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““TO THE MAST WITH HIM!” SAID MARTIN ALONZO.”

[See page 73.]

DIEGO PINZON

23

AND

*THE FEARFUL VOYAGE HE TOOK
INTO THE UNKNOWN OCEAN*

A.D. 1492

BY

JOHN RUSSELL CORYELL

ILLUSTRATED

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DIEGO PINZON.

CHAPTER I.

IN the ancient province of Andalusia, which, as everybody knows, is famous for the charms of its climate and the fertility of its soil, there stands now, as there stood four centuries ago, the convent of La Rabida.

The convent is almost a ruin now ; but in those days it was a sturdy pile, where a busy, eager body of Franciscan friars dwelt, governed by the learned and good Fray Juan Perez, who had once been confessor to the queen, Isabella.

Now there is something mournful in the solitude of the place ; but in the days when the things happened which are set down here, there was a suppressed excitement pervading the atmosphere of the convent, which had communicated itself even to Fray Pedro, who had been given the post of porter because he had what the good prior called such a singular gift of slumber.

There had been days recently when Fray Pedro had not closed his eyes for as long as two consecutive hours; and if *he* felt the influence that was around him, what wonder if the boys, digging away desperately at their humanities, should be wrought up to the highest pitch of unrest and excitement?

Fray Bartolomeo was the pedagogue, who had been selected for the office because of his great learning; but he searched the stores of his knowledge in vain during those days for a device to turn the minds of the scholars from the one topic that absorbed them.

The fact of the matter was that at the seaport town of Palos, only half a league away from the convent, preparations were going on for an adventure of the most fearful nature—an adventure which some people did not hesitate to say was prompted by the evil one himself, and which others, more lenient, declared could have been conceived only by a madman.

At the convent they did not believe the first of these propositions at all, nor did any one give word openly to the second; though there were many there who harbored it in their secret thoughts, and who occasionally whispered it.

The prior, Juan Perez, had faith in the adventure, and, indeed, had done all that lay in his

power to forward it, and was continuing to do so in the face of the most violent opposition. But then, as a brother one day whispered to another, the prior was given to the promulgation of new ideas.

It seems that a foreigner—an Italian of some sort, it was believed from his accent—had persuaded the queen to venture some money in this execrable enterprise, and had further induced her to designate the port of Palos as the place which should furnish a portion of the doomed fleet and crew.

There was very little doubt that they were doomed; though this man, Christoval Colon, pretended to demonstrate that there was no danger at all attached to his purposed expedition, and had persuaded the good Fray Juan Perez of the correctness of his demonstration.

It was true that so good a seaman as Martin Alonzo Pinzon had been beguiled by the specious representations of the pestilent foreigner, and that Martin had in turn induced his brothers and many of his kin to lend their countenance and aid to the adventure. A number of the Pinzons had, in fact, enlisted in the enterprise.

It was very well known, however, that the Pinzons were bold, reckless sailors, who feared naught and would dare anything, and all that

the people of Palos had to say as to that was that they wished them luck, and hoped they would come back alive. It was no secret, moreover, that more than one Pinzon wished himself well out of the affair, and would have taken himself incontinently out, had it not been that the present fear of the wrath of Martin Alonzo Pinzon was far greater than the fear of the more remote perils that threatened them on the trackless wastes of that ocean which, somewhere in the far western distance, poured over the edge of the earth into the bottomless abyss beyond. Martin Alonzo Pinzon was a difficult man to gainsay, and those of his poorer kinsmen who could not take comfort in the logic of the Italian must set themselves up against the will of the bluff sailor, who had a voice in which thunder rumbled and an eye in which the storm-lightning played.

Martin Alonzo had furnished one vessel in joint account with the foreigner, and as Palos owed, as a sort of forfeit, the service of two vessels for a year to the sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, two vessels had been forcibly distrained for the benefit of the foreigner.

As for the crews, Pinzon had haled a goodly number of his kinsmen into service, and cajoled a few of his townsmen; but there was no induce-

ment that could make any others stir a step towards such certain destruction until a royal ordinance was issued, offering freedom to such convicts as would venture their lives rather than remain in durance.

But even with that the crews did not fill up to the required number, and the mortal terror that was on those who had agreed to go caused them to desert at every opportunity; and the consequent wrath of Martin Alonzo Pinzon was a thing to be shunned carefully.

And, as may be seen, all this disturbance and turmoil naturally created the bitterest feeling; and for the weeks that the foreigner rested at Palos the talk of his insane folly—to call it no worse—ran high, indeed. Well it was for him that he had the good-will of the prior, Juan Perez, and the endorsement of the burly sailor.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE the little fleet destined for the mad enterprise lay in port, it was considered advisable to restrain the boys of the convent school within the walls. So it came about that the gardener was driven almost distracted by the peril of his choicest vegetables and flowers; for the boys had not the same passionate regard for the growing things that he had.

“See there, now!” said Fray Antonio, angrily, as he held one of the boys by the collar of his jacket, “you have planted your clumsy foot on the stem of my choicest melon, and it lacked a day of perfect ripening. Think twice”—he cuffed him heartily as many times—“ere ever you set foot to ground again.”

He pushed the boy from him, and then regarded him as if sorry he had not been more liberal with his blows. The boy shook himself and gave back to the exasperated gardener a glance as angry as his own. But that was only the first impulse; the second followed close on its heels and turned the anger into mischief. The lad cast a swift

glance at his comrades, who stood by, smothering their mirth, and then looked with exaggerated innocence at the irate gardener.

“Think twice, did you say, Fray Antonio,” asked the boy, “ere I set foot to the ground? Is it one of the rules of the order? Or is it a rule you, only, go by? And would it not cause one to go with a singular, halting gait? As thus—” he raised a foot and held it suspended—“I think once, I think twice, and down she goes. Now the other. I think once, I think twice. Oh, but that is rare and dignified, Fray Antonio, though I misdoubt those boys be laughing at me.”

“I will have a word with Fray Bartolomeo,” stuttered the angry gardener.

“*Gracias* for that,” said the boy; “and I beg you to expound the thing to him, lest, when he calls me and I go in this new fashion to him, he may misjudge me. Do I catch the motion, good Fray Antonio?”

He walked towards his convulsed comrades with an absurd, halting step.

“Ah,” said Fray Antonio, with a grim, angry humor of his own, “you will catch the motion, doubt it not, when you dance to the music of the scourge. I will see to that, Diego Pinzon, I will see to that.”

“He means to do it, Diego,” said one of the boys, looking where the angry brother went.

“Why, of course he means to do it,” said Diego, “and Fray Bartolomeo will ask no better than to ply the scourge over my back. I might indeed ask him to think twice ere he let the scourge fall, but I doubt if he will be as ready as I was to act on the hint.”

“You may well doubt it,” laughed one of the boys.

“It is a thing he knows no moderation in,” said Diego, with a grimace.

“The sting would have been no greater had you first eaten the melon instead of only bruising the stem,” said another.

They all found it easy to be merry since it was Diego who was to pay the reckoning. But Diego was as merry as they; for it was not in his nature to cross the bridge until he reached it.

“’Tis a good suggestion, Alfonso,” said he. “Who will eat of the fruit if I remove it from the bruised stem? I will promise to take all the blame. Alfonso only speaks the truth when he says I will pay as much for the stem as for the melon. For my own part, I think Fray Antonio lets the melons stay too long on the vine. An over-ripe melon does not suit my palate. Who is with me?”

“THINK TWICE, DID YOU SAY, FRAY ANTONIO,” ASKED THE BOY, “ERE I SET FOOT TO THE
011”



The boys looked at each other and then at the melon that lay among the leaves, showing a swelling side full of suggestions of lusciousness and melting juiciness.

“It would be a pity for the melon to spoil,” said Alfonso.

“Besides,” said Diego, hunching his shoulders meaningly, “it would be unfair to pay the price for nothing.”

A grin went around the circle, and Diego, with a glance about the enclosure, stepped over to the melon and plucked it from the vine.

“Ah,” said he, smacking his lips, “Fray Antonio is but a poor gardener; the melon would not have stood another day. Where shall we eat it?”

That was a serious question, and the boys looked blankly at each other. It was not easy to hide in the convent grounds, especially when an angry gardener was likely to make quick search. But Diego was full of expedients. Fray Bartolomeo had often told him that if he would but give the same attention to study that he did to mischief he would surpass the best of them all.

“Tut!” said he, in answer to their looks, “it will be the easiest thing imaginable. Fray Pedro will be sound asleep, and his keys will be in his girdle. It would be a huge pity to awake him,

and I will not do it, merely to ask him to open the gates. I will just slip up to him and help myself to the keys and open the gates. It will be a real mercy. Come with me."

The business began to look too serious to some of the boys, and, if there had been any bold enough, there would have been a decided demur to this proposition; but there was none, and so they all straggled after their bold leader.

Fray Pedro, the porter, was in the state that Diego had declared he would be. He was at his post, it is true; but his twice-doubled chin was sunk into his neck, the flies had undisturbed possession of his shaven skull, and, as if it were needed, his nose gave forth to the world a defiant sort of notice that he slept.

Diego gave the melon into the keeping of his trusty lieutenant, Alfonso, and crept up to the side of the drowsy friar, and detached the bunch of keys from his ample girdle.

This was the last chance the timid ones would have to retreat, and more than one looked for encouragement at his neighbor; but Diego acted as if he expected to be followed, and followed he was.

He knew the right key, and put it in the lock and turned it softly. The bolt shot back and the door swung open. Then Diego slipped back

and readjusted the keys in the friar's girdle, and a moment later the boys of the convent school were scurrying towards the olive grove hard by.

There is probably a difference of opinion in respect to melons. Certainly the boys differed from Fray Antonio as to the ripeness of the one they discussed in the coolness of the olive grove. They thought it could not have been more delicious. There was but one fault—it was too small a melon for eleven boys. There should always be eleven melons for eleven boys.

“It is very good,” said Alfonso, eating rather close to the rind, “and it would have been wasted on that Italian, Christoval Colon, who would have been sure to share it with our reverend prior.”

“Yes,” said Diego, “it would have been wasted; but much as I have enjoyed it, I would not have begrudged it to him; for it is like enough that once he sets sail he will never taste of melon again. Was ever so crazy a venture! And yet to look at him he is serious and reverend enough. I thank my cousin, Martin Alonzo, that he fixed on me for the church. I would not go the voyage with him—no, not for ten thousand ducats of gold.”

“Ducats of gold!” said Alfonso, doubtfully.

“I should think twice, like Fray Antonio, before I would refuse that.”

“Gold or silver,” said Diego, scornfully, “what would they profit you an you never returned home to spend them?”

“Let us go back,” said one of the timid ones, to whom the mention of Fray Antonio had brought up visions of a scourge vigorously applied.

“Go back!” said Diego. “Not I. As well be hung for an old sheep as a young lamb. The vessels sail to-night, and I warrant there will be rare doings at Palos to-day. I am going to Palos. Who is with me?”

“I will go,” said Alfonso. “Why not? I have eaten the melon, and I must digest it. Who else is with us?”

But very fear had made the others bold by this time, and to a boy they shrank back.

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed Diego. “Well, go back, but have a care that Fray Antonio is not waiting for you at the gate.”

It was so possible a thing that the boys looked miserably at each other for a moment, and then started on a run for the convent, followed by the jeering laughter of the two who had elected to be truants.

As for them, the moment of reckoning was so

far away that they felt very reckless, and it was with an air of bravado that they struck into the dusty road and walked hastily into the town.

When they reached the town they found that Diego had been quite right, and that the place was in a turmoil indeed. On the square there were sullen faces, and down on the quay, whither they hurried at once, there were weeping women and angry men; while on the three little vessels, anchored a stone's-throw off shore, the crews could be seen hanging miserably over the rails, casting longing eyes ashore.

"When do they sail?" demanded Diego of a man standing near him on the quay.

"They only wait on some jail-birds that have consented to go," answered the man in a surly tone. "Even they are too good for such a cruise; but if the whole crew was of the same it were better. 'Tis a sin to let good men risk their lives so."

"Here they come! here they come!" one and another said, and the boys, looking around, saw a burly, bold-looking man making his way through the crowd, followed closely by two hang-dog looking fellows, who, in their turn, were followed by an officer of the Holy Brotherhood, as the police of Spain was then called.

"'Tis my cousin, Martin Alonzo," whispered

Diego to his companion. "Let me hide behind you; for if he see me and be short of hands, he will think nothing of taking me in tow."

The fear might be well enough founded; but Martin Alonzo Pinzon was thinking of other things than the young Pinzon whom he had destined to the priesthood. He had had so much opposition and so many hard words that he was on the *qui vive* to catch and answer anything that might be said to him.

He left the officer and his two prisoners near to where Diego stood, and went to the edge of the quay to hail a small boat from one of the vessels. Now Diego was not one ever to lose an opportunity. He saw by the looks of the prisoners that, though they had chosen the perilous voyage rather than remain in prison, they were yet far from happy in their lot. And the younger of the two, who was scarcely older than himself, was particularly unhappy.

"He is very young to die," said Diego, in a sepulchral tone.

Some of the bystanders laughed; for the tone was only in keeping with the dismal expression of the young convict. But the latter raised his sullen face and glared at Diego. He said nothing, but there was something unpleasantly vindictive in his eyes. Alfonso said:

“’Tis well you are not going to take the voyage with him.”

“I think so myself,” answered Diego, carelessly; “but if I went the voyage, I think I would make little account of his anger, or any one’s else.”

“You are right,” said the man to whom they had first spoken, “what with dragons and monster serpents, and great gulfs in the water, and creatures that live on human flesh and all sorts of inconceivable perils, ’tis better far to dare anything than go such a voyage.”

“Here,” roared the voice of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, at this moment, “take these fellows off to my vessel, and see that they remain there.”

The two prisoners were hurried into the boat amid the silence of the spectators, and Martin Alonzo went back into the town.

“I would rather take my chances at the convent,” said Diego.

“So would I,” agreed Alfonso. “Shall we go there now?”

“Why should we? We shall be flogged the same, whether we stay an hour or five. I say, let us wait and see the vessels weigh anchor.”

“Let us then,” said Alfonso, who seldom gainsaid his friend.

“For a fact,” said Diego, nodding his head

sagely, "old Bartolomeo cannot hurt much anyhow."

"Old Bartolomeo!"

A hand was on the collar of each boy's jacket. Neither looked up to see whose the hand was. They had recognized the voice as that of him whom Diego had called "old Bartolomeo." They cast despairing and disgusted grimaces at each other.

"Will you lay hold of this scape-gallows," said the Franciscan to the man with whom the boys had been holding converse.

The man grinned and took a firm hold of Diego's collar, much to the surprise of that lad, who had expected, as a matter of course, to be made the example of; it being evident that the pedagogue intended to administer summary punishment.

"Be careful," said the Franciscan; "for he is a slippery rascal; and, now, give me space."

It was a diversion as good as any for the idle crowd to see Alfonso capering under the hot blows of the angry friar, and they cheered him on with laughing shouts.

"And now," said Fray Bartolomeo, letting the scourge fall at his side from sheer exhaustion, "do thou hasten back to the convent, and make good speed, or it shall be the worse for thee."

Diego had not felt the same sorrow for Alfonso that he might have done, but for the conviction that the worthy friar would be too worn with his exertions to do justice to his particular case. But when the Franciscan released Alfonso, Diego, not to betray his satisfaction, set up a howl, and begged the friar not to be too hard upon him, at the same time casting a comical glance at the spectators, to let them understand that he cared not a fig for the worthy man's castigation.

“As for thee, Diego Pinzon, who art counting on my weakened strength, thou goest to one whose arm will not fail him, I warrant—thy cousin, Martin Alonzo.”

Then did Diego turn pale, not only with the fear of an arm whose like was not in Palos, but with a greater fear.

“In mercy don't do that,” he cried. “I mind not the flogging, I will do any penance; but take me not to my cousin, for I know in my heart he will ship me for the terrible voyage.”

“Ah, that he will,” said the man who held him; “for he has not his complement yet.”

“Tut!” said the friar, taking Diego by the collar and leading him away; and the heart of the boy sank within him.

CHAPTER III.

DIEGO'S terror of his cousin was in no wise assumed—it was very real; for Martin Alonzo Pinzon, besides being the acknowledged head of the Pinzon family and a very masterful man, was the legal guardian of Diego and had his future in his keeping.

“Good Fray Bartolomeo,” pleaded Diego, earnestly, “do not take me to my cousin. I will mend my ways, indeed I will. And you may put any penance on me, and you shall see how cheerfully I will do it.”

“Thou shouldst have thought of all that before,” said the friar, feeling a pity for Diego that he would not betray, because he believed the mischievous lad needed a severe lesson.

“You do not know my cousin,” said Diego, mournfully.

“’Tis plain thou dost,” said Fray Bartolomeo.

“The flogging he would give me I care little for,” said Diego.

“Be not too sure; his arm is not that of ‘old Bartolomeo.’”



“‘TUT!’ SAID THE FRIAR, TAKING DIEGO BY THE COLLAR
AND LEADING HIM AWAY.”



“If I said ‘old Bartolomeo,’” said Diego, cajolingly, “you must believe it was said with affection. Don’t you know how we sometimes say old when we wish to use a term of endearment?”

Fray Bartolomeo smiled on the other side of his face, but turned a grim eye on Diego.

“*Gracias* for thy affectionate remembrance of me, even with the thought of the scourge in thy mind; but it must not blind us to the fact that thou didst purloin a choice melon from the garden, having previously flouted Fray Antonio, and having subsequently seduced thy fellows, and done many things which thou shouldst not have done.”

“It was very wicked of me,” said Diego; “but would you for that have me taken from the convent and carried to certain destruction?”

“Tut!” said the friar, scornfully.

“But he will do it,” whined Diego. “You heard what the man said, that he had not yet his complement.”

“Tut!” said the friar again.

“I see how it is,” said Diego, trying a new tack, “you bear me malice for calling you old, and you would have me removed from the bosom of the church. You care nothing for my future welfare. ’Tis unchristian to hate me so bitterly.”

“Tut, tut! tut, tut!” said the worthy friar, uneasily. “’Tis because I cherish thee in my heart, thou scape-grace! that I will not do thee the wrong to punish thee insufficiently. How many times have I praised thee for thy facility in declension and conjugation? How often have I told thee that thou wert the best student of them all and wouldst be a credit to us but for thy scampish tricks? How often hast thou cajoled me, in my love for thee, and escaped the punishment thou shouldst have had in justice?”

“You have indeed been very good,” said Diego, watching the face above him out of the corner of his eye; “why then will you wreck my wretched life now? I tell you, Martin Alonzo will snatch me from the convent and take me with him. I feel it in my heart.”

There was uneasiness in the heart of the friar, for he loved the boy, and there was enough in what he said to make an impression on his fears, too. Martin Alonzo might do the thing Diego dreaded, or pretended to dread. Diego saw that the good man wavered, and a grin overspread his countenance. The friar, chancing to look down, saw the grimace.

“Thou art an ungrateful little wretch!” he said, angrily. “Thou wouldst play upon my affection for thee, and then laugh at my credu-

lity. I think sometimes, Diego Pinzon, thou hast no heart at all. Now, say no more! I will not listen. I caught the smirk on thy face, and it hath undone thee for a certainty. Thou shalt learn the iniquity of making a mock of thy elders. Say no more!"

Diego hastened to remove the impression the friar had received, and strove with much earnestness and artfulness to work once more on the feelings of his teacher, but it was without avail.

When he pointed out with great particularity what the dangers of the voyage were, Fray Bartolomeo merely gave a grim assent. When he enlarged on the pity of taking him from his religious studies, the friar only snorted ominously. In short, they came to the house of Martin Alonzo Pinzon and went in.

Martin Alonzo was evidently saying his last farewells at that moment, and was in great haste to be away.

"Good-day, Fray Bartolomeo!" he said, in his abrupt fashion. "Whom have you here? It is my cousin's son, Diego? Good-day to thee, lad! I suppose thou hast come to bid me a last farewell like these women. As if I were never to return! Well, *adios*, if you will. Is he a likely lad, Fray Bartolomeo? How come on the humanities?"

His rapid, abrupt manner of speaking gave little opportunity for an answer; and the friar saw that it was a poor time to be there on such an errand; but he was so convinced that Diego would be unmanageable without a chastisement and warning from his cousin that he spoke out clearly and to the point:

“The humanities come on well enough, and no one can do better than he when he will; but I have come to tell thee, Martin Alonzo, that he needs a strong hand to correct him, or he will never arrive at grace.”

“My time is short,” said Martin Alonzo, gruffly.

“It needs not much of it to give him a taste of thy vigor, and a word of warning.”

“A sorry sort of remembrance he would have of me then, reverend brother.”

“He will honor and bless thee in the end,” said the friar.

“What hath he done that calls for my intervention?” demanded Martin Alonzo, eying Diego curiously.

“Much in the past that hath been inadequately dealt with, and to-day these several things: He flouted the gardener, Fray Antonio, when he rebuked him for stepping on his melon vines; he—”



“IT IS MY COUSIN'S SON, DIEGO? GOOD-DAY TO THEE, LAD!”

“ Good cousin,” said Diego, hastily, “ I did but as Fray Antonio bade me.”

“ What did he bid thee do ?” demanded Martin Alonzo.

“ He bade me think twice ere I set foot to ground again, cuffing me soundly lest I should not remember his admonition.”

“ Ah !” said Martin Alonzo, a twinkle lighting up his stern eye.

Diego, who was quickness itself, caught the twinkle and went on, before Fray Bartolomeo could continue his catalogue of misdeeds.

“ And then I begged him to enlighten me further, since I was not certain that I had construed him correctly.”

“ Thou didst flout him,” said the friar, indignantly.

“ What didst thou ?” demanded Martin Alonzo.

“ I did but lift my foot thus,” said Diego, demurely suiting the action to the word, “ and count, so : ‘ I think once, I think twice, and down she goes. I think once, I think twice, I think once, I think twice,’ and so on.”

It was so comically done, Diego being a capital mimic and actor, that Martin Alonzo and the women of the household laughed uproariously in spite of their seriousness. Even Fray Bartolomeo was fain to turn his head. Diego retained

his innocent countenance ; but down in his heart was the feeling that once more his artfulness had saved him.

“’Tis thus he ever saves himself the punishment he deserves, and then laughs in his sleeve at his own cajolery,” said the friar, resuming his grave face.

“He is a very cunning knave, then, is he ?” said Martin Alonzo, thoughtfully.

“If thou knowest him not, he will cajole thy anger into love and so escape his just dues.”

“How does he with his Latin ?” asked the sailor.

“Excellent well, I will say. He hath a positive gift for languages.”

“But he is full of mischievous pranks, you say ?”

“Like a very monkey for mischief.”

“And he needs a sobering discipline ?” said Martin Alonzo, his voice taking on something of its sea roar.

“Sadly,” answered the friar, trembling a little for the boy ; “but do not forget he is but a child.”

“How old is he ?”

“Fifteen, good cousin,” said Diego, in a fright ; “but do not be so wroth with me. The worst that I did was to break bounds that I might

come into port to see you start on your great voyage, good cousin."

"And purloined a melon and seduced his comrades to eat it with him," interposed the friar, seeing a softening of Martin Alonzo's face, owing to the cunning explanation of his reason for disobedience.

"Thou hadst an interest in my voyage, then?" demanded Martin Alonzo.

"The rogue will cajole him!" murmured Fray Bartolomeo, shaking his head.

"Such an interest, good cousin," said Diego enthusiastically, at the same time chuckling to think how he was like to escape.

Martin Alonzo bent a singular look upon him and turned to the friar.

"He hath a quick wit and a turn for languages, you say?"

"Both."

"But to-day he hath purloined a melon, flouted one of the brothers, broken the bounds, seduced his comrades into evil, and perhaps hath done other things not yet known."

"Oh," whined Diego, immediately cast down, "if you cannot be satisfied with what is known!"

"And," went on Martin Alonzo, "you say he hath been a sore trouble in the past and that

you have felt yourself unequal to the task of fittingly punishing him."

"Even so, Martin Alonzo," admitted the friar.

"And you wish for him, now, a punishment that shall be a warning to him?"

"I love the youth, Martin Alonzo; but it is for his good," said the friar, who found it hard to bear witness against Diego.

"And you think that without an adequate punishment he will not be the ornament to the church that he otherwise would?"

"I wish I could think differently," said the friar.

"And I wish," said Diego, desperately, having given up hope, "that you would do the worst and have it over. I can stand a flogging if it must be; but I hate suspense."

"You shall be relieved of that," said Martin Alonzo, grimly. "I have thought of the thing which will at once be a punishment for him, a boon to me, and a relief to you."

Diego held his breath, his first fear rushing over him in an instant.

"And that is—?" asked the friar, not without uneasiness, himself.

"He shall go the voyage with me," said Martin Alonzo. "I need another hand, and he is agile and strong and will suit me as well as an-

other—better, it may be, since he hath such a strong interest in the voyage.”

“It must not be,” said the startled friar.

“It shall be,” said Martin Alonzo, in such a tone and with such a fire in his eye that Diego felt himself unequal to any words, though the friar, indignant at the trap he had led Diego into, protested vehemently.

“I am his guardian, I think,” said Martin Alonzo. “You brought him here for my discretion, and he hath not yet been yielded up to the church. If he had been, I would be the last to say a word. He hath not been, and he goes with me. It is the last word. Wife, make a hasty bundle of the clothing of our son, which he hath outgrown. We have but a minute to waste. Cousin, look not so glum over a thing which so short a time ago awoke thy enthusiasm. Thou goest with me. Friar, I wish you good-day. *Adios!*”

Diego said not a word to his cousin; he knew that would have been useless. To the friar, however, he addressed a reproach.

“I told you how it would be.”

“Thou didst indeed, my son,” said the worthy friar, humbly. “But do not despair, for I will hasten to the prior and have his intervention.”

Martin Alonzo laughed in his beard, and Diego

felt that his doom was sealed. He saw the friar go out of the house, and he saw the hasty preparations of the women of the household to get him an outfit; he listened to their words of comfort and hope, and to his cousin's gruff assurance that he would not be taking the voyage himself, if he thought there was danger in it; and all the while his mind was only on the words he had spoken in mischief to the young convict.

“He is very young to die!”

They seemed cruel, now, instead of only mischievous, and he wished very heartily that he had not uttered them. And so he sat in melancholy silence until he heard Martin Alonzo saying to him :

“Pick up thy bundle, cousin; kiss the women, and come. Why, how glum thou art! And thou with the gift of language! Come, they are waiting for us, and the admiral, Christoval Colon, or Christopherus, as he and thou, being learned in Latin, would say it, will be impatient.”

Diego heeded not the banter in his cousin's voice; but resigned himself to his fate, with no attempt to hide his grief and terror. He took up his bundle and dejectedly followed his cousin out of the house. Usually, when going to punishment, he would bear himself as jauntily as if going to a feast—that is, when all hope of escape

was gone ; but on this occasion he had no spirit to simulate what he did not feel. He went with drooping head and lagging step.

There was no doubt that some of the people whom they passed pitied him ; and there were others who made merry as he had done with the young convict ; but both sorts were alike to him, and he stepped off the quay into the boat, feeling very little better than if he had been going to execution.

When they reached the *Pinta*, as the vessel of Martin Alonzo was named, a sharp word from his cousin sent Diego over the side in short order. He was just conscious of some conversation taking place about him—a short, quick talk—and then he was hustled forward and told to put his bundle down.

There must have been some curiosity under his despair ; for he remembered afterwards looking about him and making certain observations that did not in the least tend to dispel his fears.

The vessel on which he found himself, and which was destined for the most perilous voyage in the knowledge of man, was a rickety little craft no larger than those which he had seen sailing along the shallow coasts of Andalusia. It had no deck amidships, and carried houses forward and aft only to shelter the crew and

captain, and to contain the most perishable of such freight as she carried.

She was old and dirty and leaky; the crew was sullen and sluggish; Martin Alonzo was harsh and violent; Diego wished he had never taken the melon or broken bounds. The whole affair was wretched and terrible.

There were about thirty persons on board the vessel; but it was plain that all were not workers; and afterwards he learned that some of them were simple adventurers, and that some were officers sent by the queen, Isabella.

The other two vessels had already lifted anchor and were dropping down the stream, and it was not long before the *Pinta* was doing the same. But, even when the anchor was up, the shouting of his cousin—the roaring rather—did not cease, nor did the sullen scuffling of the crew.

He had no idea what he was expected to do, and he was in no mood to ask anybody, even if he had known whom to ask; so he let his bundle lie where he had dropped it and moved over to a part of the rail which seemed to be out of the way of the sailors, and leaned over it in the dismalest manner imaginable. As he stood there, he was conscious of the approach of some one, but did not turn to see who it might be.

“He is very young to die,” said a mocking voice, and he knew, before he looked around, whose the voice was ; but he turned, nevertheless, and looked into the eyes of the young convict whom he had gibed in those same words.

CHAPTER IV.

DIEGO looked into the eyes of the boy who stood by his side, and in their sullen depths he saw a gleam of malicious triumph, which he did not fail to understand. The boy was gloating over the plight he had fallen into.

It made it no easier for Diego to submit to the mockery of the other that he was being treated to his own sauce. The sauce was all the less palatable that it was of his own making. And, then, to have it served by a miserable jail-bird!

“You will do well to keep your distance,” he said to the boy.

“Ha, ha!” jeered the boy, “so young to die!”

“Say that again,” said Diego, “and I will so do to you that you will forget the jail you came from.”

A flush rose to the sallow face of the boy, and he said fiercely between his teeth:

“So young to die!”

Perhaps you know how boys do in these days on such occasions. Four centuries have made no difference; boys did the same then. These two



“‘HE IS VERY YOUNG TO DIE,’ SAID A MOCKING VOICE.”

forgot their fellow-voyagers and seemed to think they were alone on the narrow ledge that skirted the rail. They glared rage and defiance at each other; they measured each other from head to foot. Then, like a flash, for he was a quick boy, Diego struck the other boy on the cheek.

The latter was knocked off the rail, but was on his feet and up again, and was rushing at Diego, when a strong hand caught him by the collar and lifted him off his feet, and another strong hand fell thwack, thwack, on first one side and then the other of his head; and then he was dropped.

The two hands belonged to Martin Alonzo Pinzon; and as he aimed at impartiality, he had no sooner released the convict boy than he caught up a rope's end and laid it lustily over Diego's shoulders, thus giving his cousin an opportunity to form an estimate of the difference between his method and Fray Bartolomeo's. The advantage seemed to be with Martin Alonzo, for Diego had no need to pretend a distress he did not feel. His anguish was genuine.

"Now," said Martin Alonzo, comprehending the scowling convict as well as the squirming Diego, "before this happens again take thought that I am the master of this vessel and can do all the fighting." Then he looked over the crew

that had gathered quickly around, and added, meaningly, "*All the fighting, mind you!*"

With that he roared out another order, and it was a marvel how the sailors jumped to his bidding. As for Diego, he saw in his cousin another sort of man from the gentle, long-suffering Fray Bartolomeo. Nevertheless, he and his antagonist exchanged looks of dislike.

However, they said nothing to each other, though each thought to himself that a more convenient time might come; forgetting, each, that they expected never to see land again.

Well, the little disturbance, odd as it may seem, did much towards raising Diego's spirits. Besides, he was not much given to low spirits, and, with all his terror of the voyage, he was, like most of the other sailors, willing to forget the future since there was no way yet apparent of avoiding it.

He had come on board so soon before sailing that it had not been possible to assign him to any duty, and so there was nothing for him to do but watch the others work, or to look over the rail at the shore as it seemed to glide slowly by.

One thing that he did especially was to follow his antagonist with his eye, as he went about his work; and, in spite of his dislike for him and



“THEN, LIKE A FLASH, FOR HE WAS A QUICK BOY, DIEGO STRUCK THE OTHER BOY ON THE CHEEK.”

prejudice against him, he could not help admitting that he seemed to understand the business of a sailor very well. And once he heard the man who had gone aboard with him address him as Juan Cacheco.

When the *Pinta* reached the mouth of the river, she dropped anchor again near to where the *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* were anchored. The former was the admiral's vessel and the largest, and the latter was commanded by a brother of Martin Alonzo, and was the smallest. The largest was small enough, and it did not surprise Diego to hear his own thought uttered in a dismal, surly growl on the other side of him.

“Three crazy tubs for a crazy voyage!”

Diego turned to see if the remark was addressed to him and to see who had uttered it. It had evidently not been made to him, for which he was glad when he saw the ugly, sullen face of the companion of Juan Cacheco turned towards the other two vessels. He started to move away from the man, when the latter shifted his gaze from the vessels to him, and said, in a tone of half-surly friendliness:

“I think we're of the same opinion as to that. Eh, boy?”

“I know naught about it,” answered Diego, without making any effort to conceal the repug-

nance he had for the man, whom he did not think of as a fellow-voyager, but only as a convict.

“Hah!” ejaculated the man, showing by his sudden change of tone and by his scowl that he comprehended Diego’s feeling towards him. “’Tis the cockerel that crowed so bravely on the quay and changed his tone so soon after. We’ll clip your comb before this voyage is half done, my little bird, or my name is not Miguel de la Vega.”

Now Diego was as hasty of temper as he was lacking in prudence, as his quick and taunting answer showed.

“Miguel of the plain, or Miguel of the prison, it is all one to me. Only I will say this to you, that you may find it harder to get my comb than you think. It may not be so easy to steal other persons’ belongings on board ship as you found it on shore, perhaps.”

“Ah! say you so?” was the answer of the man, his brevity and lowering brow giving Diego a very unpleasant sensation, and making him wonder if a less sharp retort might not have answered his purpose as well.

He certainly had not made a friend of the man; but, for the matter of that, why should Diego Pinzon, who was an honest boy, with good blood in his veins, and something of a scholar,

withal, have any desire to be friendly with a man who had only escaped the punishment of his crimes by his willingness to risk his life in the perilous undertaking on which they were both embarked?

He moved slowly forward, thinking of these things, and making up his mind that he would speak to his cousin and demand of him as a right that he should not be obliged to have his watch with any of the convict members of the crew. He had a very lively respect for his masterful cousin, but he could see nothing unreasonable in the request he had to prefer, and so looked about to see if there might be an opportunity to speak with Martin Alonzo.

There was no hope of finding the captain of the *Pinta* in an idle moment at such a stage of the voyage; but at the moment Diego looked around he saw him standing aft, gazing aloft at some operation which his new crew was performing in the rigging, and performing very ill, if one might judge from his contracted brow. He gave a hasty, frowning glance at Diego as he approached, and then turned his eyes aloft again. Diego was not yet to be put down with a mere frown, and so held his place in front of his cousin until the latter looked at him again and said, gruffly :

“ Well, boy ?”

Diego cleared his throat for such a speech as he would have made at the convent to the reverend prior.

“ I pray your pardon, good cousin—”

“ Are you so in love with the rope’s end that you crave more of it ?” interrupted Martin Alonzo, brusquely.

“ I do not understand you, cousin,” stammered Diego.

“ Then you shall, and that right speedily. Look alive, you lubbers aloft there !” he roared to the sailors in the rigging. “ What ! will you go to sleep on the yard ? I’ll be the death of some of you yet ! Now harkee, boy,” he said, with an abrupt turn to Diego, “ Fray Bartolomeo said you were ready of tongue, and doubtless ’twas a merit in the convent ; but on the *Pinta* ’tis only a dangerous gift. I, only, have the privilege of the gift of language here—all the others of you may as well know at once that the only gift you may exercise with safety is that of readiness of limb when I give the word.”

“ Yes, good cousin,” said Diego, more meekly.

“ And cousin me no cousins,” said Martin Alonzo. “ I am your captain and naught else while we are on the voyage together. And now to the point. What word have you with me ?”

Truly here was no soft-hearted fray to be cajoled with ready words. Diego choked a little and then came to the point more directly than ever he had before.

“I came to ask that in arranging the watches you would put me with the honest men instead of with the convicts.”

“Who speaks of convicts?” demanded the captain, sharply.

“Why, ’tis well enough known that the crew is partly made up of prison men.”

“Ay! is it so? And you are so nice that you must choose your company, eh?”

“I am a Pinzon,” said Diego, with a touch of offended pride.

“A Pinzon! Ay, to be sure!” said Martin Alonzo, scornfully. “And, prithee, why are you going this voyage?”

“Because you forced me, and no other why,” said Diego.

“Tut! will you quibble with me as if I were a fray at the convent? Why, then, did I force you? Speak up like a Pinzon, now!”

“Because I gave the good brothers so much trouble.”

“You stole a melon, did you not?”

“Among other things, I did.”

“And if you stole a melon, in what are you

better than these men who stole purses, perhaps? You did it for mischief and to satisfy your gluttony, and how do you know what bitter temptations these men had? Now, let me hear no more of your superiority. The men who are here are sailors, and I know nothing else of them until they force me to. As for you, your watch has been assigned, and your place is where you have been put. Now go forward, where you belong.”

Well, there was that in Martin Alonzo's tone and manner that kept Diego's ready tongue in check, and made him turn and go forward very meekly; though not without a tingling sense of shame at having been likened in so public a manner to the convicts he had so despised.

He, indeed, had spoken softly enough; but Martin Alonzo had not. Perhaps his was a voice that did not readily lend itself to a whisper. Anyhow, he had so spoken that many on the little vessel had caught the pith of the whole conversation, and Diego felt very certain that, among others, Juan Cacheco had heard and was grinning with glee.

At that instant there was nothing he would have liked better than to have had a pitched battle with that lad; but he had learned already to exercise some self-restraint, and so went into



“‘NOW GO FORWARD WHERE YOU BELONG.’”

the forward cabin without even exchanging glances with Juan.

If he had felt disinclined to the voyage before, he felt much more so now, when the prospect of the future offered so strong a contrast to the past, which he had brought to a close by his own folly. More than once that night he had it in his mind to slip overboard and swim ashore; but the folly of it was too apparent to him for him to act upon the idea, and when the call came in the morning for the watch to go on deck, he was ready with the others.

It seemed to him when he looked around in the dim morning light as if especial trouble had been taken to humiliate and cross him; for he found himself in the same watch with Juan Cacheco and Miguel de la Vega, the two whom, of all others, he would most have wished to avoid companionship with.

He had not much time for bitter thoughts, however, for Martin Alonzo had tumbled on deck at the same time with the sailors, and had at once begun to roar out order after order; so that Diego, unless he was minded to taste of the rope's end again, must needs jump to the word.

Fortunately for him, he was enough of a sailor to understand the orders given, and was nimble

enough to acquit himself tolerably well—better, indeed, than many of the men, some of whom found themselves on board a vessel for the first time in their lives. Besides, he was soon engaged in a hot rivalry with Juan Cacheco, each boy striving to outdo the other in nimbleness and expedition.

The *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* showed as much life as the *Pinta*, and it did not take long for all to understand that the little fleet was now about to start in good earnest on the long and, as they believed, fated voyage.

Sullen curses and deep anathemas were muttered all over the *Pinta*, and it was plain to Diego that a more unwilling crew had never set sail. He might have wondered that the men did not refuse to obey the orders of the commander, had he not gained such an opinion of Martin Alonzo as rendered such a wonder idle. Moreover, he knew that, despite their unwillingness to go, there were many who had nothing but imprisonment to hope for if they refused to go.

Still, it was strange and terrible to him to hear the men all about him cursing as they worked at getting the vessel under way. Cursing the voyage, cursing the captain, and, most of all, cursing Christoval Colon, the mad adventurer,

who had prompted the voyage, as they declared, at the instigation of the Evil One.

In the first moments of despair at leaving their native land behind them, the men had made little concealment of their words; but later, Diego noticed them whispering together in knots, though always careful to give Martin Alonzo no cause for anger.

Diego noticed, too, that the convicts were not the only ones who whispered so suspiciously together; though of what was being said he could gain no notion, for at his near approach to any one of the whispering groups the whispering would instantly cease, and he would be regarded with scowling looks. Indeed, he was not long in discovering that he was in disfavor with the majority of the crew, and he very rightly attributed that fact to his cousin's loud voice, which had betrayed his, Diego's, feelings towards the convict crew.

His situation was so different from what he had always been accustomed to, that it threw him into a very unhappy frame of mind. His bold temper and gay spirits had always made him an unquestioned leader among the boys at the convent, and his quick wit and readiness to acquire knowledge had made him a favorite with the friars, even when he was fullest of mischief.

Here he was a sort of outcast. His cousin was unreasonably harsh with him; the convicts, whom he had scorned, despised and disliked him, and the honest portion of the crew passed him by with scarce a civil word.

The result of it all was to make him very sullen and dejected. His gay spirits deserted him completely, and he went about his work without a word for anybody, but always with a black look ready for any one who might challenge it, and particularly for Juan Cacheco, who took a malicious pleasure in the misery of the lad who had taunted him in his time of misery.

Had circumstances been different, Diego would have gone to his cousin with his fear of some mischief brewing on board the *Pinta*; but, as it was, he felt that anything he might say would only be received with rough upbraiding, and so, in spite of hearing now and again an ominous and threatening word dropped by the whispering men, when they did not suspect his presence, he kept silence and let the talk go on.

Mutiny was what he suspected; but from the few words he had overheard he was quite certain that the only object of the mutiny was to force Martin Alonzo to return to land, and he was too little in love with the voyage to care to prevent the sailors having their will in that re-

spect. His thought was that if he could only get back to Spain, he would make good speed to the convent, and so conduct himself that there would never again be any need for extreme measures against him. Ah, if he could but be in those quiet, peaceful cloisters again !

Yes, he was really of a mind to let the mutiny progress ; not merely because he had no sympathy with Martin Alonzo, but quite as much because the terror of the sailors, which had been daily growing since leaving land behind them, had communicated itself to him.

They were on the third day out now, and the faces of the men wore that dull, stolid look of terror, despair, and threatening which seemed to have transformed them from human beings to brutes, a likeness that was further borne out by the constant, low mutterings that broke from their lips whenever two or three came together.

Whether Martin Alonzo suspected anything or not, Diego could not tell by any sign he ever made. The burly captain went about the deck always in his masterful, confident way, and the men were too much afraid of him to give him any cause for complaint against them.

On this third day, especially, when Diego was satisfied that matters among the sailors were

drawing to a head, as if ripe for action, Martin Alonzo was absolutely free from any sign of suspicion. There seemed a storm brewing, and before he left the deck at night, he had everything put in readiness to be made snug and tight at a moment's notice.

Diego was so certain that something would occur that night that, at the last moment, his resolution to remain reticent deserted him. It seemed to him that it would be right to make an effort to put his cousin on his guard; and with that purpose in view he placed himself nearer aft than he had any business to be, in the hope that Martin Alonzo, in passing, would give him the opportunity he sought for speech with him.

Well, Martin Alonzo saw him; but as it was a part of that worthy sailor's plan to give Diego a good lesson in obedience and subjection, he merely noticed him to snatch up a rope's end and order him forward with a sharp blow across the shoulders.

That effectually closed Diego's lips to him; but as he caught the sound of a jeering laugh from Juan Cacheco, as he passed him, he turned fiercely on him and muttered between his shut teeth:

“Your turn will come, you prison dog!”

“And so will yours; and sooner than you think,” was Juan’s answer, no less fiercely spoken.

“It won’t be too soon,” said Diego.

“Ah! won’t it?” was all Juan’s answer; but it had an ominous tone.

CHAPTER V.

ALTHOUGH under not more than half her full spread of sail, the *Pinta* was dashing freely through the constantly roughening water, responding, like the good sailer she was, to the freshening breeze.

Night had come on with a black sky, and it was only now and then with the utmost difficulty that the lights of the other vessels could be seen, rising out of the darkness for an instant only to be engulfed as if forever.

All through his watch, Diego had divided his interest between these appearing and disappearing lights and the possibility of some action on the part of the conspirators on the *Pinta*. His anxiety on that score had been sharpened not a little by the ominous tone of Juan Cacheco's words to him.

But, alert as he was, nothing occurred that was in the least suspicious, and his watch was relieved without anything having taken place to justify his fears; and as his belief was that the man Miguel was at the head of whatever plot there

was, he felt reassured when he saw him, after a few muttered words with one of the new watch, plunge into the close cabin where the men crowded together to sleep.

The company of those who disliked him, whether they were asleep or awake, was never pleasant to Diego, and, moreover, the bad air and odors of the close cabin were almost sickening to him, though a good sailor; so he did not follow his watch into shelter, but determined to remain on deck as long as the rain, which threatened, held up.

With this intention he crept silently to a corner, where a coil of rope offered a support for his head, and curled up, intending to sleep there. It is easy enough to imagine what thoughts must have come to the desolate and lonely yet high-spirited boy as he lay there, clinging to his coil of rope to steady himself under the increasing motion of the boat. The bitterness of the present was mingled with regretful thoughts of the happy past.

The night was fresh, but not really cold—not cold enough, anyhow, to prevent his sleeping where he lay, and he had already dozed and opened his eyes twice or thrice, when it seemed to him that something like an animal stole past him, and he stared with wide eyes to see what

it might be, or to determine whether or not he had been merely dreaming.

Not quite dreaming, nor yet wide awake. Something had passed him with a stealthy step and crouching body, and, dark as the night was, he could distinguish a human form; and, indeed, what other living thing was there on board the vessel? Dislike is sometimes keener than even love, and it was this that led Diego to the quick conclusion that the crouching figure, moving so softly and cautiously aft, was that of Juan Cacheco. And it seemed to his strained eyes that there was a gleam of a knife-blade once when a lantern swung around the foremast.

His first thought, with a gulp of terror, was that the convict boy was stealing aft with the intention of murdering Martin Alonzo Pinzon; but then, though the idea was not an irrational one, he reflected that it was not likely, since the after-cabin was too full of friends of his cousin to make the thing possible for a boy to accomplish. And yet Juan's errand must be a wicked one, or he would not go about it in such fashion.

But be it what it might, Diego was determined to understand it, and with that idea was rising softly, when a new terror was added to the first by the sudden apparition of a man skulking along

the opposite side of the vessel. And there was something about the movement of the man that made Diego fancy at once that he was Miguel de la Vega.

Some evil it certainly was that took these two wretches out on deck when they should have been asleep in the fore-castle. Diego was a brave enough boy, and at this moment was nerved by the desperate feeling that his own safety—life, perhaps—depended upon his action; but, notwithstanding, a chill of fear crept over him as he stole from his shelter by the coil of rope and followed the dim figure of Juan.

He wondered at first that none of the sailors of the watch challenged the two skulking figures; for it was inconceivable that they had not yet been seen by some one. Then it came over him, with a new accession of terror, that all of the watch must be in collusion with Miguel and Juan.

And if that were so, might not their errand be the murder of his cousin? But no, it seemed so unreasonable that they should attempt that, with the cabin so full of friends of the captain. However, he was determined to watch Juan, who had paused for some reason; and if he saw him turn into the cabin door, he would throw himself on him and shout for help. He would have

done that anyhow, but he was afraid of making a mistake and of thus calling down on himself the wrath of his cousin.

Juan had stopped, evidently to listen for some noise from the cabin, and, as if reassured, had gone on again. Diego saw him pass the cabin door and felt relieved of his greatest fear, but was still certain that some evil was the object of this stealthy excursion. Could it be the helmsman?

No, that was improbable, for the sea, having grown rough, had made the helm so difficult to control that the man there had called a companion to help him, and it seemed unlikely that Miguel and Juan would take the uncertain chances of assault on two able-bodied men. Besides, what would be the object, since it was more than probable that the two men were in sympathy with whatever plot there was on board?

Indeed, though they must have seen Juan and Miguel, too, they paid no attention to them, but kept up a conversation in a low tone, as if they stood there quite alone. What should Diego do? What could he do but hide in the shadow of the cabin and wait?

And so he waited and watched Juan, who had crawled to the starboard rail, and was exchanging some whispered words with Miguel. Then,

of a sudden, Juan rose to his feet, and, to Diego's eyes, seemed to drop over the side. His first impulse was to cry out and run to the rail; but he checked that, knowing that the boy could not have deliberately jumped overboard, as a result of all his mysterious preparation.

Again the impulse was strong to slip into the cabin and warn his cousin that something unusual was going on, and again the fear of being put in the wrong restrained him, and he did nothing but wait for something else to happen which might elucidate what had gone before.

Juan was gone what might have been five minutes before his head appeared above the rail again. Miguel at once rose to his feet and helped Juan carefully to the deck, the men at the helm studiously keeping their eyes turned the other way all the while.

What did it mean? What had been done? What ought he to do? It seemed incomprehensible that those two should have made all that mystery for nothing but to enable Juan to idly get over the quarter-rail; but what object could there be in it? Perhaps there was a port-hole through which the knife of the prison boy could be thrust with fatal effect! Diego shuddered at that thought, and shrank away behind the cabin, feeling that he might have been wast-

ing precious time, and that it was now too late for him to do any good.

But at least he could brave the possible displeasure of his cousin and go into the cabin to ascertain if any foul deed had been committed. He told himself that he would do so as soon as the two conspirators had returned to the fore-castle.

He stole to the mast and crouched at its foot, thinking to be better hidden there. Juan appeared around the corner of the cabin on the same side that he had first passed it, crouching by the rail and peering on every side. Suddenly he stopped and stared towards where Diego hugged the shadow under the mast. Diego waited breathlessly, intending to leap towards the cabin at the first sign of discovery.

But, after a minute of peering, Juan resumed his progress, and Diego turned his head to watch for Miguel. Dislike and ready suspicion had done for Juan, however, what they had already done for Diego, and had caused him to recognize Diego in the half-hidden figure at the foot of the mast.

He had moved on as if freed from the doubt that had made him stop, and then he turned again quickly and had leaped on Diego from behind; so that, almost at the moment that Diego had

espied Miguel coming along the starboard rail, he had felt himself seized by the neck and borne to the deck.

Fear and anger combined gave him courage and strength, however, and he twisted under the grasp of his antagonist, and gave utterance to a yell at the same moment that he grappled with Juan.

“Help, Miguel!” cried Juan, finding himself unable to cope with Diego, and fearing another yell that would arouse the sleepers in the cabin.

And before Diego could utter more than a hoarse cry, he was caught by the neck in the strong hands of Miguel, and despite his struggles was in a fair way of being choked.

“Who is it?” he heard Miguel whisper.

“The boy Diego,” was Juan’s answer.

“Ah! and he was spying on us?”

“I think so.”

There was an instant of silence, during which Diego felt the grasp on his throat relax, and he made a furious, desperate effort to free himself.

“Ah! would you?” said Miguel, angrily, and once more tightened his grasp on Diego’s throat. Then he said, suddenly: “The little spoil-sport! The best place for him is over the rail. Bear a hand, Juan, and we will send him to find better company, since he seems to dislike ours.”

“What! throw him overboard?” demanded Juan.

“What else?”

“No, no. I won’t do it,” was the hasty answer.

“Why, you little fool! do you think our lives will be safe if we leave this little friar to tell the captain what he knows?”

“I will not do murder,” said Juan, in a frightened tone.

“Then out of my way, and take no part in it. If it is his life or mine, I shall not take long in the choosing. You’re a fool, Juan.”

“You shall not do it,” said Juan, laying hold of Diego, who was as still, now, as if senseless, though, in fact, he was cognizant of all that was going on.

“Out of my way, boy!”

“I will cry out and alarm the cabin,” said Juan.

Miguel cursed him for his folly, and demanded what he would have done, then.

“Make him promise not to tell a word of what he knows.”

“Ay! he’d promise anything for his life’s sake,” said Miguel. “So much for having a boy to work with.”

“He’ll keep his promise,” said Juan, posi-

tively. "Let him speak in a whisper. Say, Diego! will you promise—will you swear on the crucifix not to speak of what you have seen to-night, or of what you suspect? Let him speak, Miguel!"

"And let him yell out and arouse the cabin," retorted Miguel, in a surly growl.

"If he tries to do it, throw him over," said Juan.

Diego shook his head, as well as he could, to intimate that he would not cry out. Juan seemed to understand the movement, and again urged Miguel to loose his grasp. And, indeed, it was about time he did; for Diego was losing consciousness. Miguel unwillingly did as Juan urged him, and the latter spoke quickly to Diego.

"Will you swear as we ask you?" he said.

It was a minute before Diego could recall his senses to make a reply. Then he demanded brokenly:

"Have you done harm to my cousin?"

"Not a thing has been done to him," answered Juan.

"Have you taken any life?" asked Diego.

"Fool! no. Will you swear?"

"What have you done?"

"Holy St. Martin!" growled Miguel, "does

the little priestling think we are confessing to him?"

"You will learn soon enough what has been done if you will swear; but if you do not take the oath and that at once, it is like you will not be alive to learn," answered Juan, angrily.

"I will swear," said Diego.

"Where's a crucifix?" said Juan to Miguel.

"You may be sure the priestling has one," answered Miguel. "And let me warn you, boy," he said, savagely, "if you break your oath, you shall not escape."

"Here's my crucifix," said Diego, "and if I swear I will keep my word. Now what shall I swear?"

"Swear that you will say nothing of what you have seen or heard," said Juan.

"Stop!" growled Miguel, suspiciously, "do not forget that he is a fray, or hopes to be, and that it is his trade to juggle with words. Make him swear in such a way that he cannot get around it."

"I will swear honestly what you like," said Diego, indignantly.

"You are too ready to swear," said Miguel with all the suspicion of ignorance.

"Hush!" whispered Juan, suddenly. "There is a noise in the cabin. Swear as I said," he ejaculated hastily to Diego.



“‘HUSH!’ WHISPERED JUAN, SUDDENLY. ‘THERE IS A NOISE IN THE CABIN.’”

“The captain!” muttered Miguel with an oath, and he and Juan crawled away, attempting to drag Diego with them.

But he was not minded to bear them company, and tore away, only just in time to avoid a vicious stab from the knife that Miguel drew from his belt.

“We will hang for it!” he heard the older convict growl. “Curse you, Juan, for a soft-hearted fool! Curse you!”

The man was in such a rage that Diego expected him to brave all consequences and rush after him; so he ran aft near to where Martin Alonzo was standing, and waited. Miguel and Juan had disappeared into the fore-castle, however, and he was not molested.

Martin Alonzo, like the thorough seaman that he was, had been waked from his sleep by an unusual motion of his vessel; and, as he had lain down in the full expectation of being disturbed by the coming of the storm he had foreseen, he had leaped out of his bunk and rushed out on deck. His first thought had been that the disturbance had been caused by the storm; but when he reached the deck and discovered that the storm had not yet burst, albeit the wind was fresh and the waves running high, he sprang to the men at the helm and roared out:

“What’s wrong? Can’t two of you hold that helm steady? She yaws like a blind mule on a hill-side. Steady there!”

He pushed the men angrily away and caught the helm in his own strong hands, and braced his feet to keep the rudder steady. Still, there was a quivering, unsteady motion to the vessel.

“Whose watch is it?” he roared. “Is it yours, Lopez?” as the third mate came hurrying aft. “Have you turned lubber like the rest? Have you lost your wits because we’re three days out? How long has she been yawing like this?”

“Just commenced it,” was the surly answer.

“What’re you doing for’ard? Couldn’t you tell that something was wrong with the steering-gear? All hands on deck and have everything made snug! Jump, now! Let go the main sheet and bring her upon the starboard tack. Jump, you lubbers! Do you think I want her brought about, you sea-calves? There! that steadies her. Here, take this helm, and keep her where she is.”

The vessel was alive almost from the first roar of the captain, and everything was being done as expeditiously as possible; although most of the people aboard of the vessel were wondering what was the cause of so much excitement. The captain, however, gave no one much oppor-

tunity for reflection ; for as soon as he had given the helm into other hands, he had issued more orders looking to lightening the canvas, making all snug, and to keeping the vessel steady.

Diego had quickly seen that there would be nothing for him to do but to take his part in the execution of the orders of Martin Alonzo, and he had jumped like the others at the first word. The only care he had was to keep away as far as possible from his two recent antagonists, and this he accomplished, notwithstanding the manifest efforts of Juan and Miguel to have a word with him.

He had wondered how he would be able to keep them at a distance after the excitement had subsided ; but he had no need to concern himself about that ; for no sooner had Martin Alonzo put the vessel in condition to hold her own than the storm that had been threatening broke upon them, accompanied by sheets of rain, forked streaks of lightning, and peals of thunder ; so that until daylight dawned there was little idleness for any of the crew.

The rudder worked so badly that the vessel would not head as she was put, and in consequence shipped so much water that all hands were kept busy bailing her and pumping too.

When morning dawned, the first thought was

of the other vessels, and great was the relief to see them laboring in the great waves, not far away; though in the event of danger to the *Pinta* the others could have done nothing for her in such a sea. Still, there was some comfort in the companionship of the vessels. What Diego thought most of, however, when the first streaks of dawn lighted up the gray waste where sky and water were hardly distinguishable, was that now his life would be safe from Miguel.

He had made no effort to have any communication with his cousin; for that efficient sailor seemed to know what was wrong better than he could have told him, and any information he could have given seemed to him superfluous. He felt sure, of course, that whatever had happened had been the result of the action of Juan; but, as no danger seemed to threaten in consequence, he decided that it would be wisest to keep silence. He knew, too, that everything he did was watched by Miguel.

The *Pinta* was quite bare of canvas by this time, and was laboring frightfully. Martin Alonzo had made several efforts to ascertain what was wrong with the steering-gear; but without result, since it was dangerous to go over the side during the gale, and he had determined to postpone his investigation until the storm had abated.

All this while he had been without food, even when the sailors had been supplied with theirs, and as the wind was now blowing steadily from one quarter, he left his brother, Francisco Martin Pinzon, in charge of the deck while he went for a hasty bite of something.

He had hardly taken two mouthfuls, however, as it seemed, when the vessel suddenly shuddered from stem to stern, and in a moment more was rolling like a log in the trough of the sea. With two leaps he was out of the cabin and at the helm.

Something in the gearing had snapped and the rudder was useless. It looked as if the vessel would swamp in another minute. The water poured over her low rail, and yards dipped into the waves at each roll.

No man on board expected to survive that hour, and more than one who had not prayed for many a year knelt where he clung to some rope and tried to recall the forgotten words.

Diego found himself side by side with Juan Cacheco.

“You did this,” he cried, furiously.

“I didn’t expect this,” answered Juan, his face blanched with terror.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was very fortunate for the well-disposed few, as well as for the disaffected majority of the crew, that the *Pinta* was commanded by so able a sailor and so cool-headed a man as Martin Alonzo Pinzon.

Many another man at such a time would have been utterly at a loss what to do; but Martin Alonzo acted with a promptness that gave the impression that he had been prepared for this very emergency.

He did not merely issue his orders in quick and precise terms, but bore a hand in the execution of the more pressing duties, and so animated the terrified sailors that they took heart to act briskly and in sympathy with his efforts. Drags were hurriedly prepared and thrown over, and after a time of doubt and fearful anxiety the little vessel swung around and brought her head up to the wind.

There was no hope of any assistance from the other vessels during such a high wind and rough sea; but Martin Alonzo had the distress

signal run up as soon as he had secured the safety of the *Pinta*, in order partly to explain why he did not continue on his course, and also to prevent the companion vessels from leaving him.

Providentially—it seemed as if Providence interfered more than once in behalf of this daring enterprise—providentially the wind began to abate a great deal of its violence at this time; and although the waves continued to run very high, they were less dangerous by reason of no longer curling and breaking.

It still remained a hazardous thing to get over the vessel's side to examine the steering-gear and rudder; but Martin Alonzo had such courage and such confidence in his strength that he performed that office himself. He tied a stout line about his body and slipped it up under his arm-pits, and then, commending himself to the care of his brother, climbed over the rail.

Diego knew that it was inevitable that so shrewd a seaman as his cousin must discover that the gear had been tampered with, and when Martin Alonzo disappeared over the side he looked around to note the effect on the conspirators. Many of the sailors looked frightened, but on the faces of Miguel and Juan especially he could see a desperate, hunted expression, as if

they believed that their crime would certainly be fastened on them.

Diego himself was not without a deep concern, and his face was as pallid as any; for, now that he knew the danger they had all been exposed to by what Juan had done, he realized that there could be no excuse for his not hastening to inform his cousin of his suspicions. And he knew it would not make his case seem any better to plead that his cousin had repelled him so often that he had feared to warn him.

Presently he saw Miguel whisper to Juan, and then both of them glanced towards him. After that, Juan left the side of Miguel and made through the anxious crowd towards him. Now, the last thing Diego wished was any intercourse with either of those two. He was uncertain enough of his own position not to wish it made worse by seeming to have any understanding with them, and so he shifted his place until he was as near as he dared to go to where Francisco Martin Pinzon stood.

Perhaps Juan would have followed him there had not Martin Alonzo at that moment lifted his head above the rail, and then climbed quickly on deck. His brother asked him a question relative to the nature of the injury to the rudder; but Diego noticed that Martin Alonzo



“MARTIN ALONZO DISAPPEARED OVER THE SIDE.”

pushed him sternly aside and stepped forward to where he could sweep the waiting crew with his keen glance.

It seemed to Diego as if that stern eye were reading every face, and he had no doubt that he had betrayed in his countenance all that he knew, when the glance passed over him. He looked involuntarily at Miguel and Juan, and could see that they were in the same dread as himself, and that the former, with the ugly expression of an animal cornered, was feeling nervously of the handle of his knife.

The look they both shot at him was one of mingled inquiry and hatred, and he knew that Miguel was regretting that he had been prevented carrying out his murderous design towards him.

It was as certain to him as it seemed to them that he would be questioned by his cousin, and his dread of Martin Alonzo was such that he caught at the rail to steady himself. Martin Alonzo had other work to do first; the rudder must be repaired as far as was possible before he did anything else, and the carpenter was called and instructed what to do.

He brought his tools and such materials as seemed to be needed and went over the rail. And all the while that he was making ready,

Martin Alonzo paced back and forth in the limited space available to him, never taking his stern glance from the crew, which stood in the waist of the vessel eying him with evident trepidation.

But not until the carpenter had made all his preparations and disappeared over the rail did the captain utter a word. And when he did, it was sternly and harshly enough, but without that roar which had theretofore characterized his voice. He stepped to the ladder and sent a searching glance over the faces turned expectantly upward to his. Then after a moment of silence, during which more than one of the sailors caught a painful breath, he spoke.

“A foul deed has been wrought here.” He stopped and waited as if to give time for his words to be fully understood. “Some scoundrel, for whom hanging is too good, has wrecked the rudder. The gear has been cut with a knife, and the rudder is separated and unhung.” Again he stopped, and Diego stole a frightened look at Miguel and Juan. “Every life on board has been put in jeopardy. It is only by a mercy of God that we live now. It will be only by a further mercy that we shall continue to live. When I know the man who did it, I will hang him there,” and he pointed with flashing eyes to

the yard. "What! because ye like not the voyage will ye seek to drown us all? What! do ye think Martin Alonzo Pinzon is to be frightened from his purpose?" He stopped short and looked over the faces as if he would find one that expressed such a belief.

It is unlikely that he saw such a face; for of all there, those who were innocent of participation and those who were guilty, there was not one that did not answer his glance with one of fear or of respect. Once again before he spoke he swept the crowd with his eyes, but this time slowly.

"Diego Pinzon, come hither!"

He spoke sharply, shortly, distinctly, and Diego heard; but it was not until he spoke again that the boy found strength to move. It was then with a stagger rather than with a walk that he went to the foot of the ladder and turned his pallid face up to his cousin.

"Up, by my side!" said Martin Alonzo, sternly.

Diego climbed up with difficulty, and stood with pale face and beating heart by the side of the captain of the *Pinta*. Martin Alonzo eyed him in silence for a few moments, and the crew waited breathlessly for what was to follow. In that brief space Diego understood that the whole crew looked upon him as a sort of spy, and that his cousin regarded him as a coward

who could be frightened into telling aught he might know.

“Now, boy,” said Martin Alonzo, “you know something of this ; tell me what it is. Speak !”

Diego raised his eyes imploringly to his cousin’s face, as if beseeching him not to force such a thing upon him ; but Martin Alonzo held the safety of his vessel above the feelings of a boy, whose chief merit was his over-readiness of speech when it was least desired of him, and so he repeated, threateningly :

“Speak, or I shall know how to make you !”

Diego drooped his head and was silent. Martin Alonzo thought he was obstinate, when in fact he was torn between doubt and anguish. What was his duty ? The great muscular hand of the captain fell upon his shoulder and gripped it tight, the angry man not realizing perhaps his own energy, and causing Diego severe pain.

“Will you speak ? You had tongue enough a while since. Speak, I warn you !”

Martin Alonzo was doubly angry now. Angry at what he believed was Diego’s obstinacy, and angry that he should meet with a check before the crew. If he had doubted his ability to make Diego speak he would not have essayed it so publicly ; but, since he had essayed it, he was determined to succeed ; for Martin Alonzo was

a man who at all times would have his own way, and who was used to being supreme and undisputed when at sea on his own vessel.

Diego was well satisfied that nothing on the score of relationship would stand between him and the wrath of his cousin should he refuse to speak and tell what he knew. It was true, he might lie. How should any one know that he had cognizance of what had happened? Was it not more likely, indeed, that his denial would be the more readily credited in view of the fact that he had been a sort of outcast among the crew? Well, he did not even think of lying. A lie is the coward's refuge, and he was not a coward.

He was pale, he trembled, and his voice was unsteady; but when he looked up at his cousin his eye did not quail.

"I had naught to do with it, and I have naught to say," were his words.

Martin Alonzo's face grew gray with sudden wrath. He was in no mood then to credit Diego with the courage he had before denied him. He only knew, or believed, that his vessel had been put in jeopardy by some miscreant, and that the boy before him knew who it was and refused to divulge his knowledge. Diego was no more to him than any other boy on the vessel would have been.

“You know, and you refuse to tell!” he said, hoarsely. “Now I ask you again, and I bid you think twice ere you answer.”

Even at that moment—a terrible moment to him, with his fear of his cousin—the picture rose in his mind of Fray Antonio bidding him think twice ere he set foot to ground. Ah, the good fray! the sweet, peaceful days forever lost! It had been so funny then; it was so pathetic now!

“Who—who did it?” demanded Martin Alonzo, quivering with wrath.

“Why,” cried Diego, with sudden indignation, “would you make a spy of me? They all hate me now, though they have no cause. I will not give them cause. I have naught to say.”

He seemed to hear a murmur of approbation from the crew; but it died away as Martin Alonzo, in a voice hoarse with passion, cried:

“Have you naught to say? We shall see! Lopez! trice him up. Though he were my own son, he should not brave me so.”

Diego understood the meaning of that—they were going to flog him. Alas! it was a common enough thing in those brutal days. Diego turned paler than before, but he looked into the angry face of his cousin and said:

“And this is how you keep your promise to my mother!”

“Will you tell?”

“I have naught to tell.”

“Then you shall be flogged.”

“And I may say things I should not, Martin Alonzo Pinzon; but the shame will be yours, not mine,” and the pallor on his cheek gave place to a red flush.

“To the mast with him!” said Martin Alonzo, a flush showing, too, on his bronzed cheek.

CHAPTER VII.

AN audible murmur ran through the crowd of spectators, and Martin Alonzo knew, without looking, that it was caused as much by the well-disposed as by the disaffected among the crew, and he was certain that some of the cabin passengers had helped to swell the murmur; but he was not the man to deviate from his intention for the opinion of others, and so only repeated:

“To the mast, I say!”

So Diego was triced to the mast and the crew driven in a body forward. The flogging would be no light thing, but it was the bitter humiliation that Diego dreaded most. He almost wished Miguel had thrown him overboard the night before.

Miguel! Yes, he was suffering this for him and for Juan. He had not taken the oath they had wished him to swear, and yet he was as faithful to them as if he had done so. And where were they now? Were they going to see him flogged? Would they let it be done?

He looked despairingly into the crowd of sail-

ors, and saw many pitying faces, but not theirs. He thought bitterly that they might have given him the comfort of their sympathy.

How could he know that at that moment Juan was struggling in the strong grasp of Miguel? How could he know that when he had been hurried to the mast, Juan had sprung forward, saying, "They shall not do that."

But it was so. Juan had first watched Diego with fear and hatred in his heart for him; but when he saw and understood how Diego was making a sacrifice of himself for him and Miguel, for two persons whom he disliked and whom he could be rid of by a word, the convict boy was stirred by a generous feeling that made him determine that Diego should not be flogged for him, and so he had muttered, "They shall not do that," and would have gone up to Martin Alonzo and accused himself. But Miguel was made of baser material and would have nothing of the sort.

"Fool!" he said, "what would you do?"

"They shall not flog him. I know how he will take it. The shame will kill him. He is brave. I will not see it done!"

He struggled to free himself from Miguel, but the latter placed his hand over his mouth and quickly dragged him into the fore-castle.

“Better his back scored than our necks broken, you fool!” said Miguel.

“I will not betray you. I will take all the blame,” said Juan. “Let me go. I will cry out!”

“You are mad. I will choke you if you do not keep still. It will soon be over. Let us be thankful he has the courage to stand it.”

But the noble generosity that swelled the boy’s heart would not permit him to keep still, and while he seemed to acquiesce and submit he was only gathering strength for a final struggle, so that presently he wrenched himself free and darted out on deck and frantically pushed his way through the crowd of sailors. When he reached the mast, however, Diego was not there any longer. He did not know how time had sped while he was struggling with Miguel, and he gasped:

“Have they flogged him?”

“No, they have taken him to the cabin,” was the answer.

And this is how that had happened: No one, not even Francisco Martin Pinzon, or Garcia Fernandez, the steward of the vessel, and a man of importance, had dared to interfere to save Diego from the anger of his cousin, though both desired to do so. But while Diego was being

tied to the mast, the carpenter raised his head above the rail and whispered a few words to Francisco Martin, which he repeated to Garcia Fernandez.

They both looked at each other and seemed to gain the same idea at once; for both sprang to the side of Martin Alonzo, and Francisco Martin said in a low tone:

“Forbear flogging the lad, brother; the carpenter has imparted such intelligence to us as puts a new light on the matter. Let us to the cabin.”

Perhaps by this time Martin Alonzo was glad of an excuse to refrain; for he turned to go, first saying to the third mate:

“Hold your hand till I return.”

“It might be wise to have the lad in the cabin with us,” said Garcia Fernandez.

“Francisco Martin,” said the captain, shortly, “have him in the cabin.”

So, while Diego was shudderingly awaiting the shameful blow, he was released and taken into the cabin, where his elder cousin and the steward sat. Martin Alonzo did not look at him, but turned to his brother and asked:

“What is it the carpenter says?”

“He says there is plain evidence that the rudder was tampered with before ever the ship left

port, and that it is a wonder it did not give out ere this."

Martin Alonzo knit his brow.

"That should have been discovered before we sailed. It was gross negligence that it was not," he said.

"So that you do not hold me accountable," said Francisco Martin, with an angry flush, "I will agree with you."

"I could not watch everything," said Martin Alonzo, a little doggedly. "But it is idle to cross words on that. The rudder, it is like, was tampered with before we left port; but it is certain that a knife was used last night to cut the gear; for the cut was a fresh one. Boy, will you tell me what you know of this matter?"

It is probable that Garcia Fernandez, who was at once a shrewd and a kindly man, saw a look of obstinacy gathering on Diego's face. Certainly the boy resented the tone and manner of his cousin, and was ready to put the harshest construction on his words. The steward said hastily, before Diego could give word to the answer that sprang to his lips:

"Your pardon, Martin Alonzo, but may I have a word with the boy before he speaks in answer?"

"Let it be brief," was the gruff assent.

“I do not know,” said Garcia Fernandez to Diego, “whether or not you have anything to tell, and of course I appreciate your unwillingness to seem a spy on your fellow-sailors; but this is a matter that concerns your life and my life and the lives of all of us. Bethink you, Diego, that what has been done once may be done again, and the more readily that it goes unpunished and undetected this time; and the next time the end may be our deaths. In that case it will be your crime as much as that of the man who does the act. To refuse to divulge what you know is generous and brave, it may be; but it is the madness of generosity and bravery.”

Diego could not but be affected by the argument; but he had his side to present, too. He looked resentfully at his cousin and said:

“I put myself in my cousin Captain Martin Alonzo’s way yesterday to warn him, and he thrust me aside with a blow.”

“How was I to know what you had to say?” demanded Martin Alonzo.

“You might have heard me, at least. But no, you could not grant even that courtesy to my mother’s son. I did not come this mad voyage to please myself, and I like it not; but I would have done my duty, and will do it now if you will but let me.” Garcia Fernandez motioned

him to hush, pointing to the gathering wrath on Martin Alonzo's face ; but Diego was in the full tide of his wrongs and was not to be hushed. " You have forced me to come, when I prayed you not ; you have likened me publicly to a thief and a convict ; you have struck me unreasonably ; and you have been willing to put a felon's shame on me. If your ship had gone to the bottom it would have been your own fault in putting such a fear on me that I could not tell my plain duty. So I say to you plainly, I know who cut the gear, and I will not tell you !"

There Diego stopped, and doggedly shut his lips, while Garcia Fernandez and Francisco Martin looked at each other in dismay.

CHAPTER VIII.

PERHAPS if Diego had been better acquainted with his cousin than he was, he would not have dared to brave him, though the provocation had been twice what it was and his own indignation doubly hot. Garcia Fernandez and Francisco Martin knew the temper of the captain, and they trembled for the rash boy.

But there were several things that conspired at that moment to make Diego's defiance less objectionable than at another time it would have been. Martin Alonzo realized that he had been unjust to Diego from first to last, and had misunderstood him; he saw that he had been impolitic—though that was not much of a matter—in trying to force a confession before all the crew; he knew now that the guilt of the culprit in cutting the gear had not been as great as he had supposed at first—though a hanging matter, too; moreover, he was a bold man himself, and liked boldness in others, and particularly in Diego, whom he had supposed to be a spoiled boy with no other gift than that of talking immoder-

ately. However, he was not going to yield at once. He frowned and said :

“ You are not talking now to one of your frays.”

“ I would I were,” answered Diego, quickly ; “ I should have some hope of justice then.”

“ Tut !” said Martin Alonzo, and his brother and the steward knew by the half-smile on his face that there was no longer any danger for Diego, “ that good Fray Bartolomeo told the truth when he said you had the gift of language.”

“ It has been of little use to me here,” said Diego, sulkily.

“ Say no more about it, say no more about it !” ejaculated Martin Alonzo, gruffly, but not unkindly.

“ Yes,” said Diego, still smarting under his wrongs and disregarding the warning of Garcia Fernandez, “ that is just it ; you put upon me and then deny me the right to say a word in my own behalf.”

“ Say no more about it, say no more about it,” reiterated Martin Alonzo, impatiently.

“ Oh, I can keep silence,” answered Diego.

Martin Alonzo laughed in spite of himself at the persistence of the boy.

“ No one would credit it to hear you now,” he

said. "Well, what will satisfy you? Shall I ask your pardon in set words?"

But by this time Diego was able to see that he had come off marvellously well, and that he would be wise not to push his cousin's complaisance any further. Indeed, the moment he was assured of Martin Alonzo's kindly feeling, he lost all his resentment, and with true boyish inconsequence swung around from sullen anger and defiance into a gay good-humor that showed itself in his old-time mischief. He drew his hand from his belt, where it had been angrily clenched, and waved it in imitation of his cousin's manner, and said, copying his tone and words:

"Say no more about it, say no more about it!"

Very much taken aback by this palpable and clever mimicry of himself, Martin Alonzo bit his lip, and then burst into a short but hearty ha-ha-ha, as if he could not help it; then checked himself and held out his hand, saying:

"There! take my hand like a cousin and a friend, and go your way for'ard and be a sailor again. I forgive you, and do you do the same by me, and forget what has happened."

"Thank you, Martin Alonzo," said Diego, taking the proffered hand. "I hope I shall show you how good a sailor I can be, since sailor I must be."

“A brave lad and a shrewd!” said Martin Alonzo, as Diego left the cabin; “but, now, to this affair.”

“I crave your pardon, Martin Alonzo,” said Diego, thrusting his head in at the doorway, “but I have taken quick counsel with myself, and it seems to me there is something I may tell you without harm to any one.”

“I suppose,” said Martin Alonzo, friendly enough now, “you mean you will tell of goodwill what you would not tell perforce.”

“It may be that,” answered Diego, looking a little shamefaced.

“Well, tell it, and let us be thankful that you have relented.”

“You may laugh as you will,” said Diego, quite seriously; “but I do assure you that you had so frightened me that I could not tell right from wrong, and could only see that I must not turn informer. You will understand better when I tell you.”

“I was wrong, Diego. Speak freely now.”

“I suppose you knew as well as I that the men were dissatisfied.”

“I had been stupid else.”

“But I was certain from words I had heard fall that something, I knew not what, was to be attempted last night. That was what I would have told you had you permitted me.”

“Say no more about it, say no more about it,” laughed Martin Alonzo.

“I did not refer to it in reproach,” said Diego, “but only to show that I was suspicious and anxious; though the most I looked for was a mutiny, which should force you to turn back, and that I would not have been unthankful for, though I would have warned you, too.”

“A right-minded youth!” murmured Garcia Fernandez.

“Last night,” went on Diego, “I lay out on deck, because of not liking the forecabin, where, besides the air being close and foul, I had nothing but black looks. While I lay there I saw two sailors creep out and make their way aft, one of them with a knife in his hand. I followed softly, thinking they meant mischief to you.”

“And what would you have done in such a case?” demanded Martin Alonzo, who with the other two had listened with great interest to Diego’s tale.

“I should have thrown myself on him and called for help, the moment I saw him go into the cabin.”

“Tut!” said Martin Alonzo, “what could you do against him?”

“What!” cried Diego, off his guard, “I am his master, as he shall learn some day.”

The three men exchanged meaning glances that told Diego that he had betrayed a part of his secret. He was at once furious and in despair.

“I will say no more. 'Tis a shame to trick my honest confidence.”

“So it is, Diego, so it is in faith,” said Martin Alonzo, hastily. “Believe me, I will take no advantage of what has slipped you.”

It was very plain that Martin Alonzo had conceived a sudden and strong liking for his young cousin, and was disposed to humor him. Diego felt it, and it induced him to continue his story.

“Well, there was no intention of hurting you; but I could not make out what was intended when one of them slipped over the rail. However, I hid myself as well as I could, meaning to seek you as soon as they were in the fore-castle again. But one of them saw me and sprang on me. The other came to his assistance and choked out the cry I would have uttered. Then, one of them was for throwing me over the rail, fearing for their lives if I betrayed them.”

“I should have hanged them,” interjected Martin Alonzo, grimly.

“The other would not permit me to be murdered, and threatened to fight and cry out if the design were persisted in; so I was spared on

condition of taking an oath not to reveal what I had seen."

"Well, of course," said Martin Alonzo, "if you took an oath!"

"But I did not. You came on deck then and I escaped without taking the oath."

"Then why did you not tell me at once?" cried Martin Alonzo.

"Why," said Diego, holding up his head proudly, "if I had taken the oath, I should have owed it to them to keep silence; while not taking it, I owed it to myself, and that was more to me than what I owed perforce."

He looked very handsome and winsome as he stood there in his young pride, and Martin Alonzo thought so. He cast an approving glance at Garcia Fernandez and Francisco Martin, and sprang up from his chair.

"Embrace me, boy!" he cried, rapturously; for he dearly loved a brave action and a lofty spirit. "Thou art a true Pinzon, and I am proud of thee. There, Diego," he went on, "if I discover not Zipangu, at least I have discovered thy mother's son, and that will be some recompense. Now, go for'ard, and ever count me friend. I would not have had thee do otherwise, and I thank the Holy Virgin that I was withheld from putting that shame on thee."

CHAPTER IX.

DIEGO left the cabin very happy in the praise of his cousin and in the fact of the reconciliation that had taken place between them ; but there was something still lacking to complete happiness, and that was the good-will of the crew, which he thought he deserved, but which he was not certain he would obtain.

He need not have concerned himself about that, however. The crew had seen and admired his courage, and was ready to welcome him with acclamation or with sympathy, whichever seemed the most appropriate. Only Miguel and Juan knew how much he could have divulged ; but there had been so many in the secret of the intended attempt on the rudder that it was easily surmised that Diego could have told something harmful to them if he had been willing.

The fact that he had not been willing, pleased as much as it surprised them, and the dislike for Diego that had been almost general among the crew had been quickly and completely changed to admiration and liking ; so that when he made



“‘THOU ART A TRUE PINZON, AND I AM PROUD OF THEE.’”

his appearance out of the cabin with the air of being freed from fear of the flogging, they set up a shout of welcome and gathered around him the moment he came down the ladder from the poop-deck. And he, in his pleasure at their good-will, forgot his former nice distinction of honest men and convicts, and gave his bright smiles right and left.

“Art spared, boy?” said one old sailor.

“Yes, and have his good-will, though I betrayed no one—not I.”

“And so it should be,” said another; “for you showed yourself one of his own kind. A brave boy, comrades!”

“Ay, ay! and we did him an injustice.”

“So we did,” was agreed, “but we’ll make that right.”

“But how came he to let you off?” asked a voice that Diego knew for Miguel’s, though the fellow did not show himself inside the group, preferring to skulk on the outer edge.

“Why,” answered Diego, a little hotly, “because it was discovered that the fellow who did the trick was as much fool as knave; for the rudder had been fixed to break down ere ever the vessel left port. And I must say it is well that the *Pinta* had so good a captain, or we would all have been at the bottom now. I tell

you all freely and frankly that I like the voyage no better than any of you ; but it was a foolish and a knavish trick to do a thing that might have sent us all to feed the fishes. I wager the one who did it was no sailor."

"True," and "That's true," and "He says well!" came from every side of him, and Diego knew he had made no mistake in putting the matter as he had.

All this while, of course, the carpenter had been busy at the rudder, and after a time he came up and reported that he had done all that could be done—a matter Martin Alonzo certified to himself by going over the rail and examining the work. When he came on deck again he said to his brother :

"Nothing more can be done ; but we cannot go far in this plight. Another such gale would make an end of us. I would I could talk with the admiral."

Somehow his words got forward among the sailors, and there were very few, if any, among them that were not content with the prospect of having to turn back. And Diego, if the truth be told, was as pleased as any.

It was still too rough for any communication with the admiral, and so there was nothing for it at present but to put on sail and proceed ; but

that did not disquiet any but those who were not sailors ; for it was well enough understood that Martin Alonzo was only keeping on until he could communicate with the admiral, Christoval Colon.

The sailors had fully expected some sort of harangue from Martin Alonzo ; but he maintained what seemed to some of them an ominous silence, and gave his whole attention to the navigation of the disabled ship.

Once again during the day the rudder broke down ; but the sea had moderated so much that it was repaired more easily this time ; though it was still understood that nothing permanent could be accomplished without seeking land first.

It was not until the next day that the waves had gone down sufficiently to render intercourse between the vessels possible ; though the *Pinta* had approached near enough to the *Santa Maria* to shout across the water the nature of the accident that had disabled the former ship.

Martin Alonzo would have gone aboard the *Santa Maria*, but the admiral thought it better for himself to go to the *Pinta*, and he did so soon after sunrise. The sailors of the *Pinta* greeted his appearance with execrations—muttered, indeed, but deep and heartfelt ; and they

had many disparaging things to say of him, likening him to a madman in looks. But Diego, who had seen him often, could not feel as they did, and thought him one of the noblest and most dignified of men.

He retired to the cabin, taking his pilot with him, and followed by Martin Alonzo, Francisco Martin, who was pilot of the *Pinta*, and by Garcia Fernandez. There must have been a serious consultation between them; for they all looked grave when they came out. When the admiral had returned to his vessel, Martin Alonzo had all hands called aft, and they went readily enough; for they were hot to hear what had been decided.

Martin Alonzo stood on the poop and waited silently, until all the sailors stood ready to hear him. He looked very stern and determined, and some who were more acute than others augured ill for their hopes of a return.

“If I had discovered yesterday,” began Martin Alonzo, in a very uncompromising tone, “who had cut the gearing I would have hanged him to the yard. I had good reasons for not pressing the matter. Now, I will say that any similar attempt in the future will be punished by instant death.

“So much for that. The object in playing

that fool's trick was to force me to turn back. You are all hoping that I will turn back. I shall not. We are heading now for the Canary Islands, where a new vessel will be found to replace this; or, if that cannot be done, this shall be thoroughly repaired and the voyage continued to the end. Or at least until we have gone seven hundred leagues to the westward of Andalusia."

He stopped as if he believed he had said the last possible word on the subject. The men looked uneasily at each other, and it was plain that there was a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among them that must find voice, and it did in the person of a grizzled old sailor, who theretofore had had as little to say as any one. He knuckled his forehead and hitched himself a little forward in the group of his mates.

"I've sailed more than one voyage with you, Martin Alonzo."

"So you have. Well?"

"I never gave trouble?"

"Never."

"And don't intend to now. I shipped of my own free will, or to please you, which comes to the same thing; but I will say I don't like the voyage—I don't like it. 'Tisn't natural. I hoped we were going back, I did, like all the

others here, and I'd like nothing better than to go back. Of course if you say you are going on, that settles it, for I know you; but don't you think, Martin Alonzo, it would be fairer to let those that don't want to go get off at the Canaries? I say what I say to be fair all around."

It was the mildest sort of protest, but it was the best the old fellow could do with the eye of Martin Alonzo fixed sternly on him all the time.

"No, it wouldn't be fairer to let them go," was the answer. "If I did, I could get no others to take their places. Besides, they are a parcel of children who will thank me some day for having made their fortunes in spite of them. Why, men, we are going to find a country where the houses are roofed with plates of gold and silver. Doesn't that tempt ye? eh?"

"We're going to perdition," interrupted a surly voice.

"Bah!" said Martin Alonzo, flashing his eye over the men to find the owner of the voice, but not succeeding. "Perdition! Do you think I would like that any better than you? Have I not as much—more to lose?"

"Life is life to one as to another," said a voice.

"A coward's life is worth nothing," said Mar-

tin Alonzo, scornfully. "But there, enough has been said. We go the voyage. To your work."

He was so sharp and peremptory that it was a marvel to Diego that he was not hated by the men; but it was not so, indeed. However much they might dislike the voyage, and there was no doubt on that score, they greatly admired their masterful captain. A few there might have been who did not, perhaps, but they were hushed into silence at the first complaint against him. It was Christoval Colon who had to bear the odium of the forced voyage.

They were two days in coming in sight of the islands, and a glad sight it was to them all, even though they knew they would be obliged to put it behind them again. During those two days, and in fact ever since his reconciliation with his cousin, Diego had studiously avoided Juan Cacheco; for as he had no friendly word to say to him, he preferred not to say any. He felt bitter still whenever he reflected that Juan and Miguel would have let him be flogged.

But Juan was all the while anxious for a word of explanation with Diego, and continued to seek it even when he saw that Diego avoided him. He could have forced a conversation at any time; but what he had to say needed privacy, and that Diego would not give to him. The ap-

proach to land gave Juan the opportunity he had sought, however; for Diego stood alone, gazing abstractedly at the towering peak of Teneriffe. Juan stole up to him, and there was something wistful in his tone as he said:

“I am glad you were not flogged that day.”

Diego turned with angry start, and said, quickly:

“No thanks to you that I was not.”

“I could not—” began Juan, eager to justify himself, when Diego broke in cuttingly:

“Oh, I know a flogging would be nothing to you. I suppose you have been used to it.”

This reference to his prison life made the blood rush in a red tide into the boy's face. He tried to speak, but could not find the words readily, and, while he was struggling, Diego said, bitterly:

“I owed you my life that night, but you owe me yours for keeping silence. If I had told, you would have been hanged up there,” pointing to the yard; “so we are quits. I owe you nothing and you owe me nothing; and I hope some day to show you what an honest boy can do to a rogue.”

Juan answered never a word, but seemed as if he were choking as he turned and walked slowly away.



“IF I HAD TOLD, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN HANGED UP THERE.”

CHAPTER X.

IT would have been hard to guess at all the different emotions that wrought within the heart of the convict boy when Diego's angry and cruel words checked his generous impulse to offer his good-will.

The chief among the emotions at first was humiliation ; but jostling the humiliation were grief, anger, bitter scorn, and regret at having given room in his heart to his generous impulse ; and he had not taken ten steps away from Diego before it was anger that had control of him and was coloring every other feeling. He would have turned then and said something bitter to Diego, but he was accosted by Miguel, who had watched him anxiously when he went to speak to Diego, and who had grinned unpleasantly at his rebuff.

“ So, the pious little priestling would have none of the jail-bird, eh ? ” said Miguel, in a tone between sneering and sympathy.

“ Would or would not, ” answered Juan, ungraciously, “ it concerns no one but myself. ”

He had resented Diego's injustice and had just been telling himself, with bitterness, that it was the last time he would make any effort to do a good or generous thing; and yet, when it came to it, there was in him a sudden distaste for Miguel's kind.

He and Miguel had become acquainted in the prison, where, as the custom was, all the prisoners had been herded together. The man had conceived a fancy for the boy and had given him sympathy and encouragement, and the boy, in his loneliness, had been grateful. Miguel had little but wickedness to teach, and Juan had been so cast down and hopeless that he had listened and learned. Nevertheless, he did not yet love wickedness for its own sake, and the effect of his noble and generous impulse had been the infusion of a new and better spirit in him.

It is probable that Miguel had an undefined notion of the change that had taken place in Juan, and was so much disturbed by it that he was bent on bringing him again under his influence. Unfortunately it was a good time for an effort of that sort.

"That is true, too," said Miguel, without showing any vexation; "but I suppose a fellow must care a little if his friend is hurt."

It was said in such an off-hand, hearty way

that Juan felt ashamed of his inclination to turn from his old friend. He began to yield in a sulky fashion.

“Who said I was hurt?” he demanded.

“As if it wasn’t made plain enough! Don’t you suppose everybody who was looking could see it? That’s what he wanted, the little priestling!”

“What do you mean?” asked Juan, quickly.

“What do I mean?” Why, can’t you see that he wants everybody to know that it was you he kept out of trouble by not telling? He wants to put you in the wrong, so that he will be the favorite on board.”

“I don’t see but he’s that anyhow,” said Juan.

“Perhaps he is,” retorted Miguel, “and isn’t that just the way of it always? He is honest, he is, and you are only a jail-bird; and they all forget that it was you who were to do the trick, and take all the risk, so that we should all be safe back on land.”

“I’m not the only jail-bird,” said Juan, angrily.

“What difference does that make? The other jail-birds will be so glad to make friends with the honest boy that you will get the cold shoulder, see if you don’t, little brother!” Little brother was his pet name for Juan.

“I don’t see why that should be,” said Juan.

“Weren’t you trying to make friends with him?” asked Miguel, cunningly.

It was a conclusive argument, and for a moment Juan had nothing to say. Then he be-thought him.

“He saved my life,” he said, as if that explained his attitude towards Diego.

“Bah!” said Miguel. “Hadn’t you saved his first? If it hadn’t been for you wouldn’t he be over there now?” jerking his thumb towards the water.

“Well, he said we were quits. I saved him and he saved me.”

“Just his mean, sneaking way,” said Miguel, with a show of indignation. “If you hadn’t saved his life, yours would never have been in danger. Saved your life! As if it were any more than he ought to have done! Bah! the little priestling!”

It was a very plausible argument and it had weight with Juan. So Diego was ungrateful then! And that was always the way with your honest folk! All right then! The more he reflected on it, the more bitter he was, and Miguel, seeing how it was working, kept a discreet silence.

“Yes,” said Juan, presently, “that is how it

is. Once you are sent to jail, it doesn't matter how sorry you are for what you have done, the honest folks won't let you be anything else but a jail-bird. Why, he stole something, himself; I was there when his cousin, Martin Alonzo, said so."

"And so was I," said Miguel. "A pretty fellow, he, to hold his head up and curl his lip at you."

"Ah," said Juan, angrily, "my turn may come yet!"

"And so it will, little brother," said Miguel, in a whisper, "if you will do as I bid you."

"What do you mean?"

"I am half afraid to tell you," said Miguel, as if hesitating.

"Why should you be? But if you don't wish to, don't."

"I am not sure," said Miguel, "that you are not minded to turn honest." He said it as scornfully as if there were something very disgraceful in honesty.

"Honest! not I. And if I wished to be, how could I? But anyhow," he added, on second thought, "what do you mean? I'm not going to steal anything. Honest or not honest, I don't like stealing."

"You're very particular," laughed Miguel;

“but this has nothing to do with stealing. Wait till you get ashore and try to earn a living honestly. Only wait till then, and we’ll talk about stealing. Oh, no! this is quite another matter.”

“Well, what?”

“Do you wish to go this voyage, or not?”

“You know I don’t.”

“Are you with us, then, in deserting?”

“Do you think Martin Alonzo will give you the chance? I know him better than that,” said Juan.

“We’ll make the chance. Don’t fret about that. You are with us, then?”

“Of course I am. I don’t see, though, how you are going to do it. What is your plan, and how many are in it?”

“I can’t tell you the plan now, but I will the first time we are alone. How many in the plan? Only ten yet; you make eleven. Oh, we will never go this voyage; and, what is more, you shall settle your score with the little priestling.”

It was plain enough that his dislike of Diego was as great as Juan’s possibly could be.

“Hm!” grunted Juan, who did not lack for penetration, “and settle yours, too, I think; though I don’t see why you hate him so.”

“Ah! don’t you? Well, I do. It’s because he’s a spoil-sport and wants to play the honest.”

Miguel's reason was genuine as far as it went ; but his chief grievance against Diego was the fear that he was in a fair way to infect Juan with his ridiculous honesty. He was relieved of any immediate fear of that now, however, and he left Juan to watch the nearing islands, while he went to sound more of the men on the subject of the proposed desertion.

CHAPTER XI.

VERY beautiful, indeed, are those islands which the ancients had called the Fortunate, but which in Diego's day were known as the Canaries. Some of them rise sheer and rugged almost from the water's edge, others are mere rocky islets, and others again are like rounded hills; but with very few exceptions they are all verdure-clad at the base, and smile with cultivation far up the steep sides.

To the sailors of the little fleet, turned aside, as they deemed, from certain destruction, the islands seemed a thousand times more beautiful even than in fact they were, and there is little to wonder at if all of them cherished a hope that the voyage would end there.

It was for the admiral, Christoval Colon, to feel a foreboding sorrow at the sight of the lovely islands. He could depend upon the commanders of the vessels and upon some of the volunteer adventurers; but he knew as well as if the sailors had spoken their minds to him that they hailed the land with the sole

hope of finding a refuge there from the terrible voyage.

For that reason he had held counsel with his allies and had adopted plans to the end of thwarting any effort, open or secret, that might be made by the sailors. Therefore it happened that, although the little fleet sailed among the islands for three weeks, there never once came an opportunity which gave Miguel and his friends an occasion to put their carefully laid plans in operation.

For the first week they went from island to island, seeking a vessel which should take the place of the *Pinta*; but it was soon demonstrated that none could be procured, and then Martin Alonzo said plainly to the admiral that it was his opinion that it would be wisest to settle down to repairing the rudder and calking the ship, the latter being very leaky, owing to the intentionally faulty work of the men employed in Palos.

“But you will be obliged to lay up, then, and your men may desert,” said the admiral, who had no other fault to find with the plan.

“Not so,” answered Martin Alonzo, grimly; “for I will keep them all hard at work, and I will shoot the first man who tries to run away.”

The *Niña*, too, had to be repaired ; for she was a bad sailer and kept the other two vessels back ; so it was determined to change her lateen sails to square ones. But she did not have to lay up for that ; it being sufficient if she lay at anchor in smooth water. All this having been determined on, Martin Alonzo called his men aft and said to them :

“As you very well know, my men, the *Pinta* is unseaworthy by reason of her broken rudder and her leaky hull. We have tried to find a vessel to replace her, and have not been able to do so. Now, we must careen her and put her in order.”

With that he stopped and looked slowly over the faces of the men, and then added with a peculiar smile, and the placing of his feet a little wider apart, as if settling himself more squarely and determinedly :

“I see that many of you have hopes of deserting. Well, I shall shoot the first man of you who tries to do that. My men, we are going this voyage.”

He laughed like a man who had checkmated another, and there was a sheepish exchanging of glances when he had retired to the cabin. Only a few of the sailors laughed, and they did so not because they had any greater relish for the voy-

“I SHALL SHOOT THE FIRST MAN OF YOU WHO TRIES TO DESERT.”



age than the others, but because they thought it very shrewd and masterful in Captain Martin Alonzo, whom they admired more than any man.

As for Diego, he marvelled to see how one strong-willed man could constrain so many; for, though a guard was put over the men as they worked, it was plain enough that if there had been any real concert among them they could have overpowered the guard and made their escape.

However, nothing was done in that direction, notwithstanding many urgent entreaties on the part of Miguel; and so the time came when the *Pinta* was ready to set sail with the other vessels, and still Miguel had neither saved Juan from going the voyage, nor had he given him his satisfaction on Diego, as he had promised so glibly.

All three vessels repaired to the Island of Gomera, where the water was famous for its purity and quantity, and where wood for the fires was to be obtained. And it was there that some things happened that were fraught with interest to Diego and Juan personally, and to the voyage as well.

The *Santa Maria* and the *Niña* reached the island before the *Pinta*, and were the first to

be through with taking in the wood and water ; so that Martin Alonzo, who never liked to be behindhand, did all he could to hasten his operations. He had but one more load of water to take off, and, in order to shorten the time occupied with that, he hit upon the plan of leaving two, whom he could trust, to fill the casks that were still empty, while he went with the other men to the vessel. He cast his eye over the men doubtfully, and then called Diego and Juan to him.

“I wish somebody to fill these casks while we are gone, he said. “You two boys will do as well as two men, if you will.”

“I will,” answered Diego, and Juan said the same.

“And you give me your word, each of you, not to try to desert?”

There were two vessels on the other side of the island that would have helped the whole crew desert if there had been the chance.

“I give my word,” said Diego.

“And I give mine,” said Juan, whereat Diego made no concealment of the disdainful curl of his lip, as if the word of Juan was not worth the taking.

The dislike of the boys for each other had only grown during all the period of the stay among

the islands; for Miguel had carefully fanned the flame in Juan and set him constantly in an attitude of defiance to Diego, and Diego had been ready to construe the most innocent glance of the eye or turn of the hand into an insult.

Juan said nothing at first, but set to at his cask, unconsciously letting his anger urge him into such rapid movement that he spilled as much as he put in. Diego noticed it and laughed in a very unpleasant fashion. Juan stopped suddenly and fixed his eyes on Diego.

“Some day I will make you laugh on the other side of your face,” he said.

“Some day?” sneered Diego. “Why not to-day?”

Juan looked at the boat, which was now near the vessel, and threw down his bucket.

“I am ready now.”

Diego laughed provokingly and went on bailing.

“You count on the crew seeing us and coming to stop the beating I should give you,” he said.

“And you are a coward and don’t dare fight,” said Juan, in a furious temper.

“Will you wait,” said Diego, all of a tremble from anger, but wishing to seem greatly at ease, “until these casks are full? Then we can safely go into the wood yonder and have it out.”

“You hope they will come back before we have the casks filled,” sneered Juan, though he did not believe a word of it.

“I’ll show you if I’m a coward,” said Diego. “At any rate, I would not let another suffer for a thing I had done.”

That was the last word, for Juan was too proud to tell Diego, now, that he had tried to save him from the flogging. It is quite likely that no two boys ever filled casks with such expedition as those two did. Each was anxious to finish first in order to taunt the other with cowardice. It was Diego’s luck to be first, but Juan robbed him of the joy of a fling at him by tossing his last bucketful into the last cask before even ready-tongued Diego could say anything. He led the way to the woods, however, and that was something.

Very little of the modern science of self-defence was known in those days. If men fought, they did so with swords or other similar weapons. The knives which the boys, in common with all the sailors, wore on shipboard had been taken away by Martin Alonzo, not to be returned until the vessel was fairly at sea again, and in consequence the two enemies were forced to fight as best they could.

Diego had made up his mind to this, and led the



“NO TWO BOYS EVER FILLED CASKS WITH SUCH EXPEDITION
AS THOSE TWO DID.”

way to where there was a sufficiently large open space to give them room for a struggle. There he turned and faced about, putting himself on guard. That is, he stood warily watching Juan, who had stopped when Diego stopped, and then had taken two steps forward until he was at a little more than arm's-length from him.

There might have been a considerable difference between the two boys at the time when they first went aboard the *Pinta*; for Diego was then fresh from good living and plenty of open-air exercise, while Juan was but just out of a prison where he had grown sallow and thin with confinement, scant food, and bad air. Now, however, he was of a good color, and he had grown robust and strong.

CHAPTER XII.

THE boys were not badly matched for a struggle, and each realized it as he measured the other in the moment that intervened before they threw themselves on each other.

There were no blows at first. Striking out from the shoulder was not in vogue then. They grappled, and each did his best to throw his antagonist, the intention being to get the other down, and then to pummel him until he was unable to fight back.

So they dug up the soft green turf with their feet; they rocked this way and that; they swayed up and down; they stumbled over roots and against trees; and sometimes Diego would go down on a knee and squirm up again, and sometimes Juan would go down on a knee and squirm up again.

Their breath came pantingly and through shut teeth, and their eyes glared anger and hatred, and they looked and acted altogether more like wild beasts than like human creatures.

Then, suddenly, they tore apart from each

other and stood staring fiercely into each other's eyes. Then Diego jumped forward and struck Juan over the eye and cried "Hah!" with joy of what he had done. And Juan gasped:

"It's nothing. There! that's for you!" and he struck out, too.

However, he missed, and Diego struck him again; this time on the mouth, so that presently a red stain came on his lips, which made Diego wild with triumph, and made Juan wild with rage. Then they grappled again, and, though both were trembling with exhaustion and excitement, they hurtled about the little glade more madly than before, till Diego caught his heel on the projecting root of a tree and was thrown backward.

Juan accelerated his fall with a cry of triumph that was very much like the strangled scream of a wild animal. Diego was stunned a little, and for a moment could not defend himself against the savage blows that rained on his face, each blow being accompanied by a cry that seemed to mean, "It is my turn now! it is my turn now!"

But after a while Juan grew tired—too tired, at any rate, to keep up the stinging blows—and he held Diego pinned to the ground, his face being thereby brought within a few inches of Diego's. The latter was in no mood for yield-

ing; though he knew he was at the mercy of Juan, and could be punished more as soon as the strength of the latter returned. But his own was coming back now, and he would make a struggle as soon as Juan changed his position to strike again. At any rate, he would never ask for mercy.

In the meantime the breath of each was hot on the face of the other, and their eyes, almost blinded with rage, seemed, nevertheless, to shoot out sparks of fire. Diego made a sudden effort to throw off Juan. Juan gave him a sudden blow in the face and caught him again so that he could not move.

“Have you had enough?” asked Juan, who, even at that moment of fury, would have cared more for the submission of Diego than for anything else. It would have been more disgraceful to Diego.

“No, no, no!” screamed Diego.

“I’ll pound you till you can’t see nor move,” said Juan.

“Do it, do it!” screamed Diego, almost inarticulately.

“You’ll show me what an honest boy can do, will you?” said Juan, revengefully.

“Pound me, pound me!” screamed Diego, as if that were his dearest wish.

“ You’re a thief yourself,” said Juan.

“ Jail-bird !” screamed Diego.

“ I’ll kill you,” raged Juan.

“ Jail-bird, jail-bird !” screamed Diego.

Juan was beside himself ; but did not dare to release Diego to strike him again, for it was plain that Diego was growing stronger. He could beat his face with his head. Yes, he could do that. But stop ! there was something better.

“ Both your eyes are black,” he said, tauntingly.

“ I’ll black yours some day.”

“ Your nose and your mouth are bleeding.”

“ I’ll make yours bleed some day.”

“ They’ll know on board that I did it.”

Diego had no answer to that. He could only scream his rage and defiance. But they would know, they would know. He struggled furiously ; but Juan only laughed with all the ugliness of passion.

“ You can’t get up ; you’ve got to listen to me.”

“ Jail-bird !”

Diego knew very well that there was nothing hurt as much as that.

“ You are a thief, too,” said Juan. “ Martin Alonzo said so and you could not deny it.”

“Never a jail-bird,” answered Diego, as if the punishment made the crime.

“You are worse,” said Juan; “you are ungrateful. I saved your life.”

“I saved yours. We’re quits.”

“Mine wouldn’t have been in danger if I hadn’t saved you.”

“Why don’t you pound me?” sneered Diego. “You don’t dare. You know I’ll pay you when I am up.”

“I could butt you with my head,” answered Juan.

Diego had thought of that, too, and had been afraid Juan would think of it.

“Why don’t you do it?” he demanded, determined to be defiant to the last.

“I want to tell you something. When they were going to flog you—”

“You sneaked out of the way,” interrupted Diego, sneeringly.

“I tried to save you,” cried Juan, triumphantly.

“You tried hard,” sneered Diego again.

“Miguel held me at first,” said Juan, exultantly, knowing surer all the time how it would hurt Diego to know it; “but you may ask any of the men if I did not get to the mast just after you had been taken away.”

“When you knew it was too late,” said Diego.

“You know better. I was going to save you the flogging by telling that I cut the gearing.”

“I don’t believe it,” said Diego, doggedly.

“Yes, you do,” said Juan, “and I am going to let you up. I hate you, do you hear me? I hate you! I am going to let you up.”

And he did, as if he could see the struggle going on in Diego between his humiliation, his anger, and his sense of justice. Diego slowly rose to his feet.

“Do you want to fight any more?” asked Juan, jeeringly.

“Yes,” answered Diego, sullenly, “I want to fight till I have whipped you.”

“Come on, then, if you can see out of your eyes,” jeered Juan.

“Hey, there! you two have had enough,” said a man’s voice.

They both thought the men had returned from the ship, and they looked to where the man stood. He was a stranger to them. They fancied they must have been fighting an hour, when in fact they had not been at it for more than ten minutes. Both fighting and talking had gone on at a rapid pace.

“Well, who are you?” asked the man, with a

short laugh of amusement at the sight of the two bruised faces. "I should say one of you had had enough, anyhow. Do you belong on that ship loading water?"

"Yes," answered Juan; for the ready-tongued Diego had been silenced by the reference to the plain fact that he had been having the worst of the fight.

"And is it you who are going on that crazy voyage in search of Zipangu?" inquired the man, who was evidently a sailor.

"Yes."

"Do you wish to go?"

"Of course not," answered Juan.

"And you," said the man to Diego, "do you wish to go?"

"No."

"I thought so. Why didn't you desert, then?"

"We did think of it," answered Juan; "but the captain suspected us and kept us under guard."

"Well, you have the chance now," said the man. "The boat is only half-way back, and you have only to come with me. We are not going on any search for Zipangu."

"I pledged my word not to desert," said Diego, his bruised face robbing his proud tone of



“ ‘HEY, THERE! YOU TWO HAVE HAD ENOUGH,’ SAID A
MAN’S VOICE.”

very much of its dignity ; “but,” he added with a sneer, “he will go with you.”

Juan flushed and looked at first resentfully and then triumphantly at Diego. He would show the little priestling that there was no such difference between them as he would wish to make out. As he was no more thief than he, so he would hold his word no less dear.

“I gave my word, too,” he said, “and I will keep it ; though I know the voyage will end in my destruction. But thank you.”

“Why, that is bravely said,” laughed the man, as if he found the affair more amusing than heroic. “Well, it won’t matter much ; for it is likely enough your voyage will be ended in another way. I must go back to my ship. But, harkee, boys ! say nothing to the skipper of it ; but I have just come from Ferro, and there I saw three armed caravels of Portugal, which are waiting for your Christoval Colon to capture him and end his voyage. They lie in wait on the north side of the island, where it is most likely you will go, as the nearest and best way. I hear the men shouting for you. My faith !” he said, with a laugh, “they think you have forgotten your promises.”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE man walked off in order that he might not be suspected of offering assistance to the boys, and they went by separate ways to where Martin Alonzo was angrily shouting their names. Juan shouted in answer; but Martin Alonzo did not hear him, and was full of wrath when he saw them coming out of the wood.

“Had ye so little to do?” he began, and then stopped and exclaimed, “Holy Virgin! look at their faces!”

The men set up a shout of laughter, for which Juan cared nothing, having been the victor, but which galled Diego mightily.

“So,” said Martin Alonzo, eying them narrowly, “you have been employing your time, have you, after all?”

“We filled the casks first,” said Juan, Diego playing the wonderful part, for him, of sullen silence.

“Well for you you did,” said Martin Alonzo, and with that turned from them and began ordering the men in sharp tones. The truth was,

he was vexed to see Diego carrying the marks of a beating.

Well, the water was loaded into the boats and they pushed off, Diego and Juan sitting in their places in silence; though the men had at the first tried to be merry with them over their fight, and had desisted only at the peremptory word of Martin Alonzo, who looked as sullen as Diego's self.

As for Diego, he had neither eyes nor words for any one; but sat with his eyes down all the way. He was thinking of many things, and was having a harder battle with himself than he had had with Juan, and one that hurt him far more. It was mostly about Juan he was thinking; but there came occasional thoughts about the Portuguese caravels that were to stop the voyage.

He thought of Martin Alonzo, too. He knew by the glance his cousin had given him, and by the tone of his voice, and by his short words to the men, that he was vexed with him for being beaten, as if he had expected, as a matter of course, that Diego would be the master in such a fight. He was grateful for the feeling, but he was resentful too. Besides, there were other things in his mind, and he was in an uncertainty what to do.

When they had reached the vessel and the

water had been taken aboard and the boats hoisted to their places, the word was given to the admiral and sail was set. Diego did his share of the work, watching his cousin and Juan about equally, and knowing that they were watching him. Presently Francisco Martin took charge of the ship, and Diego saw Martin Alonzo beckon him to come apart with him, which he did.

“So,” said Martin Alonzo, brusquely, “you let him whip you.”

“He whipped me,” answered Diego, sulkily.

“Was it a fair fight?”

“Yes, but I didn’t give up; don’t think I did. I would never have done it.”

“You came out of the wood quietly enough,” said Martin Alonzo, reasoning that if the fight had been his, he either would have whipped or been unable to walk away from the place.

“I know it,” said Diego, more sulkily than before.

Martin Alonzo looked disappointed, and kicked the rail viciously.

“Tut!” he said, “when I left you two there, I hoped you would give a better account of yourself than this.”

“Oh,” said Diego, more mortified than ever, “you expected us to fight?”

“I would like to know,” said Martin Alonzo, “why you did not fight more.”

“Then you’d better ask him,” answered Diego, and turned away.

He had said nothing about the Portuguese caravels, from which it would seem that he was willing to have the voyage ended by them. All the remainder of that day the fleet sailed on for Ferro, and all the time that he was not eating or working, Diego leaned on the rail and moodily watched the island of Gomera fade into distance.

Juan was as gay as Diego was dull, and received the congratulations of Miguel and a few of the other sailors in very good spirits. At first he was inclined to be offensive to Diego, not by any direct affront to him, but by a little too much ostentation in his high spirits; but later he was more quiet, and seemed to have dismissed Diego from his mind.

As for Diego, he no longer looked at Juan, but kept himself to himself until the coming of night cleared the deck of all except the watch, in which they both were. Then he watched Juan again until he saw him standing alone, when he went over to him and touched him on the shoulder. Juan turned and started.

“Oh,” said he, “you wish me to fight here so that Martin Alonzo will stop us!”

“No,” answered Diego, breathing hard, as if to keep his anger in check, “I don’t wish to fight now. I only wish to say something to you. Some day, perhaps, we shall fight again.”

“I hope so,” answered Juan, with a disagreeable laugh.

“And I hope so,” said Diego, struggling with a sob of rage. He controlled himself and went on: “What I wished to say was that I believed you about your being willing to save me from the flogging. If I had known it before—”

“I tried to tell you once,” said Juan, in an eager, softened tone.

“I know it,” answered Diego, “and it was my fault that you did not. I said unpleasant things.”

“But it’s all right now,” said Juan, joyously. “Shall we shake hands?” and he held out his hand, fully expecting Diego to take it.

“No,” answered Diego, “I don’t care to shake hands with you. I want to fight you. I don’t like you. I was wrong about you, and I had to come to tell you. If I had known it before I could not have fought you. And I can’t fight you again if you don’t let me be even with you in some way.”

“Oh, very well; but you needn't be so particular,” said Juan. “I'm ready to fight you at any time.”

“How can I fight you,” said Diego, passionately, “if I am under obligation to you?”

“Well, what will you do about it?” asked Juan, wonderingly.

“Have you told the sailors yet about the caravels?” demanded Diego.

“No.”

“Why?”

“I don't know,” was the hesitating answer. “What does it matter?”

“It matters a great deal. My cousin must know about it.”

“I supposed you had told him already. I saw you talking with him.”

“I didn't tell him. I wish you to tell him.”

“I?” exclaimed Juan. “I won't do it. Why should I?”

“Because he dislikes you, and it will put you in favor with him if you do it. If I let you tell him it will make us quits again.”

“Betray my comrades to please you!” said Juan, scornfully. “I won't.”

“How would it betray them? Don't you see that if you don't tell I shall have to? You

don't want me to have a right to fight you," said Diego, bitterly.

"I won't do it, anyhow," said Juan.

"He trusted you ; he took your word, and I think that puts you under obligation to tell him instead of telling the sailors, especially as it won't do them any good to know. I think you're afraid to fight, that's what I think."

"No you don't," retorted Juan. "Well, I'll tell Martin Alonzo, though I don't want to ; and I'll fight you some day, and I will beat you so that you will never ask me to fight again."

"Thank you," said Diego, joyously, "and I'll never call you ugly names again, nor sneer at you."

So he turned away happy in the thought of some day retrieving his defeat, and Juan, very much puzzled over it all, watched him walk away and murmured to himself :

"He hates me now ; but maybe he'll like me after we have had a fair fight and one of us is whipped."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE slight breeze that filled the sails of the fleet on leaving Gomera had died away during the night into a dead calm ; so that when Juan and Diego came on deck in the morning they saw the islands still within a short distance of them.

Diego leaned over the rail and pretended to look at the green shores, while in fact he was uneasily watching Juan. And Juan, while pretending to be quite easy in his mind, was, in truth, as far as possible from that state. At one moment he blamed Diego for the singular scruples about fighting that had forced him into so uncomfortable a position, and the next moment he was upbraiding himself for his lack of courage in not going at once to Martin Alonzo, who was pacing the poop in a most inviting way.

There is no saying how long he might have gone on worrying himself in this fashion had not Martin Alonzo, perhaps in default of anything else to do, beckoned him to come up. Juan took a deep breath and went. Diego drew a

deep breath also, and watched the two out of the corner of his eye. Miguel watched too.

“So,” said Martin Alonzo, eying Juan with no great favor, “you and Diego beguiled the time yesterday by fighting. And I had forbidden it.”

“You had forbidden it on board ship,” answered Juan.

“What!” cried Martin Alonzo, with a grimace, “have you the gift of language, too, and can hold an argument?”

“I did but justify myself,” answered Juan, sensitive to anything like injustice.

“So,” said Martin Alonzo, shortly. “Well, tell me, then, was it a fair fight? It seemed to me strange, indeed, to see such a fighting-cock as Diego yonder coming out of the wood only half-whipped, and yet with no fight left in him. Construe me that, since you have the gift of language; for it was more than Diego would do.”

Juan shifted uneasily from one foot to another, looked sidewise at Diego, glanced over at the islands, and then traced some pattern on the deck with his foot.

“Well-a-mercy!” exclaimed Martin Alonzo, impatiently, “if there be not more mystery over this puppy fight than over a great battle! What

is there in this that ties your two tongues? Come, speak out, boy!"

"Why," answered Juan, almost as impatiently as the captain, "I don't half understand it myself. That is—well, I know why he would not fight any more; though his nice points of honor are beyond me. But I am only a jail-bird," he added, sullenly.

"Tut, tut!" said Martin Alonzo, with a touch of sympathy showing through his impatience. "I have not said so, and I shall forget where you came from, so you behave yourself. Why would Diego fight no more?"

"Well, it was like this," said Juan, plunging into it, since there seemed no escape from it; "at first he had the best of it, and gave me this eye that you see. Then we wrestled, and neither got the better of the other, until his foot tripped over a root and he fell, with me atop of him. Then I pounded him, as you can see by his face."

"Ay, and then?" said Martin Alonzo, impatiently.

"I asked him to give up, and he said, not if I killed him."

"I could have sworn to it. Well, well?"

"Then I told him something that I knew would hurt him worse than a beating, and let him up. After that he would not fight any more."

“By my faith!” said Martin Alonzo, in a tone of extreme exasperation, “and what was this wonderful thing that you told him? You must indeed have the gift of language if you can cool the hot blood of a lad like Diego by words. What did you tell him? I may need to know the words some day. What were they?”

Juan hesitated and then tossed his head with a sort of pride and defiance.

“I showed him how he had done me an injustice,” he said.

“In what way? Go on with your story.”

“Well,” said Juan, “I will tell you, since you urge me. It was I cut the rudder gearing.”

“Ah!” said Martin Alonzo, knitting his eyebrows.

“Diego knew it was I; but would not tell you because—because—well, he was too generous.”

Martin Alonzo knew that it was because Juan had interfered to save Diego’s life, and it pleased him to have Juan refrain from telling that.

“Well, go on,” he said.

“When you were going to have him flogged, I had intended to tell you rather than let him be flogged; but he did not know that, and was so angry with me that he said hard things to me. When we were fighting—when I had him down, I bethought me how it would hurt him to tell



“ ‘COME, SPEAK OUT, BOY!’ ”

him that I had intended to save him, and I did it. If I had not been angry I would not have done it, but I did, and that is why he could not fight any more.”

Martin Alonzo looked into his flushed face for a minute, and then put his hand on his shoulder and said :

“ You two boys ought to be friends, and will, eh ? after this ? ”

Juan was pleased with the friendly words and manner, as, of course, he could not help being ; for it was much as if a sponge had been passed over some of the degradation of his past. He looked his gratitude, but did not make any answer.

“ What ! ” said Martin Alonzo, “ can you not forgive him ? ”

“ It isn't that, ” answered Juan, with a short, embarrassed laugh. “ He won't forgive me, and wishes to fight again, some time when we can finish. ”

Martin Alonzo stared in wonder, as well he might.

“ But, ” he said, “ I thought you said he would not fight any more. ”

“ Nor will he until he has become quits with me ; and the way he will be quits, he says, is by making you my friend. ”

“Well,” said Martin Alonzo, bending his keen eyes curiously on the boy, “here be plots and counterplots. And how am I to be made your friend?”

“I am to tell you something you ought to know—something on which depends this voyage—something he and I learned in the woods where we were fighting.”

“And after you have told me,” said Martin Alonzo, laughing heartily, for the whole affair seemed very funny to him, yet full of generous spirit, too, “you are to fight it out, eh?”

“Yes, he will have it so, and I will oblige him.”

“Then, tell me quickly, for I would not stand in the way of so laudable a desire on his part or on yours; and I do assure you, boy, that Diego has gained his point, and that I like you well, and that I see that you will make a future that will blot out all your past mistakes. But, for the life of me, I cannot help laughing,” and he did laugh, with a roar that was infectious. “And now tell me what you learned in the woods.”

“A sailor from a ship that had just arrived from Ferro came to us and first offered to help us desert from you.”

“But you remembered your promises, eh?”

Good boy! good boy! Yes, I like you. Well, go on."

"Yes," answered Juan, flushing with pleasure, and glad now to be telling Martin Alonzo what he had heard—"yes, we refused to go with him, and then he told us it would not much matter—we had told him we did not like the voyage—because there were three caravels of Portugal—armed caravels—waiting on the north side of Ferro to capture the fleet."

Martin Alonzo became serious at once, and turned involuntarily towards where Ferro lay.

"Did he say so, boy? Ah, did he say so? Thank you, boy, thank you! We will see to that. Ay, thank you!"

"You will not let it be known that it was I told you, will you?" asked Juan.

"No, no, of course not. The men must not know even that the caravels are there. Now go make friends with Diego. You will like him; for he is a good lad, though with a hot temper."

"Nothing but a fight will satisfy him," said Juan.

"Then you shall fight, boy, and be friends afterwards. But not aboard the vessel, boy. Wait until we are in Zipangu." And then, as Juan smiled, he smiled too, and added, "Ah, you think

we will never reach there, do you? Well, I verily believe you are mistaken. But go, now, for I must to the admiral and warn him."

Juan went down the ladder with a more uplifted spirit than had ever been in his breast before, and full of determination to deserve the best that Martin Alonzo thought of him. He passed Diego on his way forward, and stopped to say :

"I have his good will ; so you and I are quits, and there is nothing to prevent our fighting when we have the chance."

"Good," growled Diego.

Juan hesitated. If Diego would only be friends with him, it seemed to him that he would have nothing more to ask for.

"Won't you shake hands and be friends until we can fight?" he asked, wistfully.

"Then how could we fight?" demanded Diego. "No, I won't be friends till we have fought."

So Juan turned away and passed on to where Miguel was jealously waiting for him. It seemed to Juan a very difficult matter to adjust his friendships to suit himself. There was Diego, whose friendship he wished and who would not be his friend ; and here was Miguel, whose friendship was so undesirable and who was bent upon being his friend.

“Martin Alonzo found your conversation very funny,” said Miguel, in an injured tone.

“Well,” said Juan, testily, “is there any harm in that?” and he moved over to an old sailor, Rodrigo de Triana, and asked questions about the weather.

CHAPTER XV.

ON Sunday, which was the third day after the admiral had received intelligence of the caravels, and which was the 9th of September, the day broke and saw the fleet drifting about not more than nine leagues from Ferro.

All those in the secret watched anxiously for the hostile vessels, and the admiral knew that if a breeze did not spring up during the day there would be great danger of capture; for the caravels could get out their long oars and be upon them in spite of the calm.

But fortunately for his purpose a breeze came up with the sun, and, before any sign of the caravels was seen, the little fleet was skimming over the waters into that mysterious west which filled the hearts of the sailors with such foreboding that now they all remained on deck watching, with increasing gloom, the disappearance behind the eastern horizon of the last speck of land.

“Nothing but water now,” said Miguel, hoarsely, as his eye swept the whole circle of the horizon.

And then, as if his words had had a spell in them, a strange thing followed close upon them. Rodrigo de Triana, a stout man and a good seaman, who had never given any trouble, turned and caught Miguel by the shoulder in a spasmodic clutch, and, with his eyes rolling terribly, cried out in a loud voice:

“And it’s the last land we ever shall see. God ’a mercy on us!” and thereupon fell on his knees on the deck and cried like a child.

And then the others, seeing this, and being themselves wrought up to a singular pitch of terror, seemed to lose all control of themselves; and all over the vessel could be seen those strong men weeping and praying in voices of agony and despair, until Martin Alonzo was filled with alarm for the result, and sprang down the ladder and went among them.

With some he reasoned in short, telling words; others he caught in his powerful hands and put upon their feet and shook them, bidding them be men or he would do such things as would turn their thoughts in a great hurry. And when he had brought them into some semblance of order, he mounted the poop again and talked to them, telling them of the marvels of the land they were going to.

“Gold, silver, precious stones, silks and sat-

ins," he said, among other things, to them, "are to be had there for the taking. Every man among you, to the meanest, shall have his fill of riches. What shall prevent every one of you from going back to Spain so rich that you may purchase any title in the kingdom? You will all be princes. What! do you think I only say these things? I know them. Why, men have been to this land of Zipangu and to Cathay, which lies beyond it, and they have so wearied of the wealth they might have there that they have left a great part behind them on returning to their own country; and yet had they so much with them that they were enabled to live in palaces and be served by nobles. But we shall leave nothing behind that any man cares to take. Here is the *Pinta*, which shall be loaded to the last line with her precious freight, and we shall come home rejoicing, and you will all despise yourselves for the childish terror which you let conquer you this day."

Since he believed everything he said, to the very last word, it was not strange that he should make the men believe him, even in spite of their fears, which they could not dispel, though they kept them hidden from him.

That is, they hid them for the time; but as they kept going farther and farther from the



“ALL OVER THE VESSEL COULD BE SEEN THOSE STRONG
MEN WEeping.”

land, their fears would return to them, and they would construe the simplest occurrence into an omen of evil, and there would follow a panic, which Martin Alonzo would soothe as best he could, displaying a patience that no one would have looked for in him; though sometimes breaking out in a great fury when his words seemed to have no effect.

But it was seldom that the cupidity that was in the poor, ignorant men would not become inflamed by his promises of gold and jewels; and so it was on that theme that he talked the most often. And indeed it was the theme that occupied his own mind the most; for it was only the admiral who had any lofty thoughts concerning the discoveries he hoped to make. He, indeed, cared for the wealth, too; but it can truly be said that what was more in his mind than riches was the thought of carrying the gospel to the heathen of Zipangu and Cathay.

But it was a terrible voyage in view of the fears of the sailors, their imaginations becoming so diseased after a while that a sudden cry from any one of them would create a panic among the others.

One day it was a floating mast, from some unfortunate wreck, that disturbed them and made them pass the rest of the day in whispered sto-

ries of disaster, and with suggestions of destruction to themselves. At another time it was the variation of the compass; at another time it was the fact that the wind blew steadily from the same quarter, convincing them that it was wafting them designedly to that abyss over which the ocean flowed; at another time it was a calm; at another a great area of sea-weed, the extent of which they could not see.

And so it went for days and days; though there were times when there were omens which they looked upon as favorable. But afterwards these were deemed only lures set by the Evil One to keep them to their purpose. Sometimes they believed they saw land, and then they were mad with joy and the ships would race with each other to be the first to see and touch it. Then it would be discovered that they had been mistaken, and the gloom would be greater than before.

And, at last, the alarm of the men grew so great that they lost their fear of Martin Alonzo, and began to talk so openly of forcing him to turn back that he was alarmed, though he gave no sign of it. And then there came a day when *he* began to have doubts. Not that he doubted that land could be reached somewhere in that western ocean; but that he believed that the ad-

miral was obstinate in always keeping to his westerly course, when it seemed plain to him that land would be reached sooner by taking a southwesterly course.

It had got to be October by this time, and it was on the 6th of that month that Martin Alonzo signalled the admiral, and afterwards went aboard his vessel with the intention of inducing him to change his course. He was in no very good temper, for his men had been more than usually mutinous, and it is probable that he insisted more strongly on having his own way than he should have done.

The admiral, however, was a firmer man than Martin Alonzo, and he would not swerve a point from his course. He was not obstinate, nor angry in his demeanor, and said to Martin Alonzo :

“I believe that land lies due west of us. I should therefore be wrong if I varied from my course. Several times you have urged me to vary, and I foolishly have acceded, to a slight extent only, it is true; but still I have done it. I must do so no more, except upon a conviction of my own that I should do so.”

“Then do you go your way and let me go mine,” said Martin Alonzo, angrily.

“Not so,” answered the admiral. “You shall keep the course I keep, and diverge at your peril.

I am in command of this fleet, and it is for you to obey me," and he spoke in so lofty and dignified a tone that Martin Alonzo was hushed, though yet raging with anger and mortification.

However, it happened the next day that the men became so threatening that the admiral had need of the support of the Pinzons, of whom there were many in the fleet, and to keep them on his side he did take a course west-southwest. Then, after three days of that course, he turned due west again, and held steadfastly in that direction.

By this time the men on the *Pinta* could scarcely be held in any sort of control, and the case was even worse on the other vessels ; so that it would have needed but a word to precipitate a mutiny that must have ended in the deaths of the most worthy men of the expedition.

But at this point, when Martin Alonzo was moodily leaning over the rail, thinking many hard things of the admiral, and half careless whether or not his men rose against him, he suddenly noted certain signs in the water that caused him to lift his head and cry out :

"Ho! Rodrigo de Triana! come hither!" and when the man had hurried to his side, "look over into the water. Are those weeds from

fresh water? Did ever you see the like grow in the sea? And is that a fresh twig of wood, floating yonder?"

"There is land hereabout," said Rodrigo, turning pale. "There is no doubt of it this time," and he ran wildly forward, shouting the intelligence to the men, and bidding them look into the water.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHILE the crew of the *Pinta* were rejoicing over the certain indications of land, Diego chanced to look towards the other vessels, and saw that the *Santa Maria* was crowding on more sail.

He immediately suspected the meaning of that. The indications of land had been seen on board of the admiral's vessel, and those aboard of her were intending to gain a good lead before communicating their discovery. Owing to the unfortunate altercation between the admiral and Martin Alonzo, the crews of the two vessels had become imbued with a feeling of jealousy towards each other, and each was willing to gain honor at the expense of the other.

Besides, there was a reward of ten thousand maravedis offered for the first discovery of land, and each vessel was naturally desirous of seeing it earned on her deck. Diego then ran over to his cousin and exclaimed :

“ They have seen the signs on the *Santa Maria*, and are pushing her to take the lead.”

Martin Alonzo looked quickly towards the vessel, and then turned and gave orders for spreading every inch of canvas on the *Pinta*. There was a good breeze blowing, and the *Pinta* was the fastest sailer of the fleet, so that it was not long ere she was showing the other vessels her stern.

All that day and until night came on, there was not an eye in the fleet but was eagerly bent in the direction in which land was supposed to lie; but when darkness came on and there had been no sign of the looked-for sight, most of the men gave over watching.

On the *Pinta* old Rodrigo de Triana had been one of the most careful watchers; though it was noticed that he had kept his eyes as much on the water as on the horizon. His watch was relieved at midnight, but he remained on deck, saying to Diego, who was in the watch with him, that he did not feel sleepy, and had a mind to study the stars.

“To study maravedis, you mean,” said Diego, laughing.

“Why, maybe you’re right, lad,” answered Rodrigo, slyly.

Diego had half a mind to watch, too; for he had a good opinion of the old sailor’s shrewdness; but he was sleepy, and deferred hope had

made him suspicious of appearances, and so he went to bed. It seemed to him, however, that he had no more than fallen asleep when a gun fired from the deck of the *Pinta*, followed by loud and joyous cries, sent him out of his berth in a great haste.

He found himself jostled by all the others of the crew who had been startled at the same time, and were crowding out on deck, eagerly inquiring of each other if land had been discovered. Then presently they heard the voice of Martin Alonzo joyfully proclaiming the great tidings.

“Ay, ay, boys! it’s land sure enough. There! you can see it for yourselves, dark as it is. And who should be the first to set eyes on it but old Rodrigo, the cunning old salt, who, instead of turning in like the rest, must spend the night in the round-house looking for those ten thousand maravedis. Now, brother Francisco, have in those sails, and we will lay to until the blessed sun comes up to let us have a clearer view of this land of Zipangu. Ah, lads! you lay your heads down to-night poor men; but if the tale be not a false one—and you see it has been true so far—you shall not go to bed again without gold under your pillows.”

With that the men all fell to shaking hands with each other, and could hardly be got to take

in the sails, for the excitement they were in. And it chanced that in the general jubilee of congratulation, Diego, whose spirits were as easily exalted as any one's, had gone about dancing and shaking hands like one beside himself, as indeed he was, and had at last caught the hand of Juan before he knew it.

"I'm afraid you don't mean it," said Juan, half wistfully, half laughingly; for Diego's joy was very extravagant.

"No, I didn't," answered Diego, drawing back, "but indeed I am so rejoiced that I will shake hands with you heartily if you will promise we shall fight it out in all friendliness at the first chance."

"That I will," said Juan, more glad in truth of the good-will of Diego than of the discovery of land; for he had craved Diego's liking as Diego, with all his self-confidence, would never have been able to suppose.

So they shook hands again, Juan laughing with joy and Diego presently hugging him in his excitement.

"To tell the truth," said Diego, as they leaned over the rail together, "I think I have wanted to shake hands with you this many a day; but I was ashamed. And I was mad to think you had been more generous than I—for you were;

that's the truth. But my heart is set on fighting it out; for I think I am the master—in all friendliness you will understand—and that I should have had the best of it that day in the wood if we had fought it out.”

“That we shall see,” said Juan; “but anyhow we shall be friends, whoever is the master, shall we not?”

“Truly we shall.”

“And you will not despise me for having come from the jail?” asked Juan, trembling for the answer.

“Martin Alonzo says that it is not what you were, but what you are,” answered Diego.

“Thank you for saying so; and some day I will tell you my story, and you shall see that I was not so bad as you have thought, perhaps; though to be bad at all is too bad, as I very well know. But we won't talk of that, now.”

“That's as you please,” said Diego, who found himself interested even then, with land dimly visible over the rail; though perhaps it was because the land was there and not to be reached, that he was glad of something to talk of. “Tell me now, or tell me never.”

“Well, it's not much and will not take long, and then it will be done,” said Juan, slowly. “It is this: My mother and I were starving, and I

tried to earn some bread for her and could not, and so I stole it. That is all."

"I should have done the same," said Diego.

"Stealing is stealing," said Juan, and Diego thought of the melon; "and, after all," he said, a little huskily, "it did no good."

"What do you mean?" asked Diego.

"My mother died with the bread on her lips."

Diego had nothing to say to that, but he showed his sympathy by suddenly taking Juan's hand and shaking it, letting it go as quickly as he had taken it.

"The only thing," said Juan, after a moment's pause, "that I was glad of was that she never knew I was taken to prison."

"I would not think it a disgrace," said Diego.

"But it was," said Juan; "and if I had not come aboard here and met you and quarrelled with you, I should have become as bad as the worst. I had only thieves, and even murderers, for friends, and could have had no other sort as long as I lived if I had not come on this voyage. I should have been glad I came the voyage even if we had not discovered Zipangu; though I would have done anything to desert at first. And now you may whip me as much as you can, if you will only remain my friend."

"I will, of course—glad to be; but you

mustn't let me whip you, or I shan't like you," said Diego.

"Oh, I shall do my best to whip you," said Juan.

"That's it," said Diego, heartily. "I wonder if you and I shall be of the party to go ashore?"

CHAPTER XVII.

DAYLIGHT comes and goes quickly in those latitudes, and it seemed to the waiting, watching men as if a veil had suddenly been lifted from before their eyes, when a small wooded island appeared to them in the early morning.

It did not, indeed, look like that civilized Zipangu of which the admiral and Martin Alonzo had spoken so often; but it was a new land, and it might well be an outlying island not yet brought under the civilizing influence of the rich and prosperous countries they were seeking.

In short, no one doubted that Zipangu and Cathay, with their enormous stores of gold, silver, and precious stones, lay beyond the island they looked upon. It was a wonderful sight, surely, to see that peaceful little island lying there on the placid bosom of the waters which had been so mysterious to them but yesterday.

And presently the shores began to fill with people the like of which they had never seen nor even heard of before. They were quite innocent of clothing, and from the ships they ap-

peared of a brown complexion, though they were afterwards discovered to be of a coppery hue. They were plainly as surprised at the sight of the strangers as the latter could be at sight of them; for there was a constant running to and fro among them, and a gesticulating and pointing that showed that they could not conquer their wonder.

But what the men could distinguish from the ships only made them the more anxious to be ashore, and there was a general shout when the admiral signalled to drop anchor and prepare the boats. Then came the eager question of who were to be the unfortunates to remain on board. Martin Alonzo settled that summarily by selecting for the boats those who had been the least troublesome during the voyage. Neither Diego nor Juan dared ask to be of the party; but Martin Alonzo was in no manner of doubt over their desire, and he said to Diego:

“I can have no fighting here, Diego, and so I can take but one of you two boys. Which ought I take?”

“An it please you, Martin Alonzo,” cried Diego, eagerly, “there need be no question of that. Let us both go, and we will pledge ourselves not even to speak otherwise than softly. I pray you, good cousin!” he begged.

“And you, Juan?” asked Martin Alonzo, ready to smile.

“I will let him strike me without striking back.”

Martin Alonzo laughed outright at that.

“I would not trust you that far. But put on all your bravery—stop! you have none. Diego, do you and Juan come with me and I will give you each one a morion and a bit of gay apparel, so that these natives may see us all at our best. The men shall all go armed.”

It was in the spirit of putting the best appearance on themselves that the whole fleet acted. The gentlemen adventurers clad themselves in shining armor and donned their most brilliant cloaks, and the sailors were armed with arquebuses and pikes, and were clad in their best, with breastplates and helmets to complete their bravery.

The admiral was splendidly robed in a brilliant scarlet cloak over his rich and glittering armor, and held the royal standard in his own hand as he stood upright in his own boat, which led the way to the new shores, which his steadfastness had earned and his great mind foreseen.

The heart of the noble discoverer was filled with piety, and so it was that his very first act on setting foot on land was to kneel down, kiss the

earth, and offer up thanks to God for his goodness, even shedding tears from the fulness of his gratitude.

After that he took formal possession of the new land in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, and proclaimed himself by the titles which it had been agreed upon with Ferdinand and Isabella should be his in the event of the accomplishment of the purpose of the voyage—Admiral and Viceroy.

It is painful to relate, now, how the men, who had reviled him and had even plotted his death, crowded around him with words of most fulsome flattery and praise. Martin Alonzo, however, was not one of these. If he had had differences with the admiral, they had been honest ones, and he lost nothing of his self-respect now, in the full tide of the admiral's triumph.

He congratulated the admiral and gave him his full meed of praise, and the admiral cordially met him, giving him back the most gracious answers. A pity it was that the good feeling felt then could not last. However, if it had, this tale need never have been told; for it was because of the renewed differences between the two men that Diego and Juan fell into such trouble. But of that later.

At first the natives would not approach the



“THE ADMIRAL WAS SPLENDIDLY ROBED IN A BRILLIANT
SCARLET CLOAK OVER HIS RICH AND GLITTERING ARMOR,
AND HELD THE ROYAL STANDARD IN HIS OWN HAND.”



strangers ; but when they saw how peaceful they were—the admiral would not permit them to be otherwise—they came gradually nearer and nearer until some of the more courageous were emboldened to touch their guests.

They believed, then, that these white men, in their shining armor and bright raiment, had come down from the skies ; the sails of the ships being taken for the wings on which they had floated down out of the firmament.

When the others saw that nothing evil befell those who went near to the visitors, they flocked out of the woods like so many children and could not restrain their curiosity, feeling of the clothing, the arms, and the very skin and beards of the white men. Yes, and they were so ignorant of the nature of the weapons that one of them boldly closed his hand on the blade of a sword, not knowing it would cut, and being as much surprised as pained to see the blood flow from his wound.

The men begged that they might remain on land all the day long, and the admiral permitted it, only admonishing them not to stray too far from the boats ; and so they spent the beautiful day enjoying the delights of the soft climate and refreshing themselves with the fruits that were brought them by the natives, who needed only

to know that a thing was desired to make them bring it.

The admiral distributed among the natives some of the cheap trinkets that he had brought with him, and it was a marvel to the sailors to see how little notion they had of the value of the glass beads and hawks' bells, prizing the latter, indeed, above everything else, and being willing to barter anything they had for them.

Gold, however, was the one thing that the voyagers craved before everything else, and that they could not find; nor could they discover any means of conveying their wishes, except by showing the metal to the natives, and making signs of wishing to have the same. But as the natives had nothing of the shape of the things shown them they only shook their heads and indicated by other signs that they had nothing like what was shown.

Diego and Juan had been furnished by Martin Alonzo with some bells and beads, and they went about looking for objects for which to barter them. Indeed, it was such a pleasure to them to see the joy of the Indians—as the admiral had called them, thinking he had come upon India—that they gave most of what they had without any sort of exchange.

But at last they stretched themselves luxu-



“ REFRESHING THEMSELVES WITH THE FRUITS THAT WERE BROUGHT THEM BY
THE NATIVES.”

riously out in one of the charming groves and let themselves be waited on by the willing creatures, who brought them fresh fruits and roasted yuca root until they could eat no more, when they offered these young sybarites water in calabashes.

“I tell you, Juan,” said Diego, drowsily—for the luxury of all this, taken with the scant sleep of the night before, aided not a little by the quantities of food he had consumed, had made him sleepy—“this is better than fighting, is it not?”

“I think so, indeed,” was the prompt answer.

The boys had become sworn friends during the day, and had not been separated once.

“Do you feel like a prince?” demanded Diego. “Martin Alonzo promised we should be such, you remember.”

“I don’t know how a prince feels,” answered Juan, with a laugh; “but I don’t believe he can feel any better than I do.”

“I wish I could find some of that gold he talked of,” said Diego.

“Have you tried your Latin with them?” asked Juan.

“I did not think it worth while. Luis de Torres, the converted Jew, spoke to them, as you heard, in I don’t know how many languages, and

they only stared at him and shook their heads, wondering, I suppose, how he ever twisted his tongue around so many odd sounds. I thought, myself, that he would lose all that remained of his teeth when he spoke in Hebrew. No, I have not tried my Latin; though, now you speak of it, it may be not amiss; for the Jew's accent was not very good. Say, old man!" he raised his voice and looked at an old man, who had watched the two boys with an extraordinary interest, but had yet approached near to them, having but recently come from a neighboring village.

When he saw that he was spoken to, he stood up and showed himself a very respectable and dignified person; though, as Diego said to Juan, most hideously painted on the face. Diego beckoned him to come nearer, and began in Latin, Juan listening attentively and with as much respect, almost, as the natives. But Diego had not said three words before he sprang from the ground and agitatedly caught the old man by the nose and led him, considerably startled and dismayed, to where the sun streamed into an open spot in the woods.

Juan followed anxiously, a vague fear troubling him lest Diego was going to do some violence to the old man. But that was not his

intention; though Juan might be excused for suspecting him. What he did was to turn the old man's head, using his nose as a sort of handle, until the light struck athwart it. Then he took his hand away and cried out, at the same time dancing:

“Gold! gold! gold!” There was a ring of that metal in the old man's nose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT was so plain to the Indians that Diego's antics were caused by satisfaction that they were immediately reassured, and were presently gathered around him to discover what it was in the old man that caused their heaven-sent visitor such pleasure.

"I believe 'tis gold," said Juan.

"I am certain of it, and I will see if I can get it from the old fellow," answered Diego, and thereupon began to make signs.

He took a hawk's bell from his pocket and jingled it before the eyes of the dignified but, therewith, delighted savage. Then he tapped the ring of gold with his finger, tapped the bell, and offered it to the savage. The old man understood him in an instant, and it gave Diego and Juan—their greed for gold being very great—a mighty satisfaction to see with what trembling eagerness the old man took the ring from his nose and exchanged it for the hawk's bell.

"Say nothing to the others till we have our



“JINGLED IT BEFORE THE EYES OF THE SAVAGE.”

fill of it," said Diego feverishly to Juan, not knowing that the more gold he had the more he would be likely to wish for, and that the time when he had his fill would be little likely ever to come.

"Perhaps they have no more," said Juan.

"That we will speedily learn," answered Diego.

So he took from his pockets, Juan doing likewise, all the bells and beads he had. Then he made signs that he would exchange them only for rings of gold. Upon that the savages ran off and returned with a handful altogether of the rings, and Diego and Juan were soon rid of their trifles in exchange; though it must be said that the Indians gave every evidence of thinking they had made the better bargain.

When they had procured all they could from the men, the boys, in great excitement, hurried out of the grove and shouted for Martin Alonzo, until he was pointed out to them.

"Well," said he, "what madness is on you now?"

"Madness, indeed!" said Diego, his dark eyes sparkling like the precious stones his head was now full of; for he was as certain as if he had them in his pockets that he would soon be possessed of burdensome quantities of diamonds, ru-

bies, sapphires, and the like. Martin Alonzo very quickly caught the expression, and demanded eagerly :

“What then? What then? Speak, Diego!”

“Look, cousin!” said Diego, softly, and drew several of the rings from his pocket and gave them to Martin Alonzo.

“Gold!” said Martin Alonzo, in a tone that might fairly be called an adoring one.

“I have twenty if I have one, and Juan has as many,” said Diego.

“Ha, ha!” cried Martin Alonzo, rubbing his hands gleefully, “did I not say you should have it? Come! we must to the admiral with this.”

“Why,” said Diego, “let us get more ourselves, first.”

“Tut!” said Martin Alonzo, and laughed like a man drunk with expectation, “be not so grudging, boy; there will be enough to load the *Pinta* to the rail. Come! Ah, this looks well, indeed.”

So he led the way to where the admiral sat, trying to extract some sort of information from the natives.

“My lord admiral,” said he, joyously, “this boy here, or the two of them together, for they run in couples now, though they were for flying

at each other's throats a while since—this boy, I say, has found the thing we have sought."

"And what is that?" asked the admiral, looking kindly at the flushed, eager faces of the two lads.

"Show him, Diego. A shrewd lad and a cousin of mine, admiral," said Martin Alonzo.

Diego, for the better showing of his shrewdness and his good fortune, drew out all of the gold nose-rings he had obtained, and Juan turned all he had into the same pile, Diego holding his two hands together to accommodate them all.

The admiral took some of them in his hand, eagerly, too, and examined them carefully before he spoke.

"Gold; and without alloy. Pure," he said. "This is well. How came you by them, my boy?"

So Diego told the story, looking to Juan for confirmation now and again, and the latter responding loyally, giving Diego all the credit that was his.

"I knew it would rejoice you," said Martin Alonzo, very proud of Diego.

"And so it does," said the admiral.

"And shall I issue bells and beads to the men, and let them barter for the yellow stuff?" asked

Martin Alonzo, eagerly ; for he was anxious to redeem his promises to his men.

“Not so,” answered the admiral, gravely. “Gold is a monopoly of their majesties and can only be bartered for on their account. And ’tis the same with cotton. All things else the men may procure from the natives.”

“Not barter for gold?” cried Martin Alonzo, in his quick, passionate way.

“Not barter for gold,” repeated the admiral, with all the dignity of his authority.

“And you will not return these rings to the boys?”

“Assuredly not, Martin Alonzo,” said the admiral. “You must see that it would be impossible ; though I would be glad to do it for the sake of rewarding their shrewdness.”

“Then,” said Martin Alonzo, his bronzed face all aflame with wrath, “I say you shall yield it up to them. I say you shall,” and he stamped his foot on the hard sand of the beach where they stood.

“Martin Alonzo Pinzon !” said the admiral, in a stern tone, “you do forget yourself.”

For a second it seemed as if he had, indeed, forgotten himself, and would continue to do so, ere he would yield his point. But a better judgment prevailed and he held his peace ; though

“NOT BARTER FOR GOLD?” CRIED MARTIN ALONZO.



it was impossible for him to quite control his temper. He caught Diego's hand in his and emptied the rings out of it upon the sand, and then swept both of the boys along with him as he walked sternly away.

He said nothing to either of the boys, but stalked along in a towering rage, and, when he had come to his boats, gave the order that the men should be collected, so that they might go aboard for the night.

As for Diego and Juan, they were divided between indignation at the manner in which their cherished gold had been taken from them and dismay at the attitude Martin Alonzo had assumed towards Christoval Colon, whose lofty manners as well as whose dignities awed them.

"I wish," said Diego, who could never be wholly repressed, "that that old man had not thrust his nose into my face."

"Or that you had wrung it off, as I supposed you intended to do," said Juan.

"Hush! Martin Alonzo is looking this way. If he should see us smile now, I think he would make but one bite of our two heads. But, say, Juan, if we may not traffic in gold—cotton I would not have at a gift—what is to become of us?"

"There are the precious stones."

“Oh, ay!” said Diego, doubtfully; “but where are they? I saw no semblance of any this day.”

“That’s because you saw nothing but noses,” said Juan, and both the boys, easily recovered from the loss of their gold, laughed behind their hands.

CHAPTER XIX.

IF the boys were easily reconciled to the loss of the gold which they had at first sought with such avidity, the same was not the case with Martin Alonzo; although even he cared less for the loss of the gold than for what he considered an affront to him.

But he had promised his men that they should carry away as much gold as they could procure, and he held himself responsible to them for the fulfilment of his promises. And then, he thought to himself, "comes this upstart Italian, who could never have sailed an inch this way but for me, and puts me down with his talk of their majesties. As if I were not a better subject of them than he!"

That was not especially to the point, but it was sufficient to the angry sailor who was jealous at the bottom, and did not ask for any good reasons for disliking the admiral. However, Martin Alonzo was not a man to brood for naught. He could not nurse a wrong, real or fancied, without coming to a conclusion which should lead to action.

During the few days that the vessels remained at the island, which the natives called Guanahani, but which the admiral renamed San Salvador, Martin Alonzo did nothing overt, though he was not in the least active in any of the plans made by the admiral. One thing he did do; he called Diego to him.

“Diego,” said he, “it seems to me that the time has come when you should prove the truth of the encomiums of the good Fray Bartolomeo.”

“As to what?” demanded Diego, with some surprise; for the good fray was very far from his thoughts at that moment.

“He said you had a gift of language,” said Martin Alonzo.

Diego had been so often mocked at by his cousin because of his alleged gift that he looked curiously at him to see if behind his gloomy face was any sign of mirth. As there was not, he answered quite soberly:

“Perhaps he praised me too highly, good cousin.”

“I hope not,” said Martin Alonzo, knitting his brows; “for I have a use, now, for such a gift.”

“And may I ask what that use may be?” asked Diego, seeing his cousin pause.

“Yes, you may ask and know ; for I look to you to practise it. Diego, I wish you to put yourself to it to learn the language of this people. Will it be a difficult task? You should know, having studied other languages.”

“I think it will be an easy task,” answered Diego ; “for I have already begun to learn some words, and I can say more than you would believe, considering I have studied but three days.”

“That is well—that is as it should be. Keep your counsel, Diego, and say nothing of what you are doing to any soul.”

“Juan already knows I am studying. But, cousin, I hear that the admiral intends to set sail as soon as the boats return from coasting the island ; and if that be so I shall not have time to learn much.”

“That will not matter ; for we shall carry away a few of the men to learn to act as interpreters. The admiral has so informed us. That is, if the men will go, and I do not doubt they will.”

“May I know with what especial object I am to study?” asked Diego, whose curiosity was roused, as much by the sullen manner of his cousin as by anything else.

“No, you may not,” answered Martin Alonzo, curtly. Then, as Diego turned abashed, he asked,

“Do the men understand why they may not traffic for gold?”

“Yes.”

“And do they know how the gold was taken from you and Juan?”

“Ay, they do, and have been angry because of it, grumbling greatly that you promised them as much gold as they could carry. However,” and Diego laughed, “it has not made a great deal of difference; for it would seem as if Juan and I had stripped the island of its gold.”

“It is true that not much more has been found; but, Diego, there must be more where that came from, and I wish you to learn as soon as you can where it did come from. That is a part of your task. And be secret.”

“Learn where the gold came from!” repeated Diego to himself with a short laugh when he had left his cousin. “That is well said; but, worthy Martin Alonzo, do you not know that every man on the fleet is striving his utmost to learn the same thing? A pretty secret that!” and Diego laughed.

Nevertheless, he prosecuted his studies, which he had taken up from sheer love of learning languages, having truly the gift the good fray credited him with, and, with a definite object in view now, he strove harder than ever; Juan, meanwhile, admiring his extraordinary facility in learn-

ing without making the least effort to learn, himself.

It was as Martin Alonzo had said. The admiral did not remain long at so unimportant an island, but, having partly explored its coast and finding it uninteresting, returned to the ships and set sail, taking seven of the natives with him, three of them going on the *Pinta*, as Martin Alonzo had supposed would happen.

All the talk of the fleet was, as Diego had said, of gold and where it could be found; and the admiral, by dint of signs and such words as he had been able to pick up, had gathered in a vague way that the source of the gold was to the south of Guanahani; and so he made his way thitherward, stopping at various islands on the way, but never with any success in finding more gold than had been had in Guanahani.

All of the islands were as charming as they very well could be, each one seeming more beautiful than the last; but as they held no gold in store for the greedy voyagers, they gave but little pleasure to any one but the admiral, who had always an enthusiastic description of each to jot in the journal he was keeping for his sovereigns.

It was the 12th of October when the fleet dropped anchor off Guanahani, and it was not until the 28th of the same month that it came

in sight of Cuba, which gave the first promise of being the land they were in search of; for it was great in extent, and was marked with lofty mountains.

At first the admiral was convinced that he had reached Zipangu, but afterwards, owing to something which Diego gathered from the Indians on the *Pinta*, Martin Alonzo gained the belief that it was not an island, but the mainland; and, at once, both admiral and Martin Alonzo jumped to the conclusion that it was Cathay, and on this supposition they made a landing.

The Indians told of gold in great quantities to be found in a certain part of Cuba; but although every effort was made to find it, it was always without success. The truth was that the Indians knew but little of the island, and what they told was always immediately magnified and distorted by the admiral, who saw everything by the light of his faith that he had discovered the eastern coast of Asia.

In the meantime Diego had gained a considerable knowledge of the language of the Indians, and was profiting by it to question the natives of Cuba; for, although the language was not the same there, it was enough like that of Guanahani to enable him to communicate in it with the Cubans.

Every day, Martin Alonzo eagerly questioned him on his progress in knowledge of where gold was to be found, and as often would express his disappointment that there was nothing more definite to tell, saying that the admiral had as much knowledge of the matter as he had.

“Well,” said Diego, “and why should he not have?”

“Boy, boy,” said Martin Alonzo, one day, “I depend on you. I will not brook the authority of that upstart foreigner. I tell you I depend on you. Now ask, pry, discover.”

Then one day, after having had an interview with the admiral, he called Diego, and said, almost angrily :

“Here is more that you have not discovered for me that the admiral knows. Now that we have spent two weeks exploring and coasting this country of Cuba, some one tells him that on the island of Babeque, which lies to the northeast, there is plenty of gold and precious stones. What have you to say to that?”

Well, it was only natural that Diego, having been badgered so much, had exerted himself to learn something that was not known to anybody else, and he had supposed he had accomplished it, when Martin Alonzo came with this piece of news. At the first word, he fancied that he

had been forestalled again ; but when his cousin had concluded, he plucked up his spirits and answered :

“I have nothing to say to that ; but I have something else to say, and that is that to the southeast, not far from here, there lies an island which the Indians call Bohio, though I think that is not its name, but only a sort of description. It is on this island, according to more than one, that gold is found, and that powerful and warlike people live.”

“Do you trust this report, Diego?” demanded Martin Alonzo, eagerly.

“I do, because I have questioned the men carefully. I have more faith in it than in the admiral’s Babeque, anyhow.”

“And it is to the southeast?”

“To the southeast,” answered Diego.

“Diego,” whispered Martin Alonzo, “I will trust you. Keep your counsel still. I think the time has come when I can show that proud upstart that he is not supreme. Diego, I shall leave him to find his own gold, and I will go find mine. Ah, I shall not prevent free dealing in it, should ever we come upon it. Quiet, boy, and you shall be satisfied for the gold he took from you.”

CHAPTER XX.

IT was all wrong and utterly indefensible for Martin Alonzo to take the attitude he did towards the admiral, and Martin Alonzo knew it quite as well as any one.

Of course he justified himself to himself, and rehearsed in his own mind how he had contributed money and influence, without which the voyage could not have been undertaken ; but down in his heart he knew that he was bent on a wrong deed, and it must have been borne in on his better nature that the real cause of his dislike for the admiral was born of a union of jealousy and an insubordination which could not brook authority from any one.

Diego felt that Martin Alonzo was intent on a thing that was wrong—his cousin's manner indicated that—but he could not reason on it ; for he did not clearly understand what the relations were between the captain and the admiral. It was generally felt that Martin Alonzo was the life and soul of the enterprise, and that the honors and authority which

were to fall to the admiral were quite undeserved.

Besides, Diego was too young, too happy in the excitement of the voyage, to care much. He admired his cousin and loved him, and would willingly follow his lead; and as he felt no responsibility in the matter—having none indeed, for his clear duty was simply to obey the orders of his captain—he gave himself no concern either at that time or later.

It was on the morning of the 19th of November that the admiral finally gave up hope of gaining anything by remaining on the coast of Cuba, and turned the prows of his ships towards that island which he called Babeque. The course set was due east, and the *Pinta*, as usual, took the lead.

The wind was dead ahead, however, and after battling all that day and during the night, very little progress had been made. Martin Alonzo spent his time, as he had frequently done of late, in gnawing his lips and fingers, and in watching, with sullen eyes, the ship of the admiral. On the morning of the 20th he called Diego to him.

“You have been wishing to have a word with me, Diego,” he said. “What is it?”

“The Indians say that the island we are heading for must be Bohio, and not the Babeque of which the admiral speaks.”

“Yes,” said Martin Alonzo, “that is what I supposed. Well, neither the *Santa Maria* nor the *Niña* can sail long in the teeth of this gale, and will be obliged to turn back.”

“So Rodrigo de Triana says,” answered Diego.

“He says well. Now, go, Diego,” and he turned and walked to where his brother, Francisco Martin, paced the unsteady poop of the *Pinta*.

It is singular how the very air seems to be charged with expectation when a plot of any sort is brewing. The sailors of the *Pinta* knew that something was to happen that was out of the common, and they often whispered when there was no need of it, and kept casting curious and expectant glances towards the poop.

All day long the gale pelted them, and they beat about before it; though the sailors of the *Pinta* knew she was not doing the best she could have done under the circumstances. They told themselves that it was because Martin Alonzo did not choose to get too far from the other ships.

Late in the afternoon the admiral decided that it would be better to turn back and wait for better weather, and he therefore put his vessel about and signalled the other two to do the

same. The *Niña* obeyed, and the sailors of the *Pinta* stood ready to take Martin Alonzo's orders. But he merely beckoned his brother and two of the gentlemen adventurers to join him, and they talked earnestly for a few minutes, the sailors watching them intently and whispering among themselves.

Presently Martin Alonzo separated himself from his companions, and walked to where he could see the sailors. There was a set smile on his face, and he said nothing for a full minute.

"Now we shall hear something startling, depend upon that," said Juan, in Diego's ear.

"It is an egg he has been sitting on for some time," said Diego, "and I am curious to see what will be hatched."

"My men," said Martin Alonzo, raising his powerful voice, "come nearer. I have something to say to you."

There was no need of a second invitation; for the men crowded as near as they could, and listened while they clung to any available thing; for the vessel was tossing like a cork. Martin Alonzo stretched out his arm towards the other ships.

"They are going back to a land where there is no gold," he said, and stopped.

“Ay, ay!” growled the men, looking at the ships and nodding their heads.

“I promised you all the gold you could procure,” said Martin Alonzo. “There has not been much as yet to get; but you know whose fault it has been that you could not have a share of what there was.”

At this the men seemed to half comprehend what was coming, and nodded vigorously at each other and shouted, “Ay, ay!” in a way that showed that they would not lag behind his wishes.

“But for me,” went on Martin Alonzo, “this expedition would never have started, or, having started, would never have continued on its way. I promised you gold and precious stones if you would keep your spirits, and I have been prevented from keeping my promise. Well, so far we have found but little gold; but the boy, Diego, has been learning the language of these Indian fellows, and he has discovered that the gold comes from a certain island, not far to the east of here. The other ships have turned back. Shall we turn back, or shall we go on? Come! it is for you to say. If we go it is for the purpose of letting each man get what treasure he can, that he may have some profit out of a voyage that has had enough of terror for us all.

What is the word, men? Shall we keep on our course, or shall we put about and return?"

"To the island!" "Gold, gold!" "Keep our course!" and such like cries were his answer, as he very well knew they would be.

"What do you think of that?" asked Diego in a whisper of Juan.

"I think he has the gift of language, too," answered Juan.

"Good!" said Martin Alonzo; "and now let us make our terms at the start, so that there may be no misunderstanding. I have been at great costs on account of this expedition, and it is but fair that I should receive more than you. Again, I shall have to supply you with the means of traffic. In consideration of these things, I ask you if it will not be right that I shall take half of the gold and have the other half divided share and share alike among you?"

The sailors had listened dubiously at the opening of this speech, expecting to hear him propose far less advantageous terms to them; so that when he concluded they were agreeably surprised and showed their satisfaction in a shout of acquiescence.

Thus it was that the *Pinta* disregarded all the signals of the admiral and kept her course as well as she could, while the companion vessels

were forced to seek shelter on the coast of Cuba.

For a while, the feeling that they had broken loose from the supreme authority put the sailors into a riotous state ; but Martin Alonzo was not the man to permit that. He might defy authority, himself, but no one should disregard his authority, and he very speedily gave the sailors to understand it ; so that in a little while he had his crew in its accustomed state of subordination.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOTHING less than the strong desire to escape from the domination of the admiral would ever have kept Martin Alonzo beating to windward in that storm, when he could have run before it to shelter on the Cuban coast.

As it was, he had to give up all idea of making the island of Bohio ; and all the night long the little vessel plunged through the towering waves, carrying almost no canvas at all, but being hurried along at a rapid rate towards the north.

During all the next day, and the next, the storm raged, and the sailors, with the faint-heartedness that seemed characteristic of them, began to murmur that they had only exchanged one evil for a worse, when land hove in sight and closed their lips.

The Indians could tell Diego nothing of this new land, and so Martin Alonzo determined to make it and explore it, in the hope of finding there the much-desired gold. Besides, it was advisable to go into shelter ; and as he drew nearer to the land he saw that it was a collection of

islands, none of a very great size, giving him the assurance of a harbor in some one of the channels between the islands.

He was fortunate in finding a safe harbor before night came on, and there he dropped anchor and remained until morning. At the first streak of dawn the deck was alive with the sailors, eagerly scanning the land to gain some notion of its promise. It was sadly disappointing, being neither so attractive nor so populous as the country they had just left, and, what was far worse, gave every augury of containing no metal of any sort.

As the bad weather continued, however, Martin Alonzo spent several days in the comparative security of the inland sea formed by the far-stretching cluster of islands, going ashore every day only to confirm the first dismal impression of the barrenness of the land, and at last emerging into the open sea again, determined to sail to the south and come upon the famed Bohio, which they all had come to regard as their promised land.

The weather was not propitious for the voyage, but all hands were agreed that they would rather take their chances of a storm than to remain among the profitless islands where they were; so Martin Alonzo set his course to the

southeast, and took leave of the islands that had done no more than shelter him.

For several days they beat about in an unusually tempestuous sea, and the only consolation Martin Alonzo drew out of the long voyage was the belief that the admiral would be unlikely to make the attempt to cross over from Cuba in such weather.

However, the voyage bade fair to come to an end at last ; for one afternoon the men on the lookout gave the welcome cry of land. By the time it was near enough to be seen distinctly, it was too late to enable them to make out anything but that it was a rocky coast, with high mountains rising up in the background.

The storm, too, had been gradually increasing in violence, so that the ship could not even lay to until daylight, but was obliged to take an easterly course and run before the wind, which seemed suddenly to have altered its course, and was now blowing steadily from the northwest—a sign, according to Martin Alonzo, that the storm would presently abate.

The storm, however, did not trouble the sailors now ; for the prospect of soon fingering that gold for which they were all so eager gave them patience in the midst of their impatience. It was now that Diego was in great demand among them.

His merry humor and constant flow of spirits had long ago made him a prime favorite with the men, while his knowledge of the Indian language made him of importance. It was to him that all questions relative to the nature of Bohio were always addressed, and now that the *Pinta* had broken loose from the fleet, Martin Alonzo had given him permission to answer all questions freely.

It may not be amiss to say that Miguel was the only one of the crew who had not taken kindly to Diego; and his aloofness was due as much to his jealousy of Juan's liking of Diego as to his own sullen temper. Once or twice, when an occasion had offered, he had made a showing of being ready to injure Diego; but he had been very quickly warned that any such act on his part would end disastrously for himself, and therefore, although it was very well known that he was unfriendly to the boy, no one gave it any serious thought, and Miguel, indeed, always acted as if he had yielded to the force of public opinion.

"Where is Fray Diego?" asked Rodrigo de Triana, on the evening after Bohio had been sighted. The sailors had fallen into the way of calling him fray, partly as a jest and partly because his superior knowledge of book learning

seemed to make the sobriquet a natural and proper one.

“Here he is,” answered Diego, who, with Juan, had been lying on the deck near the foremast, but in the shadow, so that he had not been recognizable. “What is it, my son?”

By way of joke he often assumed the clerical manner, which he mimicked as well as he did most things.

“Come hither, and tell us more of this land we have sighted, at last.”

“Ay, do, good fray,” cried one after another of the men. Although a stiff gale was blowing, it was not a cold one, but rather laden with heat, as if it had come from a warm region, and the men were lying about the deck, clad in only shirts and trousers.

“Why,” said Diego, “there is nothing new to tell you. I have told you all I know twenty times over.”

“Then tell us for the twenty-first time,” said Rodrigo.

“How well that worthy Rodrigo calculates!” said Diego, paternally. “He can add one to twenty and know the result. It is because he has taken to counting maravedis lately, no doubt.”

Everybody laughed, for it was very well known

that Rodrigo had spent many times over, in imagination, the ten thousand maravedis which were to be his for first seeing land.

“If he get them,” interposed Miguel, sourly. “Deserters are not like to have many favors shown them.”

“Oh,” interposed Juan, who often came between Miguel’s crookedness and the anger of the men, “he will never think again of his maravedis after he has been a few days at Bohio, if what Diego tells has but a grain of truth in it.”

“This is Bohio, then?” demanded one of the men, eagerly.

“The Indians say so,” answered Diego, “and are so mightily afraid at the very thought of landing here that I think they must be right.”

“They say the inhabitants are great warriors and cannibals, do they not, Diego?” asked Juan.

“They do, indeed,” answered he.

“But the gold,” inquired one, as if the question had not already been asked and answered a hundred times. “Do they say there is a plenty of it?”

“Plenty and plenty; but what is the use of my telling that so many times? By the morning we shall know all about it; and if we are not all roasted and served up before we can get

away, I have no doubt that we shall all be as rich as we ought to be."

"Ay! if we are not roasted," growled Miguel.

"Have no fear, my son," said Diego, in his most benevolent tones; "for unless it should be in the dark, I doubt if any savage would take so much as one bite of you. And unless your flesh be far sweeter than your temper, even the darkness would not win you a second bite."

The men laughed heartily, and Miguel muttered under his breath; while Juan, leaning over to Diego, whispered uneasily:

"I pray you, Diego! You promised you would not torment him."

"Then let him stop his croaking. If there be mischief, he is in it. If there be doubts, he has bred them. Always scowling at me, and always ready with his eternal croaking."

"It is true, Diego; but he is almost alone on the ship now, and you have all the friends. Besides, you promised me."

"Well," said Diego, contritely, "I will try to rule my tongue."

With his change to better thoughts and feelings, Juan had been unable to continue the close intimacy with Miguel which had been begun in the prison; but he was of too generous and loyal a nature to cast him off, and so he had all

through been placed in a very uncomfortable attitude towards him.

It is quite likely that there would have been more said on this occasion that would have led up to harder words, for there is nothing your idle sailor likes better than a quarrel, unless it be a good story. There was now, however, no time for either of those time-killers; for the lookout suddenly shouted that ominous word which always sends terror to the sailor's heart:

“Breakers! Breakers off the starboard bow!”

In an instant all was confusion, and Martin Alonzo was shouting orders that sent the men flying about the vessel, some here and some there. The *Pinta* was suddenly brought about, and pointed almost at right angles to her course. Diego, Juan, Rodrigo, and Miguel, quick to the order of the captain, had jumped into the bow, and were hanging on by the low rail, awaiting the next word, when the *Pinta* swung around in the topping seas.

The frail craft quivered and shook for a moment, and then buried her nose in a monster wave. When she came up again a cry—wild and terrified—fell upon the ears of the men.

“Save him! save him! O Miguel!” The cry was from the lips of Juan.

And Rodrigo, straining his eyes from the other

side of the deck, saw three terrible things: Diego dropping through the blackness of the night, Miguel with his hand upraised, Juan leaping from his place into the air.

“Man overboard!” yelled Rodrigo.

But the ship was in great danger, and no boat could live in such a sea; and so, though shuddering and anxious, Martin Alonzo continued to give orders, and the ship shot away through the waves after a moment of quivering hesitation.



“DIEGO DROPPING THROUGH THE BLACKNESS OF THE NIGHT.”

CHAPTER XXII.

DIEGO was an excellent swimmer, and his instinctive movement was to keep himself afloat the instant he found himself in the water; but in his heart there was nothing but despair and hopelessness.

During the few seconds that he had hung by the rail, he had seemed to realize in a flash of thought the extreme peril of his case—that he must fall into the dark waters, that the ship could never stop to try to save him, and that he must lose there the life that had seemed, only a few minutes before, so full of joy and promise.

Still, he battled with the waves, turning his back to the wind, so that the dashing spray from the breaking crests would not smother him. He cried out, his agony lending strength to his voice; but the wind outshrieked him, and he knew that he had not been heard; though, even then, it came as a sort of melancholy consolation that it would not have mattered if he had been heard. But then it seemed to him that he had heard an answering cry, and for a moment his

heart leaped only to sink again, and the futility of struggling urged itself on him.

Oh! it was quite certain to him that he must go down; but there is such a love of life implanted in us all that it is almost impossible to give up struggling; and so it was with him. The waves tossed him about, the spray enveloped him so that he could scarcely breathe, his strength was fast failing him, and still he fought for his life.

Then something touched him on the head, and the horrid thought that it might be a shark roused him to a sudden spasmodic activity. He put his hand out to push it away—and what it was he did not know; but it was not a shark, and he clung to it with the madness and the strength of hope.

He caught the floating thing with the other hand, and he was sustained. New life came to him and he felt over the object to gain a securer hold. He could not quite make out the extent or nature of it, but it struck him, with a thrill, that it was like an overturned canoe. He climbed as far on it as he could then, and rested there.

“—ego-o-o!”

Surely that gurgling, despairing cry sounded his name, or was his mind affected by his agony? No, it came again, and it was close beside him—

only a rising wave between him and it. Juan! It was Juan's voice!

"Juan, Juan!" he screamed, his heart filled at once with terror and joy. "Juan, I am here, here!"

He peered through the gloom, watching the great wave sink into a hollow. He listened with sharpened ears for a repetition of the cry. The wave sank and was rushing away, with another sweeping in to take its place, Diego riding on its side, buoyed up by the canoe. Something, something—what was it?—gleamed on the black surface.

"Juan, Juan!" screamed Diego, and, at the risk of losing his hold on the canoe, he reached out and clutched at the floating thing.

The wave rolled on, and broke over the speck of fighting humanity; then dropped away, and there was an instant of calm. It was enough. Diego had Juan in the grip of love and loneliness.

Juan had been on the point of giving up; but, as with Diego, so with him; he was no sooner assured that succor was at hand than he revived. He caught the side of the canoe—the canoe of those Indians had a sort of flange running around it—and held there until he could climb on it as Diego had done.

It was a precarious resting-place, tossing about on the waves, but it was so much better than nothing that both boys felt, from the moment of touching it, as if they should live to see another day. Neither of them could find breath to say anything for a few minutes; but in a little while Diego put his mouth close to Juan's ear and said:

"The ship is gone."

"Yes," answered Juan; "but I think we are safe here. Can you hold on long enough?"

"I think so. Did you jump after me?" The thought had suggested itself to Diego at once on finding Juan in the water.

"Yes; I couldn't help it."

Diego said nothing for a few minutes. He was thinking how true a friend Juan was; but a boy generally finds it hard to express gratitude for a service such as Juan had wished to do him.

"I can't fight you now, can I?" he said.

A strange thing to say, lying there on an inverted canoe, with the cold touch of death almost on them; but Juan understood, and that was enough.

"Oh, we are quits," he said. "I should have drowned if you had not saved me."

"You wouldn't have been in danger if it hadn't been for me," said Diego.



“HE REACHED OUT AND CLUTCHED AT THE FLOATING THING.”



They both laughed at that, as if the absurdity of the argument had struck them. It was afterwards, however, that they laughed most; for their situation was too serious then for much mirth.

Fortunately, Martin Alonzo had prognosticated truly, and the storm that had been raging for so long was subsiding. Even so, the night was a long and a hard one, what with the fear of being carried ashore and dashed to death on the rocks, and the danger of being washed off their canoe as their strength decreased.

The wind shifted again, however, and ebb tide must have begun to run, for, whenever the boys listened for the sound of breakers they seemed far away; and finally the sound ceased altogether.

Morning broke at last, finding them quite exhausted and barely able to cling to their support. As soon as it was light enough they lifted their weary heads and looked around them. To the south of them they saw the coast, perhaps five miles distant; but to the east, where the ship should have been, they saw nothing but water.

Dawn is always the most dismal time for the miserable. Hope seems to take that time for slumbering. The boys saw the worst of their case then. They were deserted by their ship,

they were five miles from shore on an overturned canoe, and even if they reached the shore it would be only to fall into the clutches of cruel cannibals.

“Gone!” was Diego’s only word, as he exchanged a hopeless glance with Juan.

Juan shivered—it is always cool before dawn in those latitudes—and cast one more glance around, and then let his head fall upon his arms. Cold, hungry, hopeless! what could be more wretched?

But the sun grew warm little by little, and hope revived within the hearts of the castaways. They felt grateful for the warmth, but were too weary to lift their heads to speak; then, too, the sea was growing so much smoother that it was hardly more than lazily swelling now, and it seemed to lull them to sleep.

The sun was high and hot when they awoke; but it was not his beams that waked them. Diego had relaxed his hold on the canoe and had rolled into the water. He was frightened at first, but, seeing that he was quite safe, he quickly caught the rim of the canoe and actually smiled. Juan smiled back, having been awakened by the rocking of the canoe and the splashing of the water.

Diego climbed up on the canoe, and, having taken a hasty glance around again, turned to

Juan, and said with a great deal of his old spirit :

“That sleep did me good. I feel better.”

“So do I,” said Juan, quite cheerfully.

“I’m desperately hungry,” said Diego. “Anything to eat in your pockets?”

He felt in his as he spoke, and Juan did likewise. Both shook their heads together.

“Hawks’ bells and beads,” said Diego.

“That’s all I have,” said Juan; “but maybe the ship will come back for us.”

“Sure to,” said Diego, hopefully. “I say, Juan, don’t you think we might get this canoe turned over if we tried?”

Juan felt sure they could, and so they both slipped off into the water and struggled with it as they had often seen the natives do; for the canoes are not at all seaworthy affairs, and it seemed quite a matter of course to a native to turn over in one; a thing that was of the less consequence, since the Indian could swim like a fish and wore no clothes to get wet.

The boys presently had the canoe right side up and had climbed carefully into it. It needed bailing out, and they had but their hands to do it with, so that it took some time and was imperfectly done then. It permitted them to sit up comfortably, however, and only their feet were in the water.

“I hope the cannibals won’t see us,” said Diego, glancing apprehensively towards the shore.

“I don’t believe it would matter if they did from there,” answered Juan. “Do you?”

“I don’t suppose it would. See! there are a great many coming down to the beach out of the woods. I hope they are not coming out to fish. Do you see any canoes?”

“No,” answered Juan, his heart rising up into his throat. And indeed it was a frightful thing to contemplate.

The boys lowered their voices in speaking to each other after that, and kept their eyes fixed anxiously on the natives moving about on the shore. Their actions seemed very strange to the watching boys; though they afterwards knew that their peculiar antics were due to catching turtles and turning them on their backs.

By and by they went away, and the boys breathed more freely, though still they were filled with anxiety. If they had had a paddle they would undoubtedly have worked away from the coast.

“I wonder,” said Juan, after a while, “if we are far from where we went overboard?”

Diego had already been wondering the same thing, and had been trying to work it out.

“I’m afraid we are,” he answered. “I think,

from the looks of things, that that mountain to the east of us is where we nearly ran ashore. That is ten leagues away, at least."

"Then if the ship does come back," said Juan, and stopped there, dreading to say what was in his thoughts.

"Yes," said Diego, who understood him, "if she comes back, she will go there."

"And will not go hunting around for us," suggested Juan.

"Why should she?" said Diego, and they both fell into a silence.

"Diego," said Juan presently, in a startled tone, "I think—"

"Well, what do you think?" demanded Diego, glancing around in alarm.

"I think the flood tide is taking us inshore," answered Juan.

And so it was of a certainty. Diego did not turn pale; for he was already that, but he showed in his eyes how he dreaded such a thing. Then he put his hand on the sailor's knife which was in its sheath by his side, and said, with a half-sob:

"I will fight till I die."

"And I," said Juan. Then hope whispered courage, and he said quickly; "but we may get ashore undiscovered, and be able to make our way

to the mountain yonder. Then, if the ship does come back—”

“It will. It certainly will,” said Diego, catching eagerly at the hope.

“We shall be there to meet her,” went on Juan. “Unless she should come and go before we can get there.”

“Oh,” said Diego, his courage rising with the prospect of doing something for himself, “if she comes back she will stay a day or two days, surely. Why not? As well come ashore at that point as another.”

“Besides,” said Juan, “we shall get something to eat ashore, and I am hungry.”

“That maize bread would taste good,” said Diego, “or potatoes.”

“Well,” said Juan, sighing, “perhaps these cannibals don’t eat such things.”

“We can get fruit enough, anyhow,” said Diego, shuddering at the thought of the food the people did eat.

They were being carried inshore very perceptibly, and after a little while they crouched down in the canoe and allowed nothing but their heads to be visible. They saw nobody for a long time, and later saw only a few children, who returned to the woods after playing about for a short time.

The current set in strongest towards a rocky promontory, and they were rejoiced, indeed, when they saw themselves being carried thitherward; for, as Diego said, it was very likely that the savages were very near the shore, and only remained in the woods for the sake of the shade, and would be certain to see them if they were to go ashore on the open beach, whereas they could go ashore under the cliff that made the end of the promontory, and remain there in safety until darkness came on, if that should prove necessary.

The canoe approached the shore very slowly, and they were lying fully concealed in it at the last, only venturing to peep over the side at long intervals to see where they were. The lapping of the waves on the shore was so soft that the boys could occasionally hear above it the cries and shouts of children, warning them that their suspicions of the whereabouts of the people had been correct.

“We shall be swept around the cape,” said Diego, after looking up once.

“How far off from land are we?” asked Juan, looking cautiously over the side.

“A hundred yards, I should say,” answered Diego. “Do you not think so?”

“Yes. What shall we do then?”

“We don’t know what there is the other side of the cape,” said Diego, in a whisper. “Would it not be best to swim ashore as soon as we find ourselves off the cliff, rather than take our chances by going farther?”

It was one of those questions difficult to answer; but as it had to be answered quickly, if at all, Juan took the view that Diego did, and they decided to swim for the cape.

“I think I can do it,” said Diego. “Can you?”

Juan answered that he thought he could, and so they waited anxiously for the moment to come, each thinking, but not saying, that the step might be a fatal one, and each determined to resist capture at any cost. They watched until the canoe had drifted past the point of rock that jutted from the promontory. Then Diego rose with the intention of plunging off, but sat down and whispered to Juan:

“We can’t be seen from the shore now. Let us paddle with our hands and get nearer in if we can.”

So Juan rose up and saw that what Diego had said was quite true, and they both immediately began paddling with their hands. And they soon found that it was not an idle thing to do, and that the canoe was getting at each moment

nearer the rocky shore, until it was not more than fifty yards away, when the boys agreed that it was time to swim.

So they dropped silently over the side, one after the other, and swam with what strength they had for the shore. Fortunately, for they were not in good vigor, the shore shelved off so gradually that when Diego dropped his feet to rest himself, he discovered that he could touch bottom. Whereupon he stood up and reached out his hand to Juan, who was panting and making but a feeble stroke.

They rested there a moment, and then made their way ashore, trembling at each step lest they should be discovered either by a passing canoe or by the children in their play.

They reached the shore in safety, however, and would have sunk on the first dry rock from sheer exhaustion had they dared. But fear kept them moving, until they had gained a spot behind some jagged rocks close up under the base of the cliff. There they both sank down, and it was a long time before either moved or spoke. It was Diego who spoke first.

“I did not know how weak I was,” he said.

“Nor I,” answered Juan. “Must we lie here until dark? I seem to be starving.”

“Do you lie here,” said Diego, “and I will

steal to the edge of the cape and see what there is beyond."

"No," said Juan, rising to his feet, "if there is a risk, let us take it together. Besides, I feel stronger now. It must have been the sun, I think. Come! let us go together. But keep close to the cliff."



“THERE THEY BOTH SANK DOWN.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

IT would be hard by mere imagination to comprehend the terrors the boys experienced as they crept stealthily along the foot of the cliff. Before reaching the corner, around which they fancied they would come upon another open beach, they stopped many times, listening tremblingly for some sound to warn them of possible danger.

But when they finally reached the corner and had peered around it with the greatest caution, they discovered that it broke into a forest, the straggling trees of which came almost to the water's edge. Upon discovering that, they looked at each other for a moment, and then sat down, pale and weary, to discuss their further movements.

“What shall we do now?” said Diego.

“I think,” said Juan, “that if I could get a few bananas to eat, and then have a few hours of sleep, I should feel quite strong again, and could go on. Night will be our best time for traveling.”

“Yes,” answered Diego, “and if we but dared to enter the wood yonder, we could get all the bananas we could eat.”

“And hide in some thicket and sleep,” added Juan.

The need they both had for sleep and food decided them, and, after weighing all the chances for and against their project, they fell on their faces and crawled into the wood. Fortune favored them, and enabled them to come upon a banana-tree loaded with the luscious fruit, which they plucked and carried with them into a shaded natural bower.

After they had eaten all they desired, they laid themselves down and fell into a refreshing sleep, which even their fear of cannibals could not disturb. When they awoke, the stars were shining.

They first ate some of the bananas, and then discussed the route they should take. It did not take them long to decide that the safest plan, as well as the most direct road, would be to keep along the beach as much as was possible, climbing or skirting any cliffs that might interpose themselves.

With this plan in view, they made their way back around the cliff, but reached the other side of it only to discover that it was as crowded now

as it had been deserted during the day, the natives being scattered along it for a long distance—some of them gathered around fires, at which something was evidently cooking, and which they at once, with a horrible fear, fancied the worst of.

They hastened back as they had come, and decided without loss of time to strike into the woods and go back a mile or more, and then take an easterly course, which would bring them into a nearly parallel line with the beach.

“I remember, now,” said Diego, “that the villages of these Indians are always near enough to the beach to enable them to get to it.”

“Yes,” said Juan. “It is either so, or far back in the interior.”

But in this they were wrong, and, so far as it concerned the island of Bohio, or Haiti, as it really was called, they discovered their mistake ere very long. They retraced their steps in the wood until they came to where they had slept, and made a fresh departure from there. They had not gone two miles, however, before they almost stumbled into a small village.

Greatly dismayed, they made a careful detour and passed the village; but they were so fearful of coming upon other villages that they proceeded now much more cautiously. Even that

did not help them greatly, however, for after another two miles, perhaps, they came upon a very large village, and in endeavoring to go around this they became hopelessly lost.

If they could have seen the heavens, they could have gained their bearings by the stars ; but the woods were too dense for that, and they would have been obliged to stop and wait for daylight if Juan had not pointed out that they were certainly going up hill, which would indicate that they were going south, since the hills, as they had noticed from the canoe, ran east and west.

“Then let us keep on going up,” said Diego, “and perhaps we can find a lookout to-morrow on the top of the mountains, and select a safer course.”

The advice was certainly good, and it was not difficult to follow, particularly, as they fell in with no more villages. So they kept on, always climbing, and occasionally, now, gaining a sight of the stars ; though the forest remained dense as far as they went.

How far they went they had no means of knowing ; for even the time spent or the fatigue incurred was no criterion ; for while they were quite certain that they must have been six hours on foot, they had wandered so much from a direct path that it was quite possible they might

have gone but a very short distance ; and they had been tired from the start.

As well as they could in the darkness, they selected a sheltered spot to sleep in, and laid themselves down to rest. They fortunately had no need to think of snakes or of other dangerous reptiles or beasts ; for the only really unpleasant creatures on the islands were scorpions, centipedes, and tarantulas, which were not feared by the natives, and in consequence the voyagers also had learned to hold them in little fear.

In the shaded woods the morning sun had no opportunity to awaken the boys until they were ready to open their eyes, and so the day was well advanced before they roused themselves.

“ Ah-h-h !” yawned Diego, comfortably, “ I am ready for breakfast, aren't you ?”

“ Sh-sh !” said Juan, and pointed through the trees.

Behind Diego, not more than a hundred yards distant, was an opening, a sort of level plateau on the mountain-side, and straggling along the side nearest the boys was a village of possibly two hundred huts. Under the shade of the trees nearest the huts were hammocks, in which the men lazily swung, while the women worked leisurely at their light tasks. Children played about everywhere.

Nowhere had the boys seen comelier or pleasanter-looking women ; but nowhere had they seen more forbidding-looking men. Their foreheads sloped back abruptly from their eyebrows, and their faces were hideously streaked with paint. Moreover, they were taller and more muscular in appearance than the other Indians they had seen. At least the few men they saw moving about were ; and altogether the boys were satisfied that the men, at least, looked the cannibals they were reputed to be.

They did not stop for any extended examination of the inhabitants ; but stole away from the village, going higher up the mountain, as taking them in the direction they wished to go, and as promising to carry them farthest away from the village.

When they had gone a sufficient distance for safety, they sought a banana-tree and plucked a quantity of the fruit and ate it. It was not what they would have eaten had they had the courage to make a fire to cook by ; for they could have had potatoes or yuca-root ; but they did not dare do that, and so they had to be content with bananas.

The mountain by this time had begun to run bare of forest trees, and to become steeper, and it was not long after that the boys found them-

selves free of the woods altogether, with a patch ahead of them of bare rugged rocks. It seemed quite improbable that any village would be in such a spot, and they felt safe to cross the open space and climb to the highest of the rocks, in order to obtain a view of the ocean.

They had supposed, from the edge of the woods, that these rocks were on the top of the mountain, but when they reached them, they discovered that the mountain-top was many feet above them still, and separated from them by a wooded valley. They obtained from the rocks the view they desired, however, and almost due northeast from where they stood they could see running to the water the mountains which they believed were the ones they were seeking.

"I am sure of it," said Juan, making a mental calculation of how far they had drifted and in what direction.

"Look!" said Diego, in a choking voice.

Juan followed his finger and saw a sail—the *Pinta* was returning to find them.

"We must hurry," said Diego.

"How far do you think it is?" asked Juan.

"Six or seven leagues?"

"Seven, I should say," answered Diego. "Everything looks nearer in this country. Let us calculate. The *Pinta* will reach there in, say,

three hours. She will surely remain as many more. Oh, yes, she will remain several hours. Why not?"

He was thinking that even if they walked openly through the country, and at their best speed, they could not hope to reach the place in less than ten hours, allowing for losing their way. Juan understood him.

"Never mind," he said. "Let us start, and we may be able to go a long distance on the mountain-top without seeing a soul. Come! The sight of the ship makes me stronger. How glad they will be to see us!"

"Will they not?"

"Tell me, Diego," said Juan, "I have been wishing to ask you and did not dare; did Miguel knock you off the yard?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Because when I saw you falling I saw him with his arm upraised, as if he either had struck you or intended to."

"I think he tried to help me," said Diego; "but I don't know."

"If the men knew he was on the yard with you, and they will be certain to, I am afraid it will fare ill with him. Come, let us hurry!"

So they hastened down from their height, and struck into what seemed very much like a travel-



“‘LOOK!’ SAID DIEGO.”

led way, it was so easy to pass along. And yet it had no appearance of being anything but natural, and so they had no suspicion of it. At first the slope was slightly downward, but kept all the time in the open, rocky space. Then it entered a wooded tract and led them to a pretty mountain stream.

They were tired, bananas offered themselves, and the water sounded so inviting either to drink or to bathe in that they could not resist.

“Let us bathe and eat before we go farther,” suggested Diego, and they did so.

Diego, who was somewhat more particular in the matter of cleanliness than the other sailors, always carried his comb in his pocket, and so he and Juan made their toilet to the extent of smoothing their hair; and then, very much refreshed, they got up and pushed on again.

The woods were evidently only the result of the brook bringing moisture and soil to the rocky tract; for in a little while the depression ceased, and they emerged once more into the same rocky belt.

“Hark!” said Diego of a sudden. “Do you hear any noise?”

“The sound of drums, or something of the sort? yes.”

They stopped and listened, and the noise grew distinctly in volume.

“It is coming nearer,” cried Diego in alarm. “And I hear voices singing, or howling. It’s behind us. Juan! What shall we do? Hide! yes, that is it; hide!”

They looked all about them for a proper place, and Diego noticed a narrow cleft in the rocks higher up to his right.

“Up here!” he whispered, and ran with all his speed followed close by Juan.

They were soon there, and the cleft proved to be a narrow, cave-like opening the depth of which the boys could not determine, nor did they try to discover; for all that interested them was the fact that it offered a good place of concealment for them.

At the same time it afforded them a good view of the country they had been traversing, and promised to enable them to see the new-comers without difficulty. And it fulfilled its promise in a very few minutes, giving the boys a sight of a most extraordinary and startling spectacle.

From out of the wood, not far from where they had just come, there emerged a fantastic procession, which moved with a rapidity that was really remarkable in view of the numbers of which it was composed.

“THE CLEFT PROVED TO BE A NARROW, CAVE-LIKE OPENING.”



At the head of it came a man beating a sort of drum and moving at a rapid pace. Behind him were perhaps twenty men, all beating drums and chanting at the same time that they performed all sorts of singular antics, though without interfering with the rapid advance of the procession. Behind them again came hundreds of girls, dancing and singing in time with each other; and behind them came hundreds more of men and women, also singing and dancing with the greatest fervor.

It was some time before the boys could see all of this strange procession—strange in itself and stranger still for the place it was in. Their first thought, and the one they clung to, was that it was some horrible festival which would end in a cannibal orgy in the manner that had been described to Diego by the natives from whom he had learned to speak the Indian tongue.

They watched it with a sort of fascinated abhorrence, and in their thoughts were deciding how they would escape it by climbing higher up the mountain. Nearer and nearer it came along the way they had come. Nearer and nearer to where they had turned to seek their hiding-place. It was there.

“Juan,” gasped Diego, “it is coming up the mountain!”

By it he meant the procession ; and it certainly had turned up almost in the very footsteps of the boys. They shrank back, but still watching the coming crowds, which, now at the ascent, had ceased to dance, though the singing and drum-beating continued.

And as they came nearer, the boys all the while wondering what their errand could be, it was easy to see that the man who led was a personage of importance ; for he was covered with ornaments of gold, and wore a coronet of the same metal, with a head-dress of feathers rising above it. The men who followed him were ornamented in quite another way, being tattooed all over the body with grotesque figures.

The girls, who came next, carried baskets of fruit and flowers, and were decked out with gold and other ornaments. The men and women farther down the line were loaded with as much as they could carry in the way of finery, but carried neither fruit nor flowers.

All of this the boys could see because they did not dare to stir and were protected from observation by the shrubs that grew about the opening where they had taken shelter. Their hearts were in their mouths for fear of discovery, and they crouched side by side, very unwilling spectators of the scene that followed, and yet interested.

The leading person, whom the boys took to be either a high-priest or a cacique, approached within twenty yards of the boys and stood there until an attendant hurried up with a stool of a dark polished wood, and placed it conveniently for him to sit, he meanwhile never ceasing to beat his drum.

After he was seated, still beating his drum, the young girls with their baskets gathered near, and the others drew up in a wider circle, until all were up the mountain. Then the priests made obeisance to the sitting man and delivered a sort of address, pointing so often directly at the place where the boys were that Diego, who had strained his ears to hear, caught Juan and dragged him back.

“Juan, Juan!” he whispered, convulsively, “they are coming in here. It must be a sort of cave. Let us run back into it.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

As swiftly as they dared, the two boys ran back in the cave, which proved to be about fifty yards deep; and when they reached the other end they discovered, to their dismay, that it was not as gloomy as they had at first supposed on looking into it after gazing out into the bright sunlight.

Besides the light which came in at the entrance, more was admitted through an opening in the roof, so that, when they stood at the back and looked fearfully around them, they could see everything quite distinctly. The cave was far more like a hall cut in the rock than like a natural cave. It was fully fifty yards in height, but was comparatively narrow, and the walls were covered with figures carved in the stone, and images, like idols, were set in niches.

Part of this the boys saw at the time, and part afterwards. At that moment they only noted such things as seemed to have some bearing on their situation, and were too anxious to look about them with any idle curiosity.

“It must be a temple,” said Diego, “and the

savages have come to worship. If we could only hide somewhere.”

But look as they would they could see no place where they could conceal themselves, and there was nothing for them to do but to stand quite still, flattened against the wall, as much in the shadow as possible. It was so hopeless, however, that both drew their sheath knives, and waited with such terror as neither had ever known before.

There was more delay than they had anticipated in the entrance of the men, but it was explained when, in a few minutes, they entered the cavern holding lighted torches. The tattooed men came first, and immediately upon entering set up such a howling as made the echoes of the place beat against each other until the din was little less than deafening.

After the tattooed men came the young girls with the baskets, delivering the latter to the howling men, and then going in procession towards the end where the terrified boys stood. It was inevitable that discovery of them should ensue, and it did.

The girls came on whispering to each other, and unconscious of the boys until they were almost upon them, when they stared full into the white faces that were so unlike anything they

had ever seen before. The frightened girls stopped, pressed back, and then turned and fled with loud screams.

“The men will come now,” said Juan, huskily.

“They shall never take me alive,” said Diego.

It was not for some time that the tattooed men could be made to comprehend that something had frightened the girls that was worthy of their attention ; but after hearing such explanations as the girls could make, they caught up some of the torches and advanced in a body, holding the torches over their heads and peering before them.

Their astonishment, their fright perhaps, was hardly less than that of the girls, for they could see not merely the strange, white faces, but the singular clothing and the glittering knife-blades. They spoke to each other in quick, jerky sentences, and advanced with the utmost caution until they were within ten yards of the boys.

They stared in silence, as they stood there, and the boys stared back. Then one of the men, seeming to pluck up courage to speak, addressed a question to the boys.

“What does he say ?” whispered Juan.

“I don’t understand all the words,” answered Diego, “but I think he wants to know who we



“CAUGHT UP SOME OF THE TORCHES AND ADVANCED IN A
BODY.”

are. From the way he asks he seems to think we are gods."

"Perhaps," said Juan, "if we can make them think so they won't—won't—" he was going to say "eat us," but changed it to "hurt us."

Diego had thought of the same thing. The other Indians had readily believed, without any suggestion from the voyagers, that they were from the skies. Why should not these? He spoke to them in the tongue he knew.

"We are from the skies. We will not do you any harm if you do not molest us."

The men listened attentively, and the boys could see the cave beyond them crowded full to the very entrance. When Diego had ceased to speak, the men consulted among themselves in a puzzled way, as if trying to make out the full sense of what they had heard.

Then they drew nearer and approached until they were within arm's-length of the boys, who watched them uneasily, but without knowing how to act; for the actions of the men were not merely pacific, but even conciliatory. Diego drew a long breath and whispered to Juan:

"I think we'd better act as if we were not afraid."

It was more easily suggested than accomplished, but it was so plainly the only thing to do, and the

men were so mild in their manner, that Diego gained courage to act upon a sudden inspiration. He took a hawk's bell from his pocket and, jingling it, gave it to the man nearest him.

The effect upon him and upon all those who heard the tinkling sound was magical. They stared with wonder and delight, not unmixed with awe, and crowded about the man who had taken it, and listened enraptured while he shook it to produce the noise.

From that it was but a short step to getting closer to the boys and touching their faces with gentle hands, feeling of their clothing, and exclaiming with wonder. And Diego could make out that the tattooed men were explaining to the girls that the bell was from the skies, and that the boys had come down to do them good.

Meanwhile the news of what had happened, no doubt with extraordinary exaggerations, had travelled back through the hall, and had found its way to the cacique outside. He became impatient, and voices were heard shouting something from the entrance, which had the effect of clearing the hall.

The tattooed men thereupon made unmistakable signs, accompanied by words which Diego could understand, inviting them to go into the

open air with them. As there was nothing to do but to accept the invitation, the boys did it with what grace they could, and were presently in the centre of a wondering crowd of men and women, who were staring at them with even greater surprise than had been accorded them in the hall, where the fairness of their skins had not been so apparent.

The cacique, as in fact he turned out to be, questioned the boys, and Diego answered as well as he could; though neither more than half understood the other. The chief thing to the boys, however, was that, in spite of the hideous faces of the men, there was not evinced the slightest disposition to do them any harm; but, on the contrary, these supposed cannibals were as mild and friendly as any of the natives they had yet seen.

Indeed, the cacique was the very reverse of fierce; and when the bell was handed him for his examination, he immediately began shaking it, and presently was dancing with great activity to its music, to the evident admiration of his subjects. This seemed to Diego a good opportunity to present another bell, so he took one from his pocket and thrust it into the empty hand of the cacique as he jumped about, and the savage was so stimulated by the gift that he whirled faster

and faster, singing all the time, until he sank exhausted on the ground.

This was very edifying to the cacique's subjects, and equally pleasant to the boys, for they had had enough experience with the Indians to know that they intended no harm to them.

CHAPTER XXV.

BEING relieved of immediate fear, though still uneasy for the future, the boys endeavored to make the Indians understand that they wished to go to the mountain range to the northeast, visible from where they stood. And, at Juan's suggestion, Diego persuaded the tattooed men, afterwards discovered to be priests, or Butios, to climb higher up to where a better view of the ocean was visible.

There he searched the horizon, and to his joy saw the *Pinta* still making her way to the rocky headland, her full spread of sail giving her the appearance of a monstrous bird. Diego pointed her out to the Butios, and told them it was on her that he and Juan had come out of the sky.

This was evidently a satisfactory and gratifying proof of the origin of their visitors, and presently the cacique was assisted up the mountain-side, that he, too, might look on the marvel, and after that the whole assemblage came up, and felt themselves blessed with the extraordinary sight.

Then Diego explained that he and Juan must go down to the beach and wait for the coming of the ship, and promised the Butios great quantities of bells and beads if they would take them thither. And, to give emphasis to his words, he and Juan showed in their hands the beads and bells they had with them.

Well, the Butios marvelled, and showed in many ways that they fully comprehended the meaning of Diego's words and gestures, and that it would fill them with great joy to have more of the bells, together with some of the beads; but they also made it plain that they were not at all disposed to part with their heavenly visitors. And they gave Diego to understand that, much as it grieved them to cross their cherished visitors, they yet could not help but take them with them to the interior of the island, pointing to the southeast as they spoke.

"We'll have to go," said Diego. "I don't believe they will hurt us at all, and we will be safe enough. From what I can make out, this cacique is only an inferior one, and he would not dare to let us go without showing us to his superior, whom they call Caonabo. And they talk of Cibao, which I think must be the Zipangu of which the admiral has said so much, for you can see what quantities of gold these people have."

“But if we go,” said Juan, “we shall lose the ship.”

“Well,” said Diego, “we have no choice but to go. What I meant, however, was this: Let us pretend to go willingly, and so put them off their guard until we can find the opportunity to slip away.”

“That is it,” said Juan, “and while we are with them we can exchange our bells and beads for gold, and so return to the ship loaded with it.”

It was the best plan they could devise, and worked better than well, so far as the exchange of their bells for gold was concerned; for when Diego took up some of the gold ornaments of the men and showed his interest in them, they were offered to him with a generous willingness that asked for no return.

Neither he nor Juan would take advantage of the generosity, however, but gave in return the glass beads which they had. They would have given them all away had not the cacique interposed, making them understand that he wished some saved for the cacique Caonabo, and telling them that if gold was desired by them they had only to wait to obtain all they could wish.

The boys would have preferred to get their

booty at once, but yielded, thinking that what they had was enough to make them rich. How they wished they could communicate with Martin Alonzo, and let him know that they had at last discovered that Zipangu, the land of gold, for which they had sought so long and at last so hopelessly !

That was not to be just yet, however, for the cacique gave orders for a return, not merely down the mountain, as it turned out, but to the place they had come from, putting the boys in the especial care of the Butios, who proved a faithful guard over them, and watched them jealously. Not, as it seemed, that they feared an escape, but that they held them so precious.

As soon as the boys settled to the conviction that escape at present was quite out of the question, they remembered that they were hungry, and conveyed that information to the Butios, who no sooner understood it than they called a halt, and procured them not only cakes of maize flour and roasted yuca, but brought them for drink small calabashes of a sort of liquid which they called cocoa, and which the boys found very refreshing.

After that they went on again, and in the woods where the boys had bathed, they stopped

long enough to procure litters for the boys and for the cacique, and in these the journey was continued.

At first they returned along the way the boys had just come ; but in a little while they turned to the south and crossed the mountains by an easy pass, and presently could look down on a beautiful and fertile valley. For half a day's journey the whole party went together ; but coming then to a village of considerable size, a stop was made and the party separated, scattering to their homes.

After that the progress they made was swifter, the party consisting only of the cacique, ten of the Butios, and a body-guard of twenty warriors, armed with war-clubs and long, heavy swords of some hard, polished wood, showing that, however gentle the men might be with their visitors, they had it in their natures to fight if there were occasion, differing in this from the other Indians the boys had seen.

For several days they travelled, their fame preceding them and causing their progress through the valley to be a sort of triumphal march. At each village they were respectfully shown to the wondering inhabitants, and the cacique occasionally favored the other caciques with a dance to

the music of the bells. And at each village it seemed to be known that the visitors desired gold, for there was always awaiting them either rings, bracelets, or what they learned to prefer, nuggets of virgin gold. The nuggets were of various sizes, the largest being two of the size of a hen's egg, each.

Diego and Juan gave a bell to each cacique as they went along, and it was manifest that the cacique considered himself very much favored and overpaid in receiving such a treasure for his paltry gold. And it was also plain that the Butios grudged each bell given away; not apparently from any lack of generosity, but because they disliked to see the favors of heaven made so common.

As the days passed and Diego became more familiar with the language, he was enabled to relieve his mind on the one subject of their greatest uneasiness. He discovered, without being obliged to ask the unpleasant question, that the natives were not cannibals, and that they detested their Carib neighbors as much as any one could.

The relief it was to the boys to learn this can hardly be imagined; for it had not failed to cross their minds that they were being most remarkably well fed and cared for, and that naturally

suggested the notion of being fattened for a purpose.

There still remained the uneasiness about the ship ; but although they had done all they could to make an opportunity to escape, they had not yet succeeded. They would have lost trace of the passage of time, had not Diego thought of making a notch on a stick with his knife to mark each day.

The knives, by the way, were objects of great curiosity to the Indians, who had never seen iron in any of its forms before, and who marvelled greatly at the keenness of the blades. One of the warriors of their guard wished to test the properties of the blade by running it across his fingers ; but Diego prevented him and displayed the sharpness of the edge by slicing a banana in thin sections. Instead of curing the man of his desire, however, it seemed to make him only more eager for his own test, and Diego, shrugging his shoulders, let him suit himself. Of course the knife cut his fingers, but, so far from being distressed by it, the simple fellow seemed to feel that he was to be envied ; and so it appeared did the others, for they would all have cut themselves had the boys been willing to permit them to do so.

It was not until the tenth day after starting

on the journey that they reached the village of the grand cacique, Caonabo. The boys were curious to see a chief of whom they had heard so much during their progress through his dominions, and they certainly were impressed by the fact that instead of going out to meet them with his warriors, as the other caciques had done, he merely sent a deputation to meet them and conduct them to him.

The village was a large one and very populous, though not a whit more civilized in appearance than any of the other villages, so that the boys could not help wondering if the stories about Zipangu had not been exaggerated by the travellers who had been there. Certainly there was gold enough; but the palace was not roofed with it, and if it had been—the palace being a mere hut—it would not have come to much.

The population was all out to gaze on the wonderful beings from the skies, and they wore a great quantity of gold on their otherwise naked bodies; but such was their respect for their cacique that none of them dared make any advances to the strangers until they had had an audience with him.

“I begin to be a little afraid of this Caonabo, of whom his own people stand in such awe,” said Diego.



“OF COURSE THE KNIFE CUT HIS FINGERS.”

“And I also,” said Juan; “but here we are, and we shall soon know what he thinks of us. I hope he will think well enough of us to do us no harm, but not well enough of us to keep us.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAONABO, Cacique of Maguana, differed so strikingly in his appearance and manner from his subjects that the boys were struck by it at their first glance at him. He was not only larger and more muscular, but he bore himself with a hauteur and dignity that any Old World monarch might have envied.

He eyed the boys with wonder, it is true, but there was something in his manner that made Diego mutter to Juan :

“I’m afraid he won’t accept the story of our descent from the skies.”

“And he looks fierce enough for a cannibal,” said Juan.

They afterwards learned that Caonabo was, in fact, a Carib and a cannibal, who had come to the island from his own home, when he was a young man, and who had won his place as the most powerful and most feared of the island caciques by his courage and his sagacity.

He was kind enough to them, though, as Diego had said, he did not act with any such awe of

them as the other caciques had done. He asked questions, which Diego answered as well as he could, and he examined curiously their clothing, knives, and bells.

“I think from his looks,” said Diego to Juan, “that he would give more for the knives than for all the bells in the world.”

And that was undoubtedly true; but he did not say so, and was as scrupulously honest as the meanest of his subjects had been. Honesty, indeed, next to hospitality, was the virtue held in highest esteem among these islanders. Theft was so heinous an offence that it was punished by death.

It seemed to strike Caonabo as a singular thing that his guests should care so much for gold; though, indeed, the boys had found it so easy to possess that it no longer had any charms for them, and if they had not hoped to rejoin the ship, they would not have taken two steps to procure a ton of the yellow metal. It seems so true that a thing is valued only in proportion as it is desired by others.

However, Caonabo had no objection to having the boys procure all the gold they desired, and he would not permit them to give their bells for it; though he afterwards accepted the bells which were offered him, when Diego made him understand that they were a gift.

What Caonabo coveted was one of the knives. He took one in his hand, and tested the blade on a piece of wood; and when Diego showed him how it could be used to pierce with, he buried it in a calabash which lay near him with such an air of its being alive that Diego procured the knife back, and would not again part with it.

“If we are going to run away,” said Diego, “I would prefer that he should not have that to try on me.”

Running away, however, seemed every day less feasible. The boys had been provided with a hut, and Butios had been assigned to them to see that they lacked no comforts, and every measure had been taken as if it were the fixed design of Caonabo to keep them with him.

He had sent the cacique, who had first discovered the boys, back to his own country, and the Butios had gone with him, very much to their disgust at being obliged to part with their treasure; though the boys had consoled them by giving each Butio a bell.

Finding their lives to be in no danger whatever, the boys made all the preparations for flight that they very well could. Diego, on the plea of seeing where the gold was procured, was taken, in different directions, from the village to the rivers where the gold lay in grains and tiny nug-

gets at the bottom. He was glad to see the gold, but what he cared most for was the acquaintance he and Juan gained of the surrounding country. Moreover, he asked questions of different persons until he had learned that the sea lay about equidistant from them on either side of the island. And from one old man, who had journeyed much, he learned that, in a lovely valley to the north of them, on either side of the Cibao Mountains, a beautiful river ran down to the sea, and entered it at the foot of the mountain-chain that lay parallel to the Cibao Mountains.

Then, there was the matter of the gold. It was valueless to them now that they had it heaped in an ignominious pile in a corner of the hut; but they knew it would regain its value when it was on the ship, and so they questioned themselves what to do about it.

After going over the matter a great many times, they determined to make a belt each, of the skin of a little animal called the coati, in which to put as many nuggets as they could. No one suspected their object in fastening the gold to the belts, the generally received opinion being that it was a sort of religious ceremony.

They had no idea of the value in Spanish coin of the pile of gold they had collected; but when their belts were finished, they found them to

weigh, each, not less than twenty pounds. They tried them on, and felt so dubious of the comfort of such heavy belts that they were tempted to throw off some of the weight; but Juan suggested that they could throw the gold away at any time, and that it would be very pleasant to go aboard the *Pinta* so laden.

That was true enough, and so they left the belts as they had made them, and hung them in their hut, where afterwards they discovered the natives looking at them in great awe. And the Butios asked permission to carry them in procession to show to their Zemes, as they called their idols.

Many times they thought of attempting escape, but whenever they essayed it they discovered themselves to be very closely watched, so that they were obliged to give up, unless they were willing to use violence; and that they were afraid to do, even if it had been feasible, and they were not sure that it was. By this time they had been absent nearly three weeks from the ship, and they were so uneasy that they were nearly beside themselves, though compelled not to betray it to their host.

Then, one night, their opportunity came. It came in a singular way, too. The people were passionately fond of dancing, and knew no mod-

eration in it. They would often dance as the boys had seen the cacique do, who had discovered them at the cave, keeping on their feet until their strength was exhausted, and then dropping, almost fainting, to the earth.

Sometimes, too, the men would drink a sort of wine made from the maize, when they had danced until they had dropped, and then they would be stupid, and would sleep where they had fallen until morning came. But in these cases there were always some of the Butios who would keep their senses and watch over the boys.

But on the occasion spoken of it was not wine to which the fallen dancers resorted, but to the dried leaf of a plant which had been placed in a hollow dug in earth and there set a-smouldering.

The boys had seen this same leaf used in Cuba, but in a different way. There the Indians had rolled it into a sort of stick, which they called a tobacco, one end of which was taken into the mouth and the other end lighted, so that by sucking at the stick a quantity of the smoke from the ignited plant would be drawn into the mouth, thereby causing the person so employed a pleasurable sensation. At least the natives had declared this to be the case; though, when the boys had tried it, they had had lively emotions of sickness in their stomachs.

On this island the leaves were placed in the hollow spoken of, and then ignited and smothered, so that the smoke would rise from it in volumes. When it had come to this pass the Indians would lie down by it with a hollow tube of wood shaped like a Y, the two prongs of which were so arranged as to fit in the nostrils of the smoker. Then the disengaged end would be thrust into the smoke, which would then be inhaled until the smoker would fall over in a stupor.

On a certain festival, which came while the boys were there, and fortunately at a time when the Butios had lost all fear of the boys escaping, though they had not relaxed their watchfulness, the dancing was ended by an indulgence in a smoke.

The women took part in the dancing, but not in the smoking, so that they would have been able to watch the boys if they had thought it necessary; but they did not, and the Butios were so anxious for the indulgence that they could not restrain themselves.

At first, when the dancing began, the boys did not realize what it was to result in, and they had no thoughts of getting away that night, but stood apart from the dancers, thinking how strange a sight it was to see all those men and women whirling about by the light of the flames

that seemed themselves to be dancing as they leaped up from the bonfires.

But after a while they saw how the men would fall down and become stupid, and Juan pointed out how the Butios were dancing and smoking with the others. That gave them their first hope of escape, and after that they watched eagerly to see if the Butios had really forgotten them.

It was quite late before they could be sure that they might escape without fear of being noticed; but they knew that it would be late in the morning before the men would recover their senses, and that they would be able to go many miles if they made good use of their time.

So they stole back to their hut, put on their gold-belts, and started off in the direction of the Cibao Mountains, as they had so often talked of doing. They went with many misgivings; for, not only was there the fear of the wrath of Caonabo, should they be captured and taken back, but there was the risk of not finding the ship, and of being obliged to remain on the island at the mercy of other Indians, not as friendly, perhaps, as Caonabo.

They had no hesitation because of their fears, however, but sped away under cover of the friendly darkness, and, thanks to the care with which they had studied the country all about the vil-

lage, they were enabled to take the right way without stopping to consider.

They were in excellent condition, too, and had it not been for the load each carried at his waist they would have been able to go twenty-five miles before dawn. As it was, they did not go more than fifteen miles, and were terribly fatigued then, and glad to lie down and rest.

When they awoke, later in the morning, they found themselves in the foot-hills of the mountains, with many good places for hiding all about them. They stole out to procure some fruit, and then returned to their hiding-place, and watched and slept, each in his turn. Twice they saw some of Caonabo's warriors, though not men they recognized, and they did not seem to be searching for them.

At night they went on again, climbing the mountains and groaning with the weight of their belts. They were sturdy boys, and the weight was very well distributed around their waists, but the load of it grew wofully heavy as they proceeded, and more than once they stopped and discussed the propriety of throwing some of the gold away. But as the hope of being once more with those who loved gold came upon them, the liking in their own hearts increased, and they could not bring themselves to be rid of any of it.

So they toiled on, and by morning were at the mountain-top, as they could know because they were able to look down into that valley which the natives had spoken of as being so beautiful and so fertile. And beautiful it was, indeed, and afterwards was named the royal plain, because of its surpassing beauty. Many fruits grew there, and fields of the maize, of which the natives thought so much, not only because it was good for food, but as well because it was the source of that intoxicating liquor with which they stupefied themselves.

There was no fruit on the mountain-top, and the boys ventured down lower with great caution, until they came to some bananas. Those they ate, and then, with rising spirits, lay down to sleep. They had come so far, and the remainder seemed the easiest part. They had seen that river, called in those times, and in these, too, the Yagui, of which the old Indian had spoken, and they knew that if they could but find a canoe along its banks they would be able to make the remainder of the journey with comparative ease.

Well, not to dwell too long on a journey which was made safely, they were three days in reaching a part of the river that was suited to their purpose; for, though navigable where they first came upon it, it was so narrow that they

would have been in constant danger of detection.

Another night's journey had to be made after that before they could find a canoe; but they did at last come upon one, and took it without qualms of conscience, knowing that the hawk's bell they hung in a conspicuous place in payment for it would be deemed a sufficient recompense.

For three nights they floated down the stream, and mightily frightened they were by discovering that there were in it those horrible reptiles known to the natives as caimans—great lizard-like monsters, with huge jaws armed with shining rows of sharp teeth, and which could stun a man with a blow of the tail. The admiral had said that the like creatures were found in Egypt and in other places in Africa, but the boys liked them none the better for that.

However, they arrived at the mouth of the river at last, just about day-dawn, and then their anxiety came in a new form. Had the ship gone? Had it left the island altogether? They crept into the woods and worked their way to the edge of them, where they could see the beach, and looked out upon the water. Then their hearts sank, for there was no sign of any ship.

How could they have hoped for it if they had been able to reason dispassionately upon the sub-



“FOR THREE NIGHTS THEY FLOATED DOWN THE STREAM.”

ject? It was because they wished to hope that they had done so, and not because of any reasonableness in it. At first, in their wretchedness they would neither eat nor talk to each other, and they could not sleep, though tired and in need of it.

After a while, however, they talked a little, consoled each other, and even declared that they could exist on the island, if that were necessary. Then they ate and afterwards fell asleep.

Diego was wakened by Juan before the sun had gone down, and looked up in wonder to see the excitement on the face of his companion.

“Come and see!” said Juan, dragging him by the arm, and he scrambled to his feet and followed to the edge of the wood.

Two ships were anchored off in the bay beyond the mouth of the river, and coming up the river were four boats with casks in them, as if the crews were going up to obtain fresh water while the tide was out.

“The *Pinta* and the *Niña*!” murmured Diego. “Holy Virgin, I thank you!” and he turned to Juan and they wept in each other’s arms, so great was their joy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE boys stood waiting for the boats to come nearer to where they were; but as it took the boats some time to reach that point, owing to the tide and current running together, the boys had time to recover from their ecstasy and to consider some things.

There was the *Pinta* with the *Niña*, and the *Santa Maria* was not to be seen. This gave them a curious feeling as of something being wrong. They could not have told what, but it made them wonder if it would not be wise to make themselves known privately to the men of the *Pinta*.

So they hastened up the river farther, and waited there until they should see if the men would land, or take the water out of the river at the middle, which they might do if they were afraid of the natives. But it seemed that the men were not afraid of the Indians, and rowed up the river to where a small stream emptied into it, and there they went ashore.

It was a little higher up, but on the same side where the boys were, and they hurried as silently

as possible to the spot. They had recognized many of the *Pinta's* men, and had mentioned them by name with great joy to each other; though Juan had looked eagerly for Miguel, and had been disappointed not to see him. They hoped, and it so happened, that the *Niña's* boats would push off first. Then Diego and Juan, with shining eyes, stole closer to where the *Pinta's* men were, and Diego called softly :

“Rodrigo! Rodrigo de Triana!”

“Holy St. Martin! who calls?” cried Rodrigo, the sound of something familiar in the tone turning his blood chill.

“Juan Cacheco and Diego Pinzon,” said Diego, and therewith stepped out of the thicket and stood revealed.

There was at first a disposition to flight on the part of the men; but there was something so very human in the joy of the boys that presently they were surrounded by all the sailors, who fairly embraced them in their joy.

The boys were hustled into the boats, one in each, and all the while the explanations were carried on. Diego gave the briefest sketch of what had happened to him and Juan, and the sailors all together told how they had returned and had not found them, and how they had given them up. How they had sailed along the coast

and traded for a plenty of gold, telling that in a whisper that made Diego demand the meaning of the *Pinta* and the *Niña* being in company without the *Santa Maria*.

Then the men told how the admiral had been shipwrecked near the western end of the island, and had built a fort with the timber of the *Santa Maria*, calling it La Navidad, and had garrisoned it with such men as wished to remain while he returned to Spain for more colonists; how, after that, he had started to circumnavigate the island, and had come upon the *Pinta* before Martin Alonzo could get out of his way.

That had happened only three days since, and already the admiral and Martin Alonzo had had an altercation about some natives whom the latter had captured with the intention of carrying them to Spain to be sold as slaves. The admiral had forced him to release the prisoners and send them ashore with gifts.

“It will soothe Martin Alonzo to see you,” said Rodrigo, “for he has grieved sometimes like a madman because of your loss. As for Miguel, he will be very glad to get out of his chains, where Martin Alonzo has kept him, vowing he would hang him to the yard if the *Pinta* left the island without you.”

“Then my cousin believed I fell because of

Miguel?" said Diego, very glad to know that Miguel had not been sacrificed.

"I saw him with his arm up as if he had struck you," said Rodrigo.

"But he had tried to help me," said Diego.

"So he swore, but no one believed him. We should have triced him up with a good will, Fray Diego, if you had not come back. But Martin Alonzo will be pleased to see you!"

Diego presently had proof of that; for when they arrived at the ship and he went up over the side, Martin Alonzo at first nearly fainted, and then, being hastily assured that Diego was no wraith, but a hearty flesh-and-blood boy, he caught him in his arms and nearly smothered him with embraces. And when he had hugged him as much as Diego would let him, he turned to Juan and said such things to him as made him very happy.

After that they went into the cabin, and Diego and Juan ate at the mess with Martin Alonzo and the gentlemen adventurers, and told their story as well as they could, without betraying what they knew of the gold; for they had agreed to keep that for Martin Alonzo's private ear.

So after the meal was over, Diego asked his cousin to give him and Juan a few minutes in private, which Martin Alonzo did by taking them

into his private cabin, a little hole that would scarcely hold the three of them.

“Now, Diego, what have you to say to me?”

Diego smiled at Juan and pulled up his shirt, which covered the belt for which he had suffered so much. And Juan did the same. They took their belts off and placed all the nuggets of gold before the astonished eyes of Martin Alonzo.

“We did not speak of these in the cabin,” said Diego, “thinking you might wish to know it first.”

Martin Alonzo stared at him and weighed the gold in silence for a time; then he almost gasped:

“More than a thousand ducats of gold! Why, boys, you are rich! And you tell me the island is full of it?”

“We saw it lying thick in the beds of the rivers, and a native told us that a piece as big as a baby’s head had been found in one place.”

Martin Alonzo’s eyes shone with eagerness for a moment; then turned dull, and a sigh broke from him.

“It is bootless. I could not go into the interior with the men. Already they are crying to get back where they may enjoy their gold, little as it is. Nor may I come back; for the admiral is viceroy of this new country, and he will never

pardon me, nor will I ask for pardon nor accept it at his hands. Keep your gold. You have earned it."

"A half of it is yours by right," said Diego.

"I shall not touch it, boy. But if you wish I will keep it safe."

So they gave him their gold to keep. Then Juan spoke to him.

"I crave your pardon, Martin Alonzo, but I wish to speak in behalf of Miguel."

"The knave!" said Martin Alonzo, frowning.

"He tried to save me, cousin. He did, indeed," said Diego.

"Why, so he has always sworn, but I believed him not. Why, then, he must be freed; but he is a scurvy fellow at best. If he had been half in earnest he might have saved you, it seems to me," said Martin Alonzo, who, as Diego and Juan afterwards discovered, had not grown less obstinate during their absence.

Being in some measure the cause of his imprisonment, Diego went with Juan to see the man unchained. Miguel was in a strange mood. At first he refused to speak to Juan at all; but afterwards thawed and was as friendly as ever, not only to him, but to Diego, acting as if he had forgotten that he had ever seemed to dislike the latter. And, indeed, it never was certain that

he did remember; for, to make an end of his part in this story, he was never himself again, and, in fact, died before ever the *Pinta* reached Spain, nobody rightly knowing what his ailment was.



“DIEGO WENT WITH JUAN TO SEE THE MAN UNCHAINED.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHETHER or not the admiral ever learned of the loss and subsequent return of Diego and Juan cannot be known. Certain it is that he made no mention of their adventure in his account of the voyage, rendered to the queen upon his return to Spain.

At the time he was not told by any one in authority or with the knowledge to relate the facts as they were; for he did not go aboard the *Pinta*, but gave his orders from his deck, when the vessels were near enough for that, or had Martin Alonzo visit him when they had need to communicate.

The next day after the return of the boys the order was given to set sail, and the two vessels started to coast around the island. They did not go farther than the eastern end of the island, however, and then the admiral got the notion of wishing to visit one of the Carib islands, in order to see some of those fierce savages; and perhaps he would have gone on that voyage, as he did on a subsequent one, if a fair wind for

home had not sprung up, and caused the sailors to be so home-sick that they begged him most piteously to turn towards the east.

At first the wind kept favorable, but not for long, and now they began to experience as much difficulty in returning across the ocean as they had had ease in coming. And by and by, when they began to have hopes of reaching Spain before many days, violent storms arose, and nearly made an end of the crazy little craft.

The *Pinta* was even worse off than the *Niña*, for her foremast was weak and could not stand any strain. The worst storm came on about the middle of February, and it was with great difficulty that the admiral could keep the two vessels together. For a time Martin Alonzo did as well as he could to keep company with the *Niña*; but the storm was so violent that it seemed to him that it was no more than the barest chance that either vessel would live, and so he determined to disregard the signals of the admiral and once more part company. Indeed, it was a measure of real safety; and he had no thought then of doing what presently suggested itself to him, which was to take it for granted that the *Niña* had been unable to survive the storm, and to make good his way home and announce himself as the discoverer.

He believed that the *Niña* could not have weathered a storm that had nearly wrecked the *Pinta*, and so he sailed before the still raging storm, and after many days was able to make the port of Bayonne, in the Bay of Biscay. From there he despatched a letter to his sovereigns, announcing his discovery of the eastern coast of Asia, and assuming that the admiral was drowned.

Then, the storm having abated, he sailed for Palos, pleasing himself with the thought of how he would be received by his friends. The *Pinta* reached the bar of Saltes at the mouth of the little river, and the men all crowded on deck to see the land they had left so sorrowfully a few months before, and were returning to so triumphant.

Diego pointed out to Juan the convent of La Rabida, standing on its eminence, where it could plainly be seen, and from which he had so many times looked down on the little river he was now sailing up, after such strange adventures. He wondered how he would be received there. There was certainly to be one nugget of gold to make a cross for the breviary of Fray Bartolomeo, and Alfonso, his old friend, should have another.

And Juan was to go with him wherever he

went, and it was always to be share and share alike with them. Juan had agreed to that with a full heart; for the approach to Spain recalled to him the things he had been able so long to put away from him, and it was pleasant to hear Diego's hearty voice telling him that he had been his brother, and always should be.

"And," said Diego, with a joyous laugh, "we will fight it out as soon as I have taken as great a risk for you as you did for me off Haiti."

The sail up the river is not a long one, with the tide favorable, and it was a short time after entering it that they came in sight of the town. Martin Alonzo paced the poop, filled with the thought of the triumph that was to be his.

"Brother," said Francisco Martin, his face quite pale, "what vessel is that riding in the river?"

Martin Alonzo looked and looked again, and a change came over his face such as one looks for on the face of the dying.

"The *Niña*," was all he said.

Yes, it was true. After passing through many adventures, the *Niña* had reached Palos just one day in advance of the *Pinta*; and as

the *Pinta* drew nearer the town, the noise of the rejoicing over the admiral could be distinctly heard.

* * * * *

It is a sad thing to say, but it is true, alas! that Martin Alonzo Pinzon was hurt to his death by the ending to his voyage. Most of all that wounded him was the feeling that he had dishonored himself. He would not sail up to the town, but took a small boat ashore, and went stealthily to his house, bitterly contrasting such a home-coming with the one he had anticipated, and yet finding in his heart that his punishment was just.

He had already been ill, but not seriously. Now he went to his house to take to his bed; and when a letter arrived not many days after from his sovereigns, reproaching him for his conduct, he groaned aloud, and turned his face to the wall. A few days later he died.

The part which Diego and Juan took was very much brighter than this. They had nothing wherewith to reproach themselves, and they enjoyed to the full the rôle of hero which was forced upon them.

At the convent, in particular, where Diego went with Juan the very first thing, they were made so much of that it is a wonder they were

not ruined. The other boys followed them about like dumb cattle after a leader ; and when either, but especially Diego, opened his lips, you would have thought some of the gold of Haiti was about to fall from them, so eagerly did his old schoolmates watch them.

As for the nuggets, Diego and Juan were not niggards with them, and would have melted them away in the warmth of their generosity in a very short time, had not Vicente Yanez Pinzon, the brother next to Martin Alonzo, and the captain of the *Niña*, taken him aside and talked with him.

Well, he had already been generous enough, so he permitted his cousin to take his money and put it in a safe place. And, indeed, some of the property bought with that money can be seen to this day, still owned by a Pinzon, too, in the little town of Moguer, about a league from Palos.

After that? Well, after that Diego and Juan made many a voyage to the newly discovered countries, and lived to learn what Christoval Colon never did learn—that they had actually discovered a new continent, and not Asia at all.

And they were with Vicente Yanez Pinzon when he and that Italian, Amerigo Vespucci,

DIEGO RELATES HIS ADVENTURES TO THE CONVENT BOYS.



made the voyage together—an account of which voyage being widely read over Europe was the means of gaining for Vespucci the unmerited honor of having been the first to reach the continent, whereby his name is to this day attached to the country discovered.

THE END.



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