port which had been so fatal to the fortunes of his superior. His vessel struck a rock on entering the harbour, and was soon torn to pieces by the waves and currents. The crew escaped with great difficulty, and but little was saved from the waters, out of the stores of plenty, the arms, the horses and swine, with which he had chartered his vessel for the supply of the colony. The "Bachelor beheld the profits of years of prosperous litigation swallowed up in an instant." When he landed upon the shores, the prospect that met his eyes added to his other discouragements. The Indians had hung close upon the departing steps of Pizarro, and had destroyed by fire the fortress and all the houses built by Ojeda. Their supplies soon began to fail, and Enciso, a better lawyer than soldier, sallying forth into the country,

was waylaid by the savages, who hunted them at every step, wounded many of the Spaniards, and by their fleetness of foot defied the pursuit of an enemy who could only hope to contend with them in close conflict, and removed from the shelter of their forest fastnesses. He returned to the harbour in dismay, and his own consternation and irresoluteness, soon declared to the Spaniards more emphatically than words could have done, the utter incapacity of their leader for their direction and relief. In this moment of emergency and doubt, all eyes were turned, as by a common impulse, upon the desolate adventurer whom the bitter malice of the Bachelor would have consigned to a lonely island of the sea. His name, muttered in murmurs at first, was at length openly pronounced, and Enciso, conscious of his own incapacity to relieve them in their present straits, was easily persuaded to turn for counsel to the only man of all his company by whom it could be given. Nor did Vasco Nunez in this moment of distress, remember the hostile spirit which Enciso had displayed towards him. With that noble magnanimity which, since his manhood, might almost have been deemed habitual, he seemed to forget their strifes, and cordially gave his honest counsel as to the best course which lay before them.

"When I sailed with Bastides along this coast," said he, "it was closely explored from cape de la Vela, even beyond the miserable spot on which we now stand. In particular, we gave a close examination to the gulf of Uraba. It is thither I would counsel ye to go. There is, I well remember, an Indian people on the western side of the gulf that dwell along the banks of a river which they call Darien. The people, though warlike, use no poison to their weapons, and the country is fertile, and there is gold said to grow in the mountains. There you may get supplies of provision and found your colony if it so pleases you."

"In the name of God, Señor Vasco, guide us if thou canst to this river of Darien," was the exclamation of the Bachelor, and his words were echoed by all his followers, glad of any retreat which would enable them to leave a spot so full of evil fortune and worse promise.

"Shall I be obeyed in what I command necessary to bring ye to the spot, and secure you in its possession? It were of little avail to say, here is the village, and the gold

is in the bowels of yonder mountain, unless there be one who shall also tell ye in what manner to circumvent the savage and explore the mountain."

The Bachelor was reluctant to yield up so large an authority to one whom he had been so anxious to destroy, and whom he still continued to fear and hate; but the necessity was pressing. The haughty cavalier was resolute not to take upon himself a half authority which was liable to be marred or baffled at any moment, at the caprice of his commander; and the clamours of his followers, who saw every instant the unfitness of Enciso for the command, compelled him to close with the terms of Vasco Nunez. In another instant and all was life and activity, courage and confidence, among a people who were sick before with apprehension and utterly down-hearted from their late defeat. Still Vasco Nunez did not supersede the Bachelor, but it was enough that the soldiers well knew that the orders came from him though uttered by the lips of the latter. Already they began to say to themselves—"this Vasco Nunez is the proper man for such enterprise—Marin Hernandez de Enciso will help us little forward." As yet these opinions were unexpressed to each other, but where men are equal, the mind of one will soon be in the possession of his neighbour, and it will be found always that every man's conviction is the common law.

In a few hours after this deliberation took place, the colony of San Sebastian was abandoned. Guided and counselled by Vasco Nunez, the Bachelor set sail for the proposed settlement on the river of Darien. When he reached the spot, Vasco Nunez, from a previous knowledge of its situation, took on himself the preparations, and having divided his force under proper commands, and put them in martial array, he landed at some distance from the town and advanced along the banks toward it. But their approach was soon discovered by the inhabitants; the women and children were sent to a place of safety into the interior, while their cassique, a valiant chief named Zemaco, stationed himself on a little eminence with five hundred men, to receive the invaders. Vasco Nunez had already made all the arrangements which he deemed necessary for the combat; but on a sudden his orders for attack were arrested by the Bachelor, who had legal and pious scruples which were yet to be overcome. Apprehensive that the terrors which

his men entertained of poisoned arrows might impair their courage, he required them to swear upon the holy volume, that, however the savages might fight, and with whatever weapons, they should not turn their backs upon the foe. They were to conquer or die. Then, having made certain liberal vows of spoils yet to be won, to "our lady of Antigua" in the event of his success, he professed himself ready for the conflict, which he had delayed to the annoyance of Vasco Nunez and other warriors, whose practice made them far less scrupulous than the circumspect attorney. Vasco Nunez, when Enciso gave the signal, led the right division which had been given him to command, directly up the hill, and in the very teeth of the Indian warriors. He was quickly followed and well sustained by the Bachelor, in the centre, and Valdivia on the left, and so warm was their valour, that Zemaco, though a brave savage, was soon made to fly, leaving many of his warriors slain behind him. The Spaniards then made their way to the village, which yielded them not only great supplies of provisions, but gold in every form of ornament, anklets, plates and bracelets, to an immense amount. Greatly was the heart of the Bachelor exhilarated by this achievement. He forgot all past misfortunes, and every disaster and doubt in the moment of this unexpected success. He instantly resolved to establish the seat of government in the village he had taken. He was anxious to begin the sway for which his spirit had yearned so long. His neck grew stiff with his triumph, the merit of which he took entirely to himself—and he who, but a day before, had taken counsel from Vasco Nunez as from a superior, now scarcely bestowed upon the latter the countenance due even to a slave. Nor, in the plenitude of his authority and greatness, did he limit its austere aspects alone to the man whom he so hated. Having established his government, he was anxious to exhibit its terrors, and availing himself of the royal command, he passed an edict forbidding his men to traffic with the natives on private account, under penalties of death. This law was little agreeable to men who considered all their perils as taken in vain, if denied the profits of the free wild trade to which they naturally looked forward at the beginning of their adventure. They murmured among themselves at the stern interdiction, and did not hesitate to say to one another, that the Bachelor aimed to appro-

priate the common gains to himself. Many of them turned their eyes, even at this early period, upon Vasco Nunez, whose courage, skill, and excellent knowledge of the country, seemed at once to designate him as the person best fitted for the command; but he kept aloof from them in their discontent, and seemed only to brood secretly and sorrowfully upon that lack of resources which alone appeared to be wanting, by which he might pass to those conquests for which he had striven so vainly and so long. While the murmurs and discontents of the people continued to rise under the unwonted strictness of the lawyer's enactments, the dispute was suddenly silenced for a brief space by an unlooked-for occurrence. The thunder of cannon reached their ears one day from the opposite side of the gulf. Rejoicing no less than surprised at these unexpected signs of European life in that heathen neighbourhood, they replied in the same manner to such grateful signals, and in a short time two Spanish vessels were seen standing in for their little harbour. They proved to belong to the armament of Nicuesa, and were under the command of one Rodrigo de Colmenares, who was seeking his superior with supplies. When Colmenares came to speak with Enciso, he reproached him for having dared to establish his government within the jurisdiction of Nicuesa. This reproach troubled the Bachelor exceedingly, and was productive of infinite mischief to his authority among his people, particularly at a time when his severe laws had almost entirely diverted from him their regards. Nor was Colmenares idle among them as soon as he discovered how they inclined. He gained their hearts by a free supply of provisions. He represented to them the legitimate right of Diego de Nicuesa, under the king's especial grant, to all that part of the gulf in which he found them, and turned confidently to Vasco Nunez as unquestionable authority on such a subject, to sustain him in what he advanced. To him also the Bachelor turned in this moment of his precarious command, and confidently hoped to be sustained by our cavalier, as it was by his counsel that he had made his way to the river of Darien. But his appeal to this authority, though made with a degree of humility strangely at variance with the scornful deportment he had so lately carried towards the same individual, failed of the effect which he had hoped it might produce.

“Colmenares is right;” he replied. “The boundary line between the separate jurisdictions of Ojeda and Nicuesa passes through the centre of the gulf of Uraba. The village of Darien lies, as we all may see, on the western side of the gulf which is allotted to the Senor Diego. We are, therefore, under the authority of Nicuesa, if any body hath authority in this heathen land. Certainly, that of Alonzo de Ojeda, as governor, and of Hernando de Enciso, as his alcalde mayor, is utterly worthless here, as the Senor Hernando, being a man of the law, and exceedingly fond of its exercise, should have known from the beginning.”

Colmenares loudly exulted at this decision, but the Bachelor bitterly reproached Vasco Nunez with what he styled the treachery of his conduct; the cold sarcastic remark with which the cavalier concluded his opinion was to the opinionated Bachelor, like the sting under the wing of the hornet.

“And wherefore,” he exclaimed, “did you counsel me to come within the province of another—wherefore but as a man false hearted and having a purpose of evil within his mind?”

“I counselled ye, that your people might be saved from starvation, or a worse death from the poisoned arrows of the savages. I thought nothing of your authority when I looked on their desperation; had it been the question how shall the fortune of the Bachelor Enciso be made,—or where shall we go that he may enjoy the dignity of alcalde mayor, Vasco Nunez had given you no answer to the prayer which you made him for relief. He had left you to your own precious wisdom, and the bitter fruits thereof.”

“And for this I spared you when I found you a fugitive from the law, an unbidden guest within my vessel? For this I yielded to the prayer of my officers when my own justice would have consigned thee to the bald rock within the seas.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the cavalier, striking his weapon by his side till the well tempered steel rattled like silver in its sheath. “By St. John of the wilderness, Enciso, the signal which would have sent me to the bald rock in the ocean, would have sent thee to a darker place. The good weapon which I carry gave me life—not thy mercy, nor

thy wisdom, nor thy courage! Go to!—thou chafest me with thy speech, till my hand can scarce refrain from making thee now bite of the steel.”

Vasco Nunez turned away from the crowd as these words were spoken, and the Bachelor was not unwilling that the controversy should cease between them; but enough had been already said to render his authority doubtful, and his followers, whom his stern legal edicts had offended, were glad of the argument to shake off a rule which promised to limit their own fortunes, and deprive them of all the advantages which had been held out to them as lures for the adventure they had engaged in. The indiscreet vanity of the Bachelor precipitated his overthrow—an ill-judged attempt to browbeat and compel his opponents, resulted in a popular commotion, in which, with a true recognition of the democratic doctrines of a more modern period, they withdrew their allegiance from him; and the man of law found himself, at the moment of his highest expectations, suddenly reduced to the condition and the fortunes of a follower, in the very armament he set forth from Santo Domingo to command.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE FATE OF DIEGO DE NICUESA.

THE overthrow of Enciso was the signal for new commotions in the colony. Colmenares insisted upon their recognition of Nicuesa, as they were within his jurisdiction; but, though this argument had been the pretence for withholding allegiance from the Bachelor, and for denying his authority, there was yet a strong party, to whom the lofty character, generous sentiment, and great skill and valour of Vasco Nunez, appeared conclusive reasons in favour of appointing him to the chief command. His own friends were active in promoting this end; and the fond predictions of the astrologer, who dwelt learnedly upon the certain prosperity which dwelt beneath his star—now certainly rising, more and more bright, from beneath the clouds which had so long obscured it—added force to those suggestions which accorded with the common prepossession in his favour. They succeeded in their purpose, in spite of the efforts of Colmenares, and appointed Vasco Nunez, in conjunction with one Zamudio, their chief magistrate. But when they waited upon the cavalier, who had kept aloof from their controversies, with the annunciation of his appointment, to their great surprise they were received with a positive rejection of the power which they had thus conferred upon him; nor could all the arguments and entreaties of his friends dissuade him from a resolution that seemed no less suicidal than strange. But the cavalier had good reasons for his rejection of an authority which had no promise of stability.

“The fruit is not ripe,” he said to the astrologer, in private, when the other, more warmly than his wont, re-

proached him for a decision which denied himself the very power which he had seemed so long to desire above all things else.

“The fruit is not ripe. These people know not yet what they want, and are just in that condition of mental insobriety, when they would quarrel with any authority, and obey none long. They need to be schooled by new dangers and troubles, and nothing but a sheer conviction of their own incapability—which will come in time—would bring them to that state of docility, without which, in the labours I propose, nothing could be done. Were I to accept this offer which they make me now, I should have them in rebellion the moment Nicuesa makes his appearance. His name would be for ever sounded in my ears, as much as a warning as a model, and no law that I should enact, calculated to restrain their passions, and make them subordinate to service, but would make them greedy for any change, particularly if one was at hand, like Nicuesa, armed with legal powers, and not less armed with the weapons of war, and ships filled with artillery. Were I to be tempted to-day with this green fruit, Micer Codro, it would stick in my throat, and strangle me before the morrow were well over. I am not impatient, and the fruit must ripen.”

With such cool reflections the ambitious cavalier calmly beheld the people who had proffered him so great a trust, despatch a deputation in the vessel of Colmenares in search of the Señor Diego de Nicuesa, inviting him to return with them, and to assume the government of Darien. As we have given a brief summary of the fortunes of Ojeda, though not absolutely essential to our narrative, it may be only proper to bestow a like notice upon the progress hitherto of his more accomplished rival; in which it will be found that, however unlike he may have been in character to the hapless Ojeda, the fate which attended his adventures was scarcely more indulgent; and leaves us to the conviction that mere valour, grace of deportment, or accomplishment in any of the arts, whether of the court or camp, are of little avail in the day of peril, without that calm, overruling, and reflective judgment, which sees, as from an eminence, far above the passions, the hopes and the fears which are for ever skirmishing below, and with a prescience,—the strict result of its own forbearance to take part

in the conflict, but which seems like a divine instinct,—deliberately chooses its course, by which to avoid all the dangers of the *inlée*, and reach the haven which yet lies along the direct route where the strife is carried on. It was the lack of this divine quality of mind, and not of any deficiency of valour or of fortitude, that destroyed the seductive superstructure of hope which Ojeda had raised up, not less in the imaginations of his followers than of his own; and a like defeat, it will be seen, had, up to the period of our story, almost brought the fortunes of Nicuesa to the same ruinous condition. The reader will no doubt remember the timely rescue which the courteous cavalier brought to his rival, and the prompt vengeance taken by the two warriors in conjunction upon the savages of Carthagena. Leaving Alonzo de Ojeda after this event, Nicuesa proceeded on his voyage to the coast of Veragua. The weather grew stormy; and, apprehensive of the dangers from the coast, the commander stood out to sea with his squadron, which was separated in the night by tempests. At the dawn of day, not one of his companions was in sight. Fearing that some accident had befallen his brigantines, commanded by one Lope de Olano, his lieutenant, Nicuesa stood in for the land, until he came to the mouth of a large river, which he entered and came to anchor. Here his evil luck still attended him—his vessel grounded by the sudden subsiding of the stream, which had been swollen by freshets, and himself and crew had scarcely left it and gained the shore, before it went to pieces. Their situation was almost desperate. Without provisions or arms and half naked, they found themselves on the shores of a remote and savage nation. With a heavy heart, dreading the desertion of his lieutenant, of whom evil things of the same sort had been already spoken, the hapless cavalier, with many forebodings, took his way westward along the sea-shore in search of the seat of his intended government. They had been able to save a boat from the wreck of their vessel, with which four of their number kept beside them in their weary progress along the coast, the perils, pains, and privations of which journey were utterly beyond expression, as they would be found utterly beyond the conception of the reader.

Many of them were without shoes and almost naked—their route lay through unbroken forests, interfaced with

thorns and beset with brambles. Sometimes they were compelled to wade through fen and morass, swim deep and rapid rivers, and clamber over sharp and rugged rocks. Their food, gleaned in their progress, consisting of herbs and roots and shell fish, scarcely pacified hunger, and did not supply the required strength for their toilsome march. At length they reached a bay that ran far inland, and were taken by the boat, in small numbers, to the opposite shore, which, when they had traversed, to their great consternation, they discovered to be an island separated from the main by a great arm of the sea. Their boat with the mariners had disappeared and they were left to the horrible dread of utter desertion by those who could have relieved them, and of final starvation in the desolate island where they were left. It was in vain that they toiled in the construction of rafts with which to cross the main. The currents swept their rafts, one after another to the sea, and the effort was given up in despair. Meanwhile their only food consisted of the scant herbs, the meagre product of the soil, and the supply of shell fish, the precarious tribute of the surrounding sea. Days and weeks elapsed in this manner, each day thinning the number of this miserable company; the survivors were reduced to such debility, that they could no longer procure the wretched food that sustained life, but by crawling in search of it on hands and knees. But relief came to them at last in the shape of one of the lost brigantines of Lope de Olano. The boat that put off to their relief contained the four seamen who had so cruelly deserted them. When the fleet was again brought together it appeared that each division had its own equal tale of misery to relate—a tale that no fiction could well exaggerate, since of seven hundred effective men with which the armament had sailed from Santo Domingo, four hundred had already perished. Sailing eastward after some delay, Nicuesa proceeded to Puerto Bello, a spot to which he was guided by an old sailor who had made a voyage with Columbus; but here his men were encountered by the savages and defeated with considerable slaughter. This determined Nicuesa to continue his voyage yet farther, which he did until he reached another port to which Columbus had given the name of Puerto de Bastimentos, or Port of Provisions. “Here,” said he, “let us rest, *en el nombre de Dios.*” The phrase by the super-

stitions sailors was immediately adopted as the name of the place—a name which to this day it retains. But the good omen which they had fancied to find in the name thus given, was soon renounced for others in better accordance with its real characteristics. The aspect of fortune remained inflexible and without corresponding change with that of their habitation. They were beset with Indians, and obtained no provisions except at the price of blood. Labour and pain and death seemed their only allotment, and while his men daily perished around him, the survivors did little else than invoke imprecations upon the head of their miserable commander. Famine so rapidly lessened his discontents, that when he mustered his forces, there were found, of the once brilliant armament of the noble Hidalgo, whose strains of syren music had beguiled so many ears in San Domingo, not one hundred dejected and emaciated men.

It was in this condition, and on this spot, so full of disheartening and painful associations, that Nicuesa was found by the deputation sent with Colmenares from the colony at Darien. The highest point of misery had been reached before their arrival, and they could scarce recognise in the dejected and squalid man before them the once accomplished cavalier. His followers were reduced to sixty, and looked like men who had taken their last farewell not only of hope but life. But the intelligence brought by Colmenares, and the presence of the deputation from Darien, was like an exhilarating draught from heaven to these despairing men. The buoyant spirit of the cavalier recovered all its elasticity at this grateful intelligence, and he commanded a banquet for the ambassador from the stores of the ship, in the indulgences of which he gave free vent to the joy with which their tidings had inspired him.

“And you tell me, Señor Albitez,” he said, as he quaffed his wine, to one of the envoys—“you tell me that you have already collected gold in quantities—what then are the sums which you deem to be at this time within the treasury of the Government.”

The question somewhat confounded the person addressed, and it was after the fashion of one who would rather be excused from making any answer at all, that he at length replied.

“Of any sum within the treasury I can say nothing, for of this I know nothing; but there are many individuals whose spoils were great at the sacking of Darien. There was Valdivia, who had seven anklets of massive gold, and as many medals, and the Bachelor Enciso, himself—”

“Ha! How! What is this that I hear, Señor Albitez? Dost thou tell me of the servants of the king presuming to sack towns within the government of Veragua, and carry the treasure which they take into their own coffers. This is a flagrant trespass upon the monopolies of the crown, and must be looked into. These men must refund what they have taken, and it will go hard with me, but I shall punish them severely for this most audacious practice against all law and authority. Give me to know the names of these persons, that I may proceed against them without unnecessary delay.”

The envoys did as they were bidden, but manifested no little reluctance in doing so. The high tone of Nicuesa, and the threats which he had so freely uttered, alarmed them for themselves no less than for the rest, and their feelings towards him underwent a most singular and rapid change from the moment that his imprudence had suffered him to disclose the policy by which he proposed to govern. He had committed the very error which, more than his lack of legal right, had unseated the Bachelor Enciso in his role, and the envoys were now cautious of all that they themselves would utter, and as narrowly watchful of the speech and deportment of Nicuesa. They adopted a sudden policy the first moment they could compare their views in secret—hurried their departure for the return to Darien before Nicuesa—and, when arrived, they did not soften, in their narrative of the interview with that Cavalier, any of the harsh threats which he had thrown out, of punishment against individuals, or the vigorous laws by which he intended to prevent such abuses of the laws in future. The people of Darien were confounded as they heard this intelligence.

“Truly,” said they, “this is calling in King Stork to devour us. What are we to do?”

The Bachelor Corral—a subtle lawyer who had been the associate of Albitez in his mission to Nicuesa, answered the question.

“Do! we must undo what we have done, and that is

an easy matter. You have been simple enough to send for king stork, but there is no good reason why you should be so simple as to receive him when he comes. I, for one, say, set him adrift, and let him go back to 'Nombre de Dios,' *en el nombre de Dios.*"

The remedy was instantly resolved upon, and when the unconscious Nicuesa approached his supposed government, with a spirit which had forgotten all its past sufferings in the proud prospect which he conceived to lie before him, what was his surprise to hear himself warned from the shore, and commanded peremptorily by the public procurator not to disembark. The cavalier was utterly confounded.

"What can this mean, my friends? I came here at your own request."

"Ay, but we have thought better of the matter, *Senor Diego*," cried a swaggering, noisy fellow, named Benitez, "and now you may go back. We cannot think of troubling you to govern for us."

His words were promptly echoed by the multitude, and their clamours drowned every attempt which the unhappy cavalier made to entreat their pity, or to affect their sense of justice.

"At least," he cried, in despair, "suffer me to land for the night, that we may come to a fitting explanation."

Even this was denied him. Night coming on, he was obliged to stand out to sea, but he re-appeared with the morning and renewed his entreaties and arguments. He was suffered to land, but this indulgence was the result of a plan among the more active of the conspirators to get him in their power. No sooner did he set foot on shore than a troop of them set forward to seize him. Fleet of foot to a proverb, the unhappy cavalier was compelled to resort to a most undignified flight, and running along the shore, closely pursued by the rabble, he soon distanced his pursuers, and found shelter in the neighbouring woods. It was at this stage of the affair that Vasco Nunez, who had been blamed by some who have not done full justice to his position, for remaining so long quiescent, threw off the lethargy which seemed to hang about his actions, and interposed to protect the fugitive. It pained him to the soul to behold a highbred cavalier subjected to the rude treatment of such a base rabble, and suddenly throwing himself

upon the path of the pursuit, he seized the most active and noisy of the crew, the fellow Benitez—already remarked for the insolence of his reply to Nicuesa the evening before—and availing himself of a stout stick which was at hand, he inflicted upon him without a word, a smart and deserved chastisement. This sudden and summary interposition had the effect of bringing the rest to a stand; and sternly rebuking them for the brutality of their conduct, he advanced to the spot where the fugitive had taken refuge, bade him come forth, and pledged his own life for his protection. This gallant conduct was not without its effect upon the rabble; and, without relaxing in their resolve to admit Nicuesa to no authority among them, they at least forbore any farther physical display of hostility. It was now that the unfortunate Nicuesa put in exercise all of his former grace and courtesy of manner, and all of his most persuasive forms of eloquence, in order to produce some change in the disposition of the multitude. Through the medium of Vasco Nunez,—for they would not suffer him to approach them in person, and, indeed, in spite of the countenance of that cavalier, it might not have been safe for him to have done so,—he strove to impress upon them the numerous claims which he had to be their leader. He reminded them that he had come at their own supplication, that he was by royal appointment the governor over the country of which they occupied a portion, and that they were, in fact, in direct treason in thus opposing his authority. But he pleaded in vain. They were too strongly impressed with the imprudent threats which he had uttered to the envoys, and were too generally obnoxious to punishment by the vigorous enactments which he had sworn to make, to suffer them to give ear to any arguments, however sweetly expressed, and however strong in themselves. They had toiled too strenuously, and through too great peril, for the gold which they had won, to be willing, while they had the power to withhold it, to refund it to any treasurer of the king. They rejected with noise and uproar the pretensions which he had not the power to enforce, and when he threatened them with the royal indignation, they commended him with bitter jeers to the king and council of Castile. Finding argument and expostulation vain, the hopeless cavalier assumed the language of entreaty, and baffled and driven about by fortune as he had been, and

looking with a sentiment of horror which was ominous, at the prospect of being compelled to return to Nombro de Dios, he prayed them that they would suffer him to come among them as a companion, if not as a commander. This also was denied by the ruthless rabble.

“ Let me be a prisoner among them—let them put me in irons, Vasco Nunez—plead to them even for this fate—which would be far preferable in my eyes to the necessity which would drive me back to the shores which I have left, the famine and the poisoned arrows which await me there.”

In this wise did the unfortunate Hidalgo plead for the meanest boon which it was in their power to grant; and no art or argument of Vasco Nunez was withheld to persuade them to the required concession. They received his arguments with scorn, and answered his prayers by contemptuous clamours; and the struggle closed with the final expulsion of the wretched cavalier in a miserable vessel, the worst in their harbour, which they allotted, and in which, with a heart bowed down, if not broken by his repeated misfortunes, he proceeded to sea, attended by only seventeen followers, chiefly his personal attendants and fast friends. But the crazy vessel never reached her port. She steered across the Caribbean sea for the island of Hispaniola, and was never heard of more. But the grave of her hapless captain was found many years after upon the shores of Cuba, which the vessel may have reached or a surviving boat with the baffled cavalier. A band of wandering Spaniards found the spot, above which stood a tree, containing a carved inscription informing them of his fate—

“ *Aqui feneciò el dedicado Nicuesa.*”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## DEMOCRACY IN DARIEN—THE CARIBBEAN REBEL.

WHEN the vessel which bore the ill-fated Nicuesa, had disappeared from the shores of Darien, the community, now without any head, relapsed into its former factions as to who should have authority over them. One party insisted upon the claims of the Bachelor Enciso, as better founded than those of any other, he having the appointment of Alonzo de Ojeda, who had been specially deputed by the king himself to the command of one half of Veragua. Another party, and by far the most numerous, ridiculed this claim as being of force only within the limits of that half of the country which had been given to Ojeda; but their ridicule was perhaps better placed when it was aimed at the legal scrupulosity of those who took such ground, and who had just joined, tooth and nail, in expelling the undoubted governor of the soil, also claiming under direct appointment of the king.

“But what to us,” continued the latter party, “what to us in the wilderness are the appointments of Ferdinand, or rather of Fonseca. How can they know the sort of man who is best calculated to promote our conquest of the country. They give us Ojeda, who is mad with his own ungovernable temper; and Nicuesa, who is no less mad with his own ungovernable self-conceit—both of them leading us into danger, having no skill to relieve us when they do so. Our lives are to us of more value than they can be to king or bishop, and these give us the right to choose for ourselves the sort of captain who shall the better preserve them in pushing the conquests we intend. We will choose our own officers, as it is fitting we should; we only being required to obey them, and it being to our loss and misfortune only, if they prove not to be good ones.

Our claim to choose them for ourselves is better founded for another reason. We have experience of their abilities, we have seen the most famous exploits of Ojeda, and of Nicuesa, and of many others ; and it cannot but prove the truest policy, when the greatest number of our voices unite in favour of one man, if we choose that man to be our leader."

This was wholesome democratic doctrine, and was urged with all the vehemence natural to men who were removed thousands of miles from the accustomed restraints of the law. But the ambition of the Bachelor Enciso and the great interest which he had in the expedition from the first, awakened all his loyalty and legal acumen, and being a better pleader than a soldier, he stoutly declaimed against the treasonable countenance which they maintained to the royal authority. They heard him with some patience for awhile, as one of their companions, but when the worthy Bachelor, who, if talented, was any thing but discreet or wise—deceived by their indulgence, and thinking he had gained some ground in the argument, proceeded to denounce individuals, and threaten them all with royal indignation and punishment—they routed him as rudely as they had done Nicuesa, and in their fury, invested as they assumed themselves to be with a sovereign power which was utterly new to Enciso, but which, according to our modes of thinking, and their arguments, was quite as legitimate as any other, they thrust the ambitious Bachelor into prison, and confiscated all his effects to the common use. This done, they proceeded almost in the same moment to declare Vasco Nunez their leader, and to confer upon him that power of which they had just before made so unscrupulous and violent a use.

"The fruit is now ripe, my son."

These were the words of Micer Codro, as he bore to the cavalier the first intelligence of the proceedings of the people. Vasco Nunez, from the moment when he found that all his entreaties had failed to produce any change in their resolves with regard to Nicuesa, had studiously, and with a sad heart and vexed spirit, withdrawn himself from among them, and was now wandering along the shores of the sea, contemplating the backward route taken by the unhappy adventurer, and conjuring up, with a mournful prescience, those aspects of evil to himself, which seemed so naturally to follow the fortunes of the adventurous and brave.

"Micer Codro," said the cavalier, "it is but a few months, thou rememberest, when the accomplished Señor Diego sailed with a noble fleet and a brave and numerous crew from the port of Santo Domingo. The fruit was ripe for him—yet where is he? The same people who offer me command were too happy to serve under his banner. They took his gold, they swore to follow his fortunes, yet, in a sudden mood of anger or caprice, they forget the solemn faith they swore, and pursue him with a malice which would seem to call for the sanction of some surpassing crime or cruelty of his commission; and yet, my life on it, the Señor Diego hath been only too indulgent to their wishes—too blind to their faults and excesses—too liberal to their vain follies and impatient desires."

"My son!" replied the astrologer, "the part which thou hast taken in behalf of the unfortunate Señor Diego, is becoming the generous rival and the noble gentleman; yet dost thou think that, had he been suffered to remain at Darien, he could have kept the command?"

"He freely offered to renounce it—he prayed only to be admitted as a companion."

"True, but this was only at the moment of his utter desperation. Dost thou think that, had he been suffered to remain as a companion, he would have been content with such a position, in the very armament he himself had fitted out. Dost thou not believe that, when the first feelings of his apprehension had disappeared, and he had learned to forget, in the better fortunes of the people, the miseries of *Nombre de Dios*, he would have stirred up a faction against the leader, and if he did not succeed in casting him down and setting himself up in his stead, would have withdrawn his faction, and by a separate command have divided the people to the destruction of both parties."

The cavalier was silent. The astrologer continued.

"It would have been ordinary human nature to have done so, and such certainly would have been the case had the Señor Diego been suffered to remain in any capacity. He was a man easily cast down by bad fortune, and as easily lifted into forgetfulness by good. He lacked equally the firmness to bear patiently under evil, and the humility, which is the noblest wisdom, to maintain an equal patience when success smiled upon him. Misfortune made him base—a slave, impotent, feeble and complaining; while suc-

cess changed him to a tyrant—rash, insolent, and overbearing. That he could not have remained at Darien without striving to command, I have already shown thee, and, indeed, thou knowest this truth already, from what thou knowest of Nicuesa. That he could not have commanded successfully any more than Ojeda, there is sufficient proof in his melancholy progress, as it is already known to us. The very picture thou hast drawn of the noble fleet and numerous crew with which he set sail a few months ago from Santo Domingo, when contrasted with their present condition, and the miserable remnant which is left at Darien, is the very best justification of the people. Their very lives—I speak not now of their fortunes—depended upon their driving away Nicuesa and Ojeda, and all those assuming and insolent, but incompetent commanders, who have already brought them from misery to misery, until they tremble now upon the very verge of ruin. Without provisions, few in number, vexed by their striving factions, and confused and agitated by the possession of their own powers, unless thou takest the rule upon thee as it is offered thee, they must fall a prey to the fierce cassique Zemaco, who hangs over, watching them like a bird of prey from the hills. Thy own safety and mine, Vasco Nunez, not less than theirs, commands thee to take this rule upon thee. But there is yet a stronger argument, my son, in the blessed chance which this election gives thee of carrying out the promise of thy star. Nay more, in all this business—in the toils and misfortunes—the defeat and banishment of Nicuesa and Ojeda—the finger of thy destiny hath been at work. Look back, my son, to the day when the hurricane seemed to have swallowed up thy fortunes, when it swallowed up thy barque. Then thou stoodst, the most hapless man of all the three whose proud vessels covered the bosom of the Ozama. Now, where art thou? The proud fleets of Ojeda and Nicuesa—where are they? These captains, where are they? Thou seest them all here, at Darien—all that remains of the proud armaments of thy rivals—they are broken in spirit and fortunes—gone from thy path for ever, and their troops, of their own head, pronounce thee with unanimous voice their captain. Truly the hand of heaven is in this business. Thy star hath guided thee aright, and the force that is left to thee, if small, is hardy, and hath been taught les-

sons of endurance and courage which, of all others, are the most necessary for the men to know, who aim to explore these mountains of Darien, and overcome the fierce tribes that inhabit them. The hour of thy glory and thy triumph is at hand, my son;—let not, I pray thee, the golden chance pass by. Now is the time—the fruit is ripe and ready for thy lips.”

“Stay! seest thou nothing? there, in the little bay, scarce a mile above us, into which the waves glide softly and without surf—seest thou not a boat, Micer Codro? Seest thou not a long narrow canoe, such as the natives of the islands make. There, beyond the point, Micer Codro?”

“Mine eyes are older than thine, my son—I see nothing,” replied the other.

“It is gone—it is hidden by the rushes that skirt the bay. Let us move towards it, Micer Codro, it may matter something to our fortunes. Zemaco rests on the hills below—wherefore should this canoe, if it comes to him, find its way so far above. Let us look to it, Micer Codro—thou hast a weapon, and mine is ready—besides, here is Leonchico—himself a host. Ha! ha! Leon! Ha! ha! Set on, Set on!”

The dog, obeying the well-known command, sprang forward, and was followed by the two. They proceeded with all haste towards the spot where Vasco Nunez had seen the boat disappear, which they found to be an indentation of the shore, having the appearance on three sides of a capacious basin, but without receiving the tribute waters of any river. The land was so low, however, that the tides covered a long stretch of it at high water, and thick beds of reeds and a high grass grew so luxuriantly over the surface, as to form an almost impassable barrier to the direct approach from either side. For a time they saw nothing of the canoe. The waters of the basin flowed smoothly in almost without a ripple, and seemed never to have borne the burden of a vessel or the dip of an oar. But a patient watch for a while longer enabled them to detect a movement among the thick reeds upon the opposite shore, and following the motion of their slender forms, they beheld the stern of the canoe protruding slightly from beneath the stems which it divided in its passage, and which vibrated fitfully in accordance with its upward pro-

gress. It was soon swallowed up from their gaze; but while they stood watching and wondering at the appearance in that quarter of such a vessel, they beheld two persons emerging from the rushes in which they had lost sight of the canoe, and after leisurely surveying them with a gaze seemingly as curious as their own, ascending the hills which bounded the view on the southwest. They were both Indians, one of them a man, evidently from his form and carriage of the Caribbean race. He was tall, straight, and strongly made. He carried a bow in his hand and a well-filled quiver on his shoulder, and walked with the ease and haughty erectness of one accustomed to command. His companion was a woman; she followed closely behind him with an air of respectful deference that was perceptible to the Spaniards even at the great distance from which they watched. The man, after the first survey which he made of them, turned his eyes away and went toward the hills without bestowing upon them a second glance. Not so with the woman. Though following her conductor closely with unfaltering footsteps, she stole a frequent look behind her, and then, as if fear followed her survey, her speed would be increased until she again drew nigh to her companion. In this way they soon passed from sight among the rising hills that deepened in the distance. The appearance of these Indians on that part of the coast, so far from that where Zernaco maintained his forces, in a canoe of such unusual magnitude, and which had evidently just come from the sea, was necessarily a subject fruitful of conjecture in a mind so earnest and inquiring as Vasco Nunez; though, little did the cavalier imagine among his many speculations, the vast voyage which that frail vessel had made, and the character of her inmates. Little did he think that, favoured by a Providence whose ways are no less wondrous than inscrutable, that strange barque, borne by the capricious winds from point to point, and island to island, had at length crossed the Caribbean seas in safety, and that too at a season when the returning brigantines of Ojeda and Nicuesa had met with nothing but tempest and disaster. For five hundred miles of ocean had the Indian adventurer, whose fortunes lay in that small vessel, preferring any fate to the tyranny which had hunted him like a beast of prey from mountain to mountain, given himself up to the mercy of the winds

and waters—and they had spared him. Proud thoughts and triumphant hopes filled his mind and heart, when his eyes at length surveyed the native regions from which he had been torn in youth; but, when he beheld, the first moment of his arrival, the aspects of a race from which there seemed no hope of flight, a withering doubt arose in his bosom whether he had not braved the perils of the seas in vain. For a moment, while he gazed, his heart sank within him at the idea that he had fled from the tyranny of Hayti only to find it under renewed forms of terror in full activity at Darien. But the proud spirit of the warrior grew predominant as he turned away for the hills.

“At least,” he exclaimed, “here dwells the Caribbee. It is no weak and timid Haytian, to bow down to the Spaniard and dig for him in the earth, and plead for life when he should strike for liberty. The Caribbee is a man, Spaniards—a brave warrior. He may die, but he will die like a strong man, and brave must be the foe who overthrows him.” These words, only half spoken aloud, reached no other ears than those of the woman who followed him, nor did the Spaniards behold the fierce gesture which accompanied them.

He sank from sight, and the circumstance of his appearance was soon banished from the thoughts, as well of Vasco Nunez as of his companion, when the latter renewed to him the subject upon which they had already spoken so long. The astrologer was still apprehensive that the cavalier, who was sometimes more prone to follow the dictates of a lofty and romantic generosity than those of deliberate prudence and a judicious policy, now proceeded to array before his mind such other arguments as he esteemed likely to effect his purpose; but Vasco Nunez briefly cut short his pleading by declaring his resolution to accept the appointment of the people.

“I will become their leader, Micer Codro, though I well know that a single mishap would destroy their confidence in my ability—or fortune, which is worse—and the arrival of any fresh feathered popinjay from Spain or San Domingo, will be the signal for the formation of a new faction, hostile to my authority. My hope is, however, before that time, to have crossed those mountains which rise, stretching away, heaven knows how far, between our pre-

sent footsteps and the broad ocean of the south which lies beyond them. That conquest made, what matters it if Ferdinand bestows my power upon some gaudy courtier more fit to tread a measure than direct a march? Nay, what were the loss of life itself, when the objects which life has lived and struggled for to its own constant peril, are all achieved? That ocean at my feet—that empire surveyed and won, and the life of Vasco Nunez can never be lost, though his blood flows upon the scaffold as a traitor to his sovereign!"

## CHAPTER XXX.

## VASCO NUNEZ IN POWER—ZEMACO PREPARES FOR BATTLE.

"BEHOLD NOW," says a venerable historian of that period, "the surprising changes of that fortune which befel Vasco Nunez. Behold him now, so late an outcast from all favour, and an outlaw under fear of punishment, lifted on a sudden into the high places of authority, and transformed, from a rash soldier of fortune, into the captain of as brave a troop as ever followed leader in the paths of Spanish conquest. Truly, it would seem that Micer Codro had not idly spoken in the matter of that star!"

With the first possession of his new authority, Vasco Nunez proceeded to make such regulations and enactments as seemed most necessary for the promotion of order in the colony. He subjected his followers at once to active employments, under different heads, that they might the more quickly forget the temporary authority which they had themselves exercised with so hasty a hand. His next step was to despatch a vessel to the shores of Nombre de Dios, to bring away the miserable remnant of Nicuesa's colony in that place; which, he rightly judged, wanting their commander and destitute of provisions, such only excepted as they could wrest in bloody conflict from the natives, must be in a still more deplorable condition than when Nicuesa left them. With a degree of generosity which was equally a matter of surprise to all, the person not excepted whom it most concerned, he released his mortal enemy, the Bachelor Enciso, from the prison to which the violent judgment of the people had consigned him. With a cringing aspect, the Bachelor came before him to acknowledge his generosity, and emboldened to implore some further exten-

sion of it. His farther prayer was for permission to leave the colony and return to Spain, and this he urged with words smoothly chosen to flatter the man he once would have destroyed, but whom he failed utterly to deceive. Vasco Nunez smiled scornfully as he hearkened to the insidious prayer of his enemy, but he showed no other token of his suspicion. Well knowing the insincerity of the Bachelor, the friends of Vasco Nunez counselled him to refuse his application.

"He will appear before the Court of Castile with evil report of your doings, my son," said the astrologer—"he will do you hurt with the sovereign."

"Nay, I will strive to guard against his devices. Zamudio shall accompany him in the same vessel, who shall bear my own despatches to our sovereign, and make of himself true reports of all particulars, by which this cunning villain shall be defeated. Better that he should be made to confess that I freely gave him permission to depart for Spain, than that it should be said I held him in bondage in Darien, fearing his ill report of my injustice."

Governed by this policy, the most liberal and noble, if not the most shrewd and cautious, the cavalier assented to the prayer of the Bachelor, who, in his heart, all the while meditated a bitter revenge upon Vasco Nunez, for all the injustice of his companions. To him he ascribed the falling off from him of the regards of his followers, and he resolved that his single head should feel the whole weight of that bitter revenge which lurked within his bosom, the natural progeny of all his defeats, shame, and disappointment. But, though Vasco Nunez well conceived the feeling in the mind of the Bachelor, he saw him depart without apprehension, or, indeed, any feeling but scornful indifference. He had provided, as he thought, against any evil result which might be feared from the revelations of his enemy. He had instructed Zamudio in all the particulars of his own connexion with the colony—particularly in having conducted it to Darien, and led the attack on the cassique Zemaco. These and other facts were written down for the guidance of his representative in answering the charges of the Bachelor; and a more imposing argument still was put into his hand, in the gold and pearls gathered at Darien,—a large portion out of which had been set aside as customary for the treasury of the Crown. To

the Royal Treasurer at Hispaniola, whom he knew to be invested with the extraordinary power of commissioning, he sent a liberal present in gold by the hands of the Regidor Valdivia—a politic gift, which, we may say in this place, had the desired effect of bringing him, some time after, the appointment of Captain-General of the Colony. With these precautions, Vasco Nunez saw the departure of Enciso with unconcern, and proceeded with the calm deliberation of a mind entirely at ease, to commence those toils of conquest, from which he promised himself an eternal fame. The hope of Vasco Nunez, superior to the miserable love of gold by which the ordinary leaders of the time were wholly governed, imparted to his air, manner, and address, a loftiness and dignity which impressed his followers with something of that feeling of veneration which the Spanish seamen, even at that early day, entertained for Christovallo Colon. It is not improbable, indeed, that the high purpose and holy resolve of the latter, had not been without its due weight in forming the present character of the former. The overthrow of the miserable savages, with whom battle, in ordinary cases, was a sort of sport among the Spaniards, gave him little pleasure, as he felt that it could yield him little fame; and in the struggle to win, and the eagerness to divide, the golden spoils, for which nearly all Spanish adventure was undertaken, he took little part, save when it subserved that great interest which was the leading object of his aim. While, therefore, he sent forth small detachments in various quarters to explore the country, he ever kept in view and in secret the one sole and singular purpose of his mind. To the astrologer alone he poured forth his hidden soul, and gave vent to those bright dreams of his imagination, which had for so long a season cheered him amidst suffering, and sustained him under disappointment. Nor did his fancy lack aid and sustenance in this vision of greatest glory, from the dreamy temper of the astrologer. His predictions hourly grew more fruitful of great results—the star to which his faith was given looked down with an effulgence nightly increasing; and those strange chances by which the cavalier, from being a miserable fugitive, at the mercy of so base a creature as Enciso, became the leader of a fearless band of warriors on the very shores which he had so long desired to obtain, was of itself a circumstance which seemed to

promise the fullest confirmation of any dream, however wild and extravagant.

But events did not allow Vasco Nunez to remain idle, indulging in the vain hope that he should be suffered without obstacle to win the secret path of his high ambition. Shortly after his elevation, and ere he had so far subdued the disorders of his colony as to permit of his own departure from it, a detachment which he sent forth under Francisco Pizarro—afterwards the conqueror of that golden region to which Vasco Nunez pointed out the way—was defeated by the implacable cassique Zemaco, and Pizarro himself, sorely bruised and wounded, made his escape with difficulty, leaving one of his followers, not slain, but disabled, on the field. The anger of Vasco Nunez was awakened by this latter circumstance. "Go back," he exclaimed to Pizarro—"it were to thy eternal dishonour if thou leavest one of thy followers in the hands of the savage!" The lieutenant obeyed, and was successful in rescuing the disabled man; but the ready and watchful hostility of Zemaco, thus promptly manifesting itself, made the necessity obvious to all for his instant overthrow or removal. Addressing himself, therefore, to the present necessity, Vasco Nunez at once proceeded to put his people in readiness to march. The hills, at the foot of which the colony had entrenched itself, were, he now discovered, filled with enemies, bold, resolute, and distinguished by an obstinate courage which made them a very different sort of foes from those to whom the Spaniards had been accustomed among the Antilles. They were capable of great endurance, long privation and fatigue, and in battle shrunk from no exposure of their persons, and had no fear of death. Under a cassique like Zemaco, whom they loved as a man, and obeyed with a full confidence in his skill and prowess as a leader, they felt themselves capable of great achievements, and realized, from the confidence in themselves and chief, an addition to their habitual courage which made them anxious for the moment when their leader should give them the signal for descending upon their enemies in the plain. It was while Vasco Nunez was making his preparations to anticipate them in their attack, and at the moment when the warriors of Zemaco, having tasted already of Spanish blood, were growing impatient of the cautious but inactive policy of their chief, that the latter

received an accession to his councils if not to his strength, which was calculated, in many particulars, to affect the mode of warfare which he pursued.

On the evening of that day when the colonists appointed Vasco Nunez to the chief command over them, there came within the circle of the cassique's encampment, the two strange Indians whom the cavalier had discovered as they disembarked from the sea. The reader has already seen who they were. The appearance of Caonabo among the people from whose race he sprung was productive of as much surprise to them as would have been his presence to the Spaniards. When arrested by the watchful spies of Zemaco, and closely questioned as to his objects and origin, he haughtily threw wide the cotton garment which covered his breast, and revealed those peculiar marks of his nation and their own, made in childhood, which satisfied them of a common paternity. Then, in their own language, he bade them conduct him to their chief.

It were needless to go through those minor details by which Caonabo convinced Zemaco that his counsel was of the utmost importance to his kingdom in carrying on the conflict with the Spaniards. He described to him the capacities and the character of that feared and hated race, in the succinct and clear narrative which he gave him of the miserable fate which had befallen the unhappy people of Hayti. His own history formed no small portion of a story, crowded with details of blood and persecution, of a character so brutal as to startle and confound his savage auditory, to whom the sprinkling of a parent's blood upon their heads in infancy,—according to the custom of the Charaibee—would seem calculated as the precursor of a life in which no atrocity could be found too outrageous for indulgence. The arms of the Spaniards, their skill in warfare—their horses, and above all, the cruel bloodhound, whose unerring nostril no vigilance, unless divided from him by the running water, could well elude—all these were described to the listening cassique by one whose intimate experience of the enemy whom they feared, enabled to speak with effect and certainty. Caonabo concluded by counselling Zemaco to retreat before the invaders, laying the country waste as they advanced, and leaving them destitute in this manner of all sources of supply. But the

proud chief of Darien, with a smile of exultation replied thus to the cautious counsellor.

"Does my brother know the power of Zemaco? Let him look upon these hills. They hide a thousand warriors. They have a thousand brothers. The hills behind them have their thousands. I cannot see the end of my people, though I stand on the highest mountain of Darien."

"The heart of Caonabo was once proud like thine, my brother," was the reply. "On the hills of Hayti I too had my thousand warriors. But they perished even with the coming of the Spaniards. They carry a swift lightning which strikes down the brave man, though he outrun the swiftest and overthrow the strongest, by reason of his greater strength."

"Does my brother speak of the warriors of Hayti—they were women," was the reply. "Had they been men like thyself, they had also lived like thee. My young men fear not the lightning of these bearded people. They cry aloud that I should command them to devour their enemies. Their teeth gnash for prey."

"Heed not the young men, my brother. They know not the strength of the Spaniard—they only know their own. They are swift of foot—let the Spaniard hunt them among the mountains and the thick woods till he grows weary by the wayside. When he is weary let the young warriors strike."

"The young men of Darien fear not death. They will go down to the valley to-morrow and shoot their arrows into the dwellings of the Spaniards. They are numerous as the trees, and they promise me a thousand white teeth of the enemy to hang in the great temple of Dobayda. Thou shalt see them to-morrow, my brother, when they strike the Spaniard—thou shouldst have had such warriors with thee in Hayti!"

Caonabo saw that the moment had not arrived when, sobered by misfortune and frequent defeat, the proud casique would hearken to those counsels of caution which could secure him success in conflict with the Spaniards. He strove no farther, particularly too when his own blood grew warmed with the clamorous valour of the warriors who gathered around him. The strength of their bodies, the courage of their souls, the dexterity with which they

used their weapons delighted him, and deceived him with the hope that much might be done towards victory in the proposed onset of the morrow. To Buru, that night when they were alone together, he betrayed more of the exultation of spirit which he felt than he suffered Zemaco to behold.

"These are men of war, Buru—men of strength—and they will make their enemies tremble. They will fly from the Spaniard, but they will shoot as they fly—they will perish, but they will perish like men. Zemaco hath given me a lead among them—an hundred warriors will hearken to the cry of Caonabo. Then, as thou lookest from the heights when the battle is going on, thou shalt see the valour of the Carib. In thy heart, when thou beholdest the fall of a Spaniard, thou shalt rejoice and say, Caonabo will avenge the blood of Zemi, our boy."

"Alas!" exclaimed the woman, "but there is no rejoicing for Buru. The blood of the Spaniard brings not back the boy that is perished. He sleeps under the reedy waters of the gulf, and the fat turtle makes his bed beside him where the green weeds are softest. Ah, father, chief—must there be more fighting and blood? May we not fly as thou saidst, to a far mountain in Darien, to which the Spaniard can never come?"

"As well hope to fly from death, woman, as to fly from tyranny. You cannot fly from the tyrant. He must be met with a hatred keen like his own—he must be overcome and slain. But should Caonabo fly when Zemaco stands up for the fight. Shall the chief run back into the mountains skulking in fear, when the young warriors go down into the valley with sounding conchs, and clashing their spears for battle. It is time that thou shouldst sleep, Buru—go to thy rest. These things are not for the Haytian women. Let her trim the buskin of a chief for battle, or bind his hurts when he is wounded, or feather the long arrow, or give it to the hardening fire—it is all that the trembling woman of Hayti may do for the warrior. But when the strife comes close to the bohios of the tribe, then shalt thou see the woman of the Carib do braver deeds than were ever done by the Haytian man. Thou shalt see her fling the javelin like a warrior and cling to the legs of the enemy, even when he strikes her down to his feet."

"Alas, for Buru, she will die for Caonabo, but she can-

not do battle like the Carib woman. Her heart fails her when the stroke is given. She grows weak at the clashing of battle—she faints when the blood streams from the stricken man. Let not Caonabo hate the poor Buru for that she is of Hayti, and weak like the people of the sunny island.”

The prayer of Buru fell like a reproach upon the ears of the awakened warrior.

“Said Caonabo that he loved not Buru, because she fought not like the Carib warrior? When did he need the arm of Buru in battle? Go! Go! When that day comes, Caonabo will be glad to die. Wherefore should he live when he must say to the mother of his boy, ‘take up thy arrow, woman, and keep thy husband from harm—go forth and meet mine enemy so that he slays me not.’ When did Caonabo speak these words in the ear of Buru. Go! Go! Thou wilt sleep safely, for Caonabo walks the hills that lie between thee and the Spaniard.”

Thus saying, the Carib chief went forth in the transparent starlight, and with light and fearless footsteps, stole down the heights that led to the encampment of the Spaniard. This he surveyed with the keen eye of thought no less than valour. He looked upon the method of the temporary wooden fortress, the palisades, the ditches and the dwellings, so incorporate that they answered all the common purposes of defence. From the point at which he gazed he could behold the distinct form of the soldier, rising into sight at intervals, his bright weapon glittering in the starlight as he trod his rounds with the regularity of an assigned duty. Then came to his ears sudden voices of command and answers of obedience, followed by the heavy ring upon the ground of the arquebus—the clash of steel, the clink of the hammer upon armour, and occasionally the deep bay of the unerring hound, whose sudden tongue sent a chilling sensation even into the bosom of the fierce warrior who listened. All things betrayed an order, compactness, and guarded care, which, while they impressed the Carib with admiration, were no less calculated to move him with many apprehensions touching the result of the conflict. He had a sufficient knowledge of the Spaniards, to know how ill would be the prowess of the naked warriors of Zemaco, though fifty times their number, against their mail clad and measured order; and when he remarked the con-

dition of preparedness in which they stood upon the plain, where their horses might move with freedom, and the baldness of vegetation which left the Indians without the cover under which they were wont to fight, and by which alone they could hope, in some little measure, to neutralize the advantages which their foes possessed, he could not but feel increasing apprehensions with regard to the approaching issue. But the immense numbers which Zamaco commanded reconciled him to the conflict, which, indeed, was beyond his power to control. The Spaniards were few, and Caonabo deemed it not improbable that the native valour of the Carib, stimulated by the excited temper of their minds under the restraints to which they had been for some time subjected, would prompt them to a degree of fury, which, above the fear of death, would overcome their enemies by the sheer exhaustion following the continued press of numbers, and a long protracted conflict with newly arriving warriors. His close survey of all objects upon the plain, its inequalities, places of retreat and shelter, together with the few covering points which it possessed, enabled him to form some general plan as to the mode by which to conduct his own share in the coming battle. This achieved, he returned to the heights on which no watch was maintained. The warriors slept in scattered groups along the hills, and none of them beheld his departure or return. But the eye of Buru was watchful, and her mind filled with sorrowful and trembling thoughts, allowed her no sleep till the return of the chief; and even then, when more assured she lay upon his arm and slumbered through the night, his ears still caught the deep moaning of her lips, at moments, which told him that the sleep of the sorrowful is itself a sorrow. Then, with the gathering and cruel fancies which precede the strife in the bosom of the warrior, and though panting for that vengeance which is holy when it is the only condition by which liberty can be won or rendered secure, the chief yet felt deep pity for the timid, the gentle, the suffering woman at his side.

"Would it were," he muttered to himself, as he listened to her unconscious moanings—"would it were, if for thy sake only, that I could bear thee to some far mountain, or some lonely island, such as the valour of the Carib once made sacred against every foe. But where is the moun-

tain which the barking dog of the Spaniard may not climb, or where is the island that his mighty ships may not find in the open paths of the ocean. The valour which made the home of the Carib sacred before, whether upon the mountain or amid the sea, can alone preserve it now; and if we blind not ourselves—if we look calmly where to strike between the armour, and rush not madly into the arms of defeat and death, it may be that we may preserve it now. But thou, at least," he continued, looking down upon the melancholy face of the sleeper, "thou, at least, shalt never again bear the burdens of the Spaniard. I will save thee from him while I have life to strike, and the dagger which cannot destroy the tyrant, shall at least deprive him of his slave."

He kissed the weapon which he had drawn from his bosom while speaking these words, then throwing the hand which grasped it over the neck of the unconscious sleeper, he resigned himself to a like repose.

END OF VOL. I.







