SESTRINA

A. SAFRONI-MIDDLETON

HAITIANS A BLEND OF KINDNESS AND JUNGLE FEROCITY

Yield to Smiles Where Armed Force Fails.

BY EYE WITNESS.

ST. MARC, Haiti, Dec. 3.—[By Mail.]

Even seeing is not believing in this wild, fantastical land.

This is because the native will one time surrender to his frantic passions, especially if he be one in a mass, and another time, perhaps within the same half hour, he will make himself entrancing by play acting what he thinks or suspects you would like to see.

Also, if he be of the inferior class, he is pretty sure to think that what the white man does on a given occasion is the right thing to do, or at least the appropriate.

Amid this smallpox epidemic we are all being vaccinated—and revaccinated, I may add, for the points sent to the officers from the states seem to be inferior for the proportion of "takes" is not what it should be.

She Was Stoic; So Were They.

A Belgian woman sent for her servants to be vaccinated with her. When the physician reached her villa, they observed that she did not wince when the point was thrust beneath her skin and they took the puncture with equal equanimity.

"This was not due to their relative lack of sensitiveness to pain," the woman's husband said, "for if Gabrielle had winced or cried out the house would have rung with their shrieks."

In short, the Haitian is precisely like this capital of his, with its tottering hovels within the shadow of its huge flamboyant cathedral, its women bathing naked within sight of the sentries around the presidential

French villas worthy of St. Quentin, but from the long windows of which

you see vistas which could be picture in an encyclopedia as "Typical Nativ Village in the Congo."

Rare Contrasting Types.

In your walks, however brief, an they will be brief in this heat, you se the Haitian of the squatting postur with his numerous and naked famil gathered with him round the sing bowl from which all partake, and yo see the suave, informed Haitian wh swings his cane like a Parisian dand and can intelligently discuss interna tional politics.

The complexity of almost ever Haitian situation is due in part to th fact that the squatting Haitian an the Haitian who would pass muster o the boulevards frequently manife ..ch other's qualities.

.. fact, the Haitian in the mass is curious but not mystifying combin tion of valor and jabber, of fidelity an childish petulance, of fortitude an helplessness, and of gentleness and f rocity.

Can't Handle His Liberty.

He has fought and bled for liber

and won it, but in its practical app cation liberty means nothing truly b neficent in his scheme of life, becaus he has no sense of the reciprocal ob gation which liberty involves.

The Haitian's punctilio is acut even among the humble people. T call a man a liar is a deadly insu Instead of that, you must say, "Yo are speaking lies." He will shrug h shoulders and reply, "What else cou I say." Furthermore, if you lie to Haitian you might as well get off t island, yet he will cheerily lie to yo

To say, "Be quiet," or "Shut up," a noisy servant is a violation of h personal liberty and he will reply, "I a free country we have a right talk."

Smiles Win Natives.

These people cannot be driven, b they can be managed into doing almo anything. A smile and a hearty, frien ly word are gold coin in this islan

There is an American up St. Ma way who early in his work among t Haitians said, "Whatever they do I

smile. Just smile however much they roil me."

He is big and burly and deep voiced, but the old women resting along the road lift their withered arms and cry, "Oh, mon petit!" when Lisle of the railroad company gets back to the island from New York after one of his conferences with Farnum of the National City bank.

Resumé of Temperaments.

These notes on Haitian characteristics which I have picked up from many white persons long resident in the republic probably over-emphasize the worst and weakest phases of the national character and do not sufficiently stress their fidelity to the firm master, who, if he is self-respecting, also commands their respect, their civility, which is spontaneous and fine, and their trustfulness, which is so unquestioning that it is a wicked deed to betray it.

And today the attitude toward them of those who know them best is "After all, I like them and I like Haiti."

So do I.

Andrews

French Lick Springs Hotel

French Lick, Ind.

SESTRINA

A. SAFRONI-MIDDLETON

VOODOOISM IS FAITH OF HAITI, ADMIRAL SAYS

Kill Humans, Drink Blood, Knapp Reports.

[BY A STAFF CORRESPONDENT.]

Washington, D. C., Dec. 14.—[Special.]—That 95 per cent of the natives of Haiti believe in the African jungle faith of voodooism which requires the sacrifice of human beings and the drinking of human blood is declared by Rear Admiral H. S. Knapp in his report to the secretary of navy on investigation of Haitian conditions.

Admiral Knapp cites a shocking case of the trial of a voodoo priest, who is reported to have killed thirteen children, whose blood was drunk and flesh eaten by persons present at the rites.

"Voodooism is prevalent," says the admiral's report, "and the further one goes from the coast into the interior the more openly is voodooism practiced. Voodooism is essentially snake worship and in its extreme rites it requires the sacrifice of human beings and the drinking of their blood and the eating of their flesh.

Orgies at Sacrifices.

"The human sacrifice is called the 'horniess goat.'; minor sacrifices of goats are made. These religious celebrations, if the word 'religious' can be applied to such affairs, end in disgraceful orgies of debauchery. It is very difficult, of course, to determine just how extensively the beliefs are held, but some Haitians themselves have asserted that probably 95 per cent of the total population believes in voodooism to a greater or less exent.

"Of course, the contrary is strongly held by apologists for the Haitian character. It seems certain, however, that whether it be the effect of voodooism or not, the average Haitian is strongly superstitious—superstitious with the superstitions of the jungle. He is afraid of the evil eye, or, as it is called here, the 'ouanga,' and stands in great awe of the voodoo priests and priestesses. It is also believed the educated classes are not free from much of this superstition, even where they deny belief in or the existence of voodooism.

Voodoo Followers Feared.

"Haitian officials high in place will not take action against persons accused of voodooism, whether because of their own belief in it or because of fear born of their own knowledge of the extent to which voodooism is prevalent among the population or of incurring enmities. A voodoo priest has been lately tried and sentenced, and the proceedings of the military commission are now in Washington awaiting action.

"This man is said to have killed, at one time or another, thirteen children whose blood was drunk and whose flesh was eaten by persons present at the rites. The practice of similar voodoo rites is confidently believed by those most familiar with the situation in Haiti to be not unusual in the remote places, although it is very difficult to obtain any positive evidence in corroboration.

SESTRINA

A ROMANCE OF THE SOUTH SEAS

BY

A. SAFRONI-MIDDLETON

AUTHOR OF "SOUTH SEA FOAM."

Life is our death: We dream reality.
Imagination is Omnipotence,
Some image of a bright eternity
Flashed on Time's mirror from the Mind Immense:
'Twill be reshaped from all that madness seems
Into immortal beauty of new dreams!

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SESTRINA

CHAPTER I

A dusky maid stood 'neath a lone palm tree
Down Makewayo beach, on Savaii Isles;
A perfect shape and curved lips had she
As stared her bright eyes o'er the lone sea miles;
Maids have grown old, brave men seen their best day,
But she was made of terra-cotta clay—
In beauty by the sea still stands and smiles!

"O SWEET is woman clad in modest smiles and grass!"

The speaker, Royal Clensy, was an ardent dreamer, romanticist and mystic. He did not wear a flowing robe or seer's beard, he was simply a handsome young Englishman attired in a serge suit, wearing a topee as he leaned against the stem of a palm tree. And had our hero have been able to express his opinions in distinguished poetic style, instead of in the crude phrase which opens this chapter, it is an extremely dubious point as to whether he would ever have been awarded the Nobel Prize for *Vers Libre*. However, though Clensy was ambitious, he was quite devoid of pretence, which was as well since competition seems keen wherever one goes.

"Cah! Cah! Cah! Too whoo Ha He!" said a second voice. It was the voice of wisdom, the philosophy of the ages was expressed on the wrinkled brow, in the solemn bright eyes and on the shining grey and crimson striped homespun suit, as away, in its own private aeroplane, it sailed over the palms—out of this story! It was a full-blooded native of the Marquesas Isles—a cockatoo!

The first speaker, who still stood under a palm by the lagoons, swished his hand and scattered the swarm of sandflies that buzzed before his eyes obstructing his curious gaze at the pretty, symmetrical brown maid who glided under the palms and then vanished! It was a common enough sight to see a modest maid or youth clad only in smallest green attire stitched on by invisible stiff grass thread, run from the village doorways into another hut opposite. It was a sight to sweep a dreamer's reflective mind into the golden age of Eden's fountains before the Tree of Knowledge upset the innocence and beauty of the first sylvan shades. And oh, the prevailing terrific heat, and the coolness suggested by such artless attire. True enough the glowing tropic heat had its drawbacks on those Isles. But Old Dame Nature toiled on, patiently and artlessly for art's sake, devising suitable clothes, mysteriously sewing and stitching wonderfully hued patterns and greenest, cheapest materials for her artless children. And what a fascinating code of morals was hers! An ill-timed sneeze before the altar, and the dusky bride's wedding-robe—her mass of shining hair—lo, became disarranged, and made the amorous chiefs sigh. How awful!

No wonder the young Englishman meditated profoundly and continued his preposterous reflections: "Who knows, I may have been happier had I have been born here, in Temeroka village, within sounds of the tribal drums instead of the chimes of Bow Bells." He gazed down on his much worn boots and wondered what would happen when they fell off! "How on earth can I ever get them re-soled and heeled here, on Isles where men and women wipe their noses on sweet-scented leaves, where the highest social society discuss morals and politics as they somersault in these shore lagoons. Truly, a sylvan utopia of fierce happiness and clotheless modesty. God's finest sculptural art done in smooth terra-cotta clays, sun-varnished, finished off with muscular curves, and, to say the least, picturesque feminine outlines as

folk roam under these coco palms." Our hero's reflections did him credit, nothing was truer. Even the first wonder over creation seemed to gleam in the eyes of those wild peoples. Only one odious odour disturbed the rich scents of tropic flowers. It came from the copra sheds round the bend of the bay, by the primitive wharf where a fore-and-aft schooner lay. It was at that spot where beggared tattooed chiefs and melancholy kings and queens of fallen dynasties cracked nuts ready for the extraction of suspicious looking fats to smear on the artificial breadfruit and well-combed smooth hair of civilised Man! O world of inscrutable mystery!

"'Ow gloryhus is rum, woman and coconuts!" grunted a third voice. Our hero was not startled. It was the voice of one of a noble lineage, that presumably dated back to Bacchus down in Thebes. It was none other than Beer de Beer Adams who spoke thus. It's a crying shame to have to introduce such a character to polite society. He would never have entered these pages, but for the fact that he stood by Royal Clensy that day. Adams was a derelict sailorman. Even as he spoke he conclusively proved how unfit he was to enter the society of the humblest pages of polite literature, except, perhaps, as a character of the most menial position—lo, he pursed his vulgar lips and sent a stream of filthy tobacco juice across the line of Clensy's vision. But what cared our hero? He was young! twenty years of age!

As this script will probably be the only serious, authentic record of Clensy's life from that time when he left Hiva-oa on a schooner for the South American coast, to arrive eventually at Port-au-Prince, Hayti, it will be as well to let the uninformed know something about his mode of life at the date when he met Adams. It will be sufficient to say that Clensy had been roaming about the various isles of the Marquesan group for three months before he decided to go farther afield. Adams was a destitute drunken reprobate—and he looked it.

To be seen in his company was sufficient to exclude one from any decent society that might exist between Terra del Fuego and the Coral Sea. Probably that is why Clensy cottoned to Adams like a shot when he first ran across him in Taiohae. Clensy was out to see the world and enjoy the vigorous novelty of roughing it; and Adams was out to cadge from unsophisticated young men. (Adams is not to be taken as a specimen of an honest South Sea shellback.) As for Royal Clensy, he was physically perfect. He had a fine brow, and eyes that shone with the light of a gay personality. His mind was in the spongy state that readily absorbs good and bad influences; but his belief in the goodness of human nature sent the mud to the bottom of the living-waters to nourish and help the roots of the lilies grow in the summer of his days. His temperament was, under sunny conditions, sanguine and decidedly amorous. Anyone who knew him well was not likely to die of shock were they suddenly informed that he had eloped with a princess or a pretty serving maid. However, he did neither of these things, and they are only suggested to help explain that which is so difficult to explain—temperament. Like all men who have good in them, he was his own godly priest, and instinctively knelt at the altar of his own secret faith to confess his sins to a remorseful conscience. Consequently his religion was sincere and quite devoid of hypocrisy. He was bound to improve with time, as the mud settled down, and the lilies took firm root. So much for Clensy's embryo sins and virtues. This gay young Englishman was of good birth; that was certain. Earlier incidents connected with his life cannot be given. Whether on first entering into the light of mundane things he was bottle or breast-fed, or was reared in suitable surroundings for so erratic a temperament, is immaterial. It can, however, be relied upon that he was born as he *was*, inheriting all those peculiarities which made him solely responsible for the drama of

passion that put his life out of joint before he was twenty-one years of age. All wise men agree that temperament is the ruling passion that controls man's actions, all impulses good or bad, be they successfully curbed or blazed before an admiring or shocked world, as the case may be. Adams swallowing rum or gassing Royal Clensy with smoke from his filthy clay pipe, was Adams proper; and Clensy standing beneath the coco palms staring with serious eyes, wondering what would become of him should his people not soon send his remittance, was, and, without a libellous statement on the reputation of his great natural mother, Dame Nature, none other than the legitimate, handsome, sun-tanned inconsequential Royal Clensy.

Instead of Clensy being shocked over Adams's wicked yarns and disgusted to see a man squirt tobacco-juice with such marvellous precision over his shoulder, he stared his admiration of such vulgarity, and then roared with laughter.

"So yer wants ter git to ther coast of Sarth America, do yer?" said Adams. Then he added. "Look ye here, Myster Clensy, you're a young gent, anyone can spot that by the cut of yer jib. And anyones who knows me, knows I'm ther man ter be an honest fren' and guide ter yer."

"You really do seem a good sort," responded Clensy as he tugged the little tip of his virgin moustache and looked critically at Adams's wrinkled, semi-humorous, rum-stricken countenance. Then Clensy, summing up his inward thoughts, murmured to himself: "You look like a hardened old sinner to me, blessed if you don't."

Adams who only saw the distinct surface of things, thought he had made a fine impression. He rolled his solitary eye (he had lost his right eye during a brawl in a heathen seraglio, New Guinea) and said: "So you're a remittance man, and want ter git ter a plyce wheres yer can 'ave the spondulicks sent?"

Clensy nodded, and said, "I want to get to Acapulco,

on the South American coast, my uncle's British Consul there."

"'Is E *indyed*!" gasped Adams as he at once obsequiously began to brush an imaginary speck of dust from Clensy's shoulder. Visions of coming affluence loomed before his solitary eye.

"How can it be managed? I must leave this place soon or I'll be dead broke," said Clensy. Thereupon Adams immediately informed the young Englishman that the French tramp steamer, *La Belle France*, was leaving Hiva-oa for the South American coast with a cargo of copra in a few days. "She puts into Acapulco, so the thing's done—if yer've got the cash for passages?"

"I have," said Clensy, then he handed the sailorman a sovereign on account.

"Leave it all to me, I'll get passages for about ten quid each," said the old reprobate as he spat on the golden coin for luck. So was the matter settled between them. Two days after that, Adams informed Clensy that he had managed to secure berths as deck passengers at twelve pounds apiece. He watched Clensy's face, and then smiled his inward delight, for he had made five pounds over the deal with the skipper of the *La Belle France*. Clensy, who guessed that he had secured berths for less money than he said, made no remark.

"She's sailing day after termorrer, so we'd better go and say good-bye to our fren's on the islets tother side; agreed?"

And so Clensy agreed to go to the neighbouring isle to say good-bye to Adams's old friend, the widowed queen, Mara Le Vakamoa. "You must see heathen royalty afore you leaves these islands," said Adams.

That same night Adams paddled Clensy in a canoe across the narrow strip of ocean that divided them from the isle where dwelt several pagan kings and much-married queens. When Clensy arrived at the unpalatial-looking wooden building which was the residence of Queen Mara Le Vakamoa, much of the glamour which

Adams's description of native royalty had conjured up in his mind faded. They only stopped one night and day in the royal village. True enough the queen and high chiefs were extremely courteous and paid great homage to the noble papalagai's (white men). But though Adams was in his element when in the company of full-blooded South Sea royalty, Clensy soon sickened of the ceaseless chattering and royal display of limbs. The fact is, that the queens and princesses belonged to an ancient dynasty, and had long since passed the zenith of their beauty. Even Adams screwed up his lean, humorous-looking mouth and took in a deep breath when the Queen Vakamoa opened her enormous thick-lipped mouth and gave him a smacking farewell kiss. Then Clensy, too, bowed before the inevitable, took a large nip of Hollands gin from Adams's flask, and saluted the queen likewise. It was only when the pretty native girls took flowers from their hair, and handed them to Clensy as they murmured, "Aloah, papalagi"; that he really took an interest in the farewell ceremonies. Then they trekked down to the beach and paddled away in their canoe. It all seemed like some weird dream to Clensy as Adams chewed tobacco plug and diligently paddled back for the shore lagoons of the mainland. Night had swept the lovely tropic stars over the dusky skies, and they could faintly hear the musical cries of "Aloah, e mako, papalagi," as they faded away into the ocean's silence.

Next day Adams and Clensy went aboard the *La Belle France* which sailed in the afternoon. They both felt quite depressed as they watched the Marquesan Isles fade like blue blotches far away on the western horizon. Clensy was every bit as depressed as his comrade. He had thoroughly enjoyed his three months' sojourn in the beautiful archipelago of golden-skinned men, palms and sylvan valleys shaded by breadfruits and coco-palms. He had also been well liked by the rough traders and shellbacks whom he had come in contact with, for he

had often gained the respect and affection of sunburnt men from the seas who hated snobs.

The voyage to the South American coast was extremely monotonous to Clensy. Adams's constant companionship and swashbuckling deportment on the dreary passage across tropic seas gave Clensy bad intellectual spasms. But still, he patiently tolerated his presence. He probably well knew that Adams too had his place in this scheme of intelligent things, and that one change of a footstep at the beginning of Adams's career might have made him a splendid Government official or Controller, and well respected by all who didn't know him! The fact is, that Clensy was by nature a genuine democrat. He was well bred, and so, carelessly unconscious of his worldly advantages over the uneducated men with whom he so readily consorted. He had proper pride, but it was humble enough. His head did not swell overmuch. He could not realise that when he was wealthy, and still dined side by side with penniless shellbacks, he was doing something that should be vigorously blown from the highest peak on dèmocracy's brass bugle so that it might reverberate and echo down the halls of boasted brotherhood. His nature had no kinship with the great boast of a democracy that shouts: "See how our millionaires sit by the side of the wage-earning cowboy and dine on beans and corn-cobs." Thus pointing out to all who can see and hear, how wide a gulf really divides the poor man from the eternal boast of the democratic brotherhood. In short, Clensy was a splendid specimen of the democratic-aristocrat Englishman dwelling under the great socialistic government of the human heart. His intellect was fair: he knew that kings could feel humble, and a pope be really religious. He was a gentleman.

Clensy breathed a sigh of relief when he sighted the coast of South America, and the *La Belle France* eventually entered the ancient bay of Acapulco. But he was greatly disappointed when he discovered that his

uncle had left the consulate and had returned to England two months before his arrival. "We're done!" said Clensy as he realised that he would have to wait quite three months before his remittance money arrived from England. For a long while he and Adams were on their "beam-ends." Clensy had a few pounds which was augmented by Adams's musical accomplishments. For the derelict reprobate would go off on his own and perform on his wretched accordion, playing to the Mexican storekeepers. Sometimes he wrapped an old silk robe about him, and putting on a Spanish hidalgo mein, would go busking outside the old-fashioned homesteads of Vera Domingo. So did he help Clensy out of his predicament.

In due course Royal Clensy's remittance arrived. Acapulco was a quiet, lazy town in those days. The inhabitants were mostly Spaniards, Mexicans and niggers. Consequently Clensy made up his mind to clear out of the place and make for the larger states. What really happened after Clensy received his remittance whilst in Acapulco can only be guessed at. Clensy was as improvident and reckless with money as Adams, so it is possible that they had a pretty good time while the bulk of the money lasted. The only thing that can be recorded with certainty is, that they left Acapulco and made their way to Vera Cruz, and eventually arrived by steamer at Port-au Prince, Hayti.

"It's no use you grousing, Myster Clensy," said Adams.

"I suppose not," replied the young Englishman as he gazed mournfully on the dark faced population of the semi-barbarian city of the Black Republic, Port-au-Prince. "Reminds me of what I've read about ancient Babylon and the Assyrian cities," said Clensy as he watched the swarthy Haytian chiefs and handsome mulatto women, clad in yellow and blue silken robes, as they shuffled along the stone pavements in their loose sandals. Many of the quaintly robed folk stood by

the doorways of their verandahed weatherboard homes conversing, making a hushed kind of hubbub as they muttered and stared with large dark eyes at Clensy and Adams.

"What's Babylony and Asyery ter do with it? It b—— well reminds me of hell, and of being damned 'ard up, it do!" responded the unpoetical ex-sailor.

"What on earth shall we do? We're dead broke till my remittance arrives again," reiterated Clensy as he wiped his perspiring brow and smiled wearily as the pretty Haytian girl passed by and gave him a languishing glance.

"Don't you worry, myster, the only thing ter do, is ter take up ter the buskin' again, but I *can't* play alone in this 'ell of a 'ole, I'll p'raps get shot by one of these smut-faced devils."

"Can't play alone! What do you mean?" said Clensy.

"I simply means thet you must stand by me, and see thet I'm unmolysted by these ere b—— 'eathens."

"Good heavens, have I come to this!" moaned our hero as he once again wiped his brow and made a thousand good resolutions as to how careful he would be when the next remittance came! But withal Royal Clensy was game. He brushed his misgivings away and smiled, and thought, "Well, I suppose I must adapt myself to circumstances in this world of woe and tears." Then he came to the sensible conclusion that it was best to cast one's pride aside when the digestive apparatus made pathetic appeals to the higher senses.

That same afternoon, to Clensy's extreme mortification, he found himself standing just outside the presidential palace at Port-au-Prince. "It's best ter ply before people who 'as got money," Adams had said, and so there they stood as Adams opened his villainous mouth and wailed out "Little Annie Rooney's My Sweetheart" to his vile accordion accompaniment. Clensy gnashed his teeth and hid his perspiring face in

his silk handkerchief of other days when the chorus came. It was then that Adams shuffled his feet and, doubling the tempo of the song, danced a hideous jig. "God our help in ages past," murmured Clensy in an insane way, as the ebony-hued population swarmed around them, and gazed in astonishment at the one-eyed sailorman as he played on, quite unconcerned and careless of Clensy's anguished feelings. "What! you have the infernal cheek to think I'll go round with your coco-nut shell and collect!" said Clensy, when Adams calmly stood on one leg, stopped dancing, and intimated that Clensy might make a "whip round." "Not I. I'd sooner get a ship! Why, it's bad enough to hear you make that damned row," said Clensy angrily. Consequently Adams went round himself with the shell. To Clensy's surprise, when Adams had passed among the crowd of onlookers, and had come back, the coco-nut shell was nearly full of peculiar-looking coins that neither knew the exact value of.

The Haytians and mulattoes are a naturally unostentatious folk in their likes aud dislikes, a peculiar kind of calmness pervading their most deliberate acts. One cynical-looking Haytian chief gazed critically into Adams's collecting calabash as he once more went round, and dropped a dead putrid rat inside! The Haytian chief was evidently not feeling exactly partial towards white men, and chose that way of showing his resentment.

"For heaven's sake, don't get ratty!" whispered Clensy as he pulled his comrade's coat-tail and gave a warning glance. Fortunately for them both, Adams swiftly realised that Clensy was generally right, and so he cooled down and soothed his outraged feelings by swearing at the Haytian chief in the choicest Billingsgate English. With that marvellous precision which brings envy to the hearts of foreign sailormen throughout the world, Adams squirted a stream of tobacco-juice—splash! it had sent a dark stain down the length

of the chief's yellow robe as he stalked majestically away. Then once more the Cockney sailorman began to play and sing.

"Wish I'd never written home from Acapulco and given an address at this hole for my remittance to be sent to," thought Clensy. His heart quaked in the thought that he had to exist by aid of Adams's musical accomplishments for nearly two months. It was dreadful! But it was only a momentary spasm of deepest gloom that afflicted our hero. Fate is kind, in a way, to mortals. The silver lining generally appears on the cloud when the day seems darkest; and though the cloud may be charged with the thunders and lightnings of undreamed-of future storms to break over the sanguine wayfarer's head, it *does* look silvery for a time, and so cheers the despondent soul. In fact, Royal Clensy's thoughts had already suddenly leapt into another channel, had become charged with warm, sensuous feelings that had blazed into existence by the magic gleam of beautiful eyes! Adams had just finished his last song, and was hand-pedalling his accordion into a thrilling wail, when a beautiful Haytian girl ran out of the open gate of the presidential palace and stared with evident admiration straight in Royal Clensy's sun-tanned handsome face. Then she stared in astonishment at Adams's accordion. (Accordions were great novelties in Hayti in those days.) Clensy blushed to the ears. Her eyes shone like baby stars; her hair tumbled in a glittering mass around her neck, rippling below her waist, floating in artless confusion over her *neglige* attire—a pale blue *sarong*. Her complexion was of an olive hue, delicately tinted with the rosy blush of health, like the complexion of a fair Italian girl.

"What cursed luck! Travelled the world over only to meet her at this dire moment, outside a palace busking with a reprobate like Adams playing a wretched accordion." In that swift realisation of his degradation, Clensy felt atheistical. He could have turned round

and screwed Adams's neck till the scoundrel's spine snapped! For the first time in his career he became a child of modern democracy. A great wave of snobbishness overwhelmed his senses. He longed to turn round and shout into the Haytian girl's ear: "Behold Me! the son of wealthy parents, the blood of great ancestors flowing in my veins, yet here I stand, happy in the society of this drunken old reprobate and his damnable accordion." Swiftly recovering from his embarrassment, he made a courtly bow. The girl's lips parted in a delicious smile as she daintily imitated Clensy's salutation. It was most fascinating. The palace and the surrounding weatherboard houses seemed to fall on top of Clensy's head as the girl placed a coin in the collection-box. Then, looking into Adams's rum-stricken face, as he still sang, she said, "Oh, monsieur, you *have* gotter voice!"

Clensy whipped his handkerchief out and wiped his sweating brow, then stared again and gave the maid the benefit of the doubt. "That can be taken as the reverse of a compliment; the girl must have a sense of humour," he thought. As for Adams, he bit the coin with his blackened teeth to assure himself that it was gold, then he made himself look as awkward as a frog. He wasn't going to be outdone by a whippersnapper like Clensy. Arching his back as though the world of chivalry weighted it he bowed too! The next moment an elderly negress poked her frizzy head round the rim of the palace gateway and said in a squeaky voice, "Oh, Madamselle Sestrina, ze president, your father, wish to zee you." At hearing this, the girl who had so impressed Royal Clensy gave a silvery peal of laughter and ran back within the palace gates. Clensy was not so much to blame for his sudden infatuation for the girl who had appeared before him and had then vanished like a dream! She *did* have red lips that looked like smashed pomegranates formed to charm men to taste. The beautiful morn of maidenhood shone on her brow;

the first golden streak of creation's first sunrise seemed to twinkle in the ocean-like depths of her eyes. Yes, Clensy saw her as woman standing on the threshold of the temple of Beauty, her loveliness unconsciously inviting some one to come and worship at her altar as she stared over those visionary seas, seas where the shadows of the unborn children sit on the shore reefs, singing their luring, plaintive, sunrise songs till sad, wandering men pass along! Sounds sentimental and poetic? Well, Clensy had suddenly become strangely endowed with the poetic instinct. And so, the girl's maiden beauty had presented itself to his mind in a highly imaginative form. Beautiful Sestrina, President Gravelot's daughter, for such she was, had fired Clensy's brain with an undying passion, had unknowingly made the first fateful footstep down the path of destiny that was to lead to the sad drama, the terrible catastrophe that is alone responsible for this story.

CHAPTER II

O mystery that made the frenzied thug,
And winds to beat the frozen sheep:
O fates that did conspire to make a bug
To haunt sad mortals in their sleep!

"NICE gal, that!" mumbled Adams, as he and Clensy hurried away from the crowd that still loitered before the presidential palace. They quickly made their way towards the palm-sheltered portion of the dusty, heat-stricken city.

"Yes, very nice," responded Clensy, as he gazed vacantly ahead, hurrying Adams along as though he sought to escape from his own embarrassment.

"I'd loike ter marry a bootiful crawture like 'er. Only one fault ter find about 'er—she ain't fat!" said the

sailorman, as he glanced up at Clensy, squinting his solitary eye sideways, like a curious cockatoo.

"Hem!" was Clensy's rejoinder, as he threw his shoulders back and looked the other way to hide his cynical disgust from Adams's eye, as that materialistic worthy still expressed several opinions about Sestrina's face and figure. Anything of a subtle nature in Clensy's manner or talk was naturally lost to such an intellect as Adams possessed, and so the sailorman at once changed the conversation. "E's gone off agin, in one of 'is balmy moods!" the reprobate murmured to himself, then he added aloud, "Hawful 'ot," and pulled his whiskers.

"Thank God it's shady here," said Clensy, as they arrived in the shades of the beautiful mahogany trees. "Let's see the sights of the town," said Adams, as they stood under the trees and gazed on the little streets and the long, irregular rows of quaint wooden houses.

"I'm done up, nearly dead for want of sleep," replied Clensy.

"Why, I feel as fresh as a two-year-old!" growled Adams. The true facts are, that Adams was case-hardened and hadn't spent a wretched night in attempting to distract the attention of enormous fleas from his person as poor Clensy had done in the low lodging-house bed the night before. The Haytians love company in bed, and, from what Clensy could see, the price of a bed in Hayti was increased if the fleas were lively and plentiful. In fact, the inhabitants were kind-hearted, bohemian folk and believed in the merciful creed of live and let live! A fact that was well illustrated by the state of the streets in Port-au-Prince. Adams said the streets were worse than the streets in Shanghai and Hum-kow, Tokio. The Haytians do their washing in a tub before their front door, and hang their clothes on lines that are spread from one side of the street to the other, tied on to the stems of the palm-trees that usually grow on the pavement side. It was

a quaint, semi-poetic sight to Clensy as he gazed at the yellow, crimson and white lingerie and garments of both sexes fluttering to the caresses of the hot winds: wonderful drapery placed side by side without any nice discrimination as to the modest feelings and sensibilities of those who passed by! Adams looked quite jovial as he gazed at the clothes-lines and made critical remarks. The undemocratic Clensy simply looked at the filthy streets and held a large lump of camphor to his nostrils, and often rubbed some on his moustache. Royal Clensy always carried "Keating's," a small tooth-comb, and lump of camphor during his travels. He was a wise fellow. Along the kerb-sides were innumerable dustbins, for the Haytians throw all their house refuse into the highway, right opposite their front door. And there it stood, incubating in the hot sunlight, heaving and buzzing, thousands of tiny worlds populated with happy life, green and sapphire-winged insects, worlds upon worlds inhabited by bright-plumaged beings that feed on the offal of their sphere as they sang and danced in their youth and grew old in their universe of inscrutable mystery. Even as Clensy and Adams watched, they saw clouds of bright, gauzy wings arise, millions of God's humblest beings emigrating as they swarmed away, hissing and singing till they found another constellation of shining hot worlds in front of the stores farther down the great highway of their heavens! As for the black-faced population, they might have been the dead Pharaohs shuffling along in some mysterious holiday, rewakened from the tomb. On they shuffled, apparently oblivious to everything; dusky faces, yellowish faces, greenish faces and copper-coloured faces. A picturesque sight they made. The warm-coloured women and girls were clad in *sarongs* and scanty semi-European attire as they slouched or shuffled under the palms of the street's side, laughing and babbling together, girls and youths of all types laughing or yawning as they swallowed the

astonished insects as they migrated from one heap of refuse to another, and sometimes fell into the abyss of those open thick-lipped negro and negress mouths!

"Don't fink much of this 'ere plyce!" mumbled Adams.

"All right in its way; good for insect collectors," replied Clensy.

"Mulatters and niggers ain't civilised like *we* are," was Adams's sententious remark, as he removed a cork and sniffed the shellback's *sal volatile*—his rum-flask!

"Not they!" said Clensy, shaking his head with superb acquiescence. With all the drawbacks of Haytian ways, Clensy admitted that the city had its picturesque, poetic side. The half-caste girls and negresses with heads adorned with wonderful chignons, the dusky, bright-eyed youths and the musical *patois* they babbled, greeted Clensy's ears and eyes in a pleasing way. Far away he saw the palm-clad mountain slopes disappearing into rugged, dreamy blue distances, and on the other side of the city stretched the dim wide plains of Gonaives. "What mahogany trees!" exclaimed Clensy, as they stood before several giant, sombre trees, the last members of the great forests that had once surrounded Port-au-Prince.

"Damn yer trees!" said Adams, who was more interested in watching several Haytian maids and negresses perform a peculiar dance, the *bamboula*, the steps of which gave a bold exhibition of the dancer's physical charms. Adams, being very religious and modest by nature, said, "'Ow can they do sich fings before civilised men like hus! It's terryble!"

"Don't break down; all our health is wanted to meet the trials of adversity before us," said Clensy in a soothing voice, as Adams hung his blushing face and the maids still danced on. Then the sailorman lifted his shocked countenance and, as his solitary eye gave a merry blue twinkle, he murmured, "Let's git out of it and go back to our lodgings."

The fact is that it was getting late, and the stars were already shining over the plains of Gonaives. In half an hour Clensy and Adams had arrived back at their cheap lodging-house that was situated by the Sing-Song Café, in La Selle Street.

"By God's grace I'll sleep to-night," said Clensy, as he took his tin of Keating's flea powder forth and began to well pepper his bunk bed. Then he opened his baize bag (he had pawned his portmanteau), and, taking out his special bit of ship's sheeting, he pitched the lodging-house sheet out of the window and re-made the bed. "You're too aristocratic, too 'tickler ter travel. You orter stopped 'ome with yer pa and ma," said Adams, as he picked up a wriggling fat green lizard from his bed and tossed it out of the window.

"Maybe I am too particular," replied Clensy, as he glanced through the window at the stars, and wondered how long the mingy oil-lamp, that swung from the ceiling, would last before the oil was exhausted. Then his heart gave a thump and nearly stopped! Adams dropped his pipe in his astonishment. They both thought the roof had fallen on top of them.

But it wasn't as bad as that. A huge settee-pillow had been thrown, had struck Clensy on top of the head, and smashed into Adams's back. A tremendous peal of laughter shook the room. "Flea powder! By the gods of my fathers, flea powder!" yelled a voice. They turned their heads, and there, in a bunk right opposite their own, they saw two large blue eyes staring at them from beneath a giant of a brow. They saw a great body slowly uplift from the bunk. Then the figure's wide-open mouth gave vent to a vibrant peal of renewed laughter. The man who had so boisterously introduced himself to Clensy and Adams was a new arrival in Hayti, had only the day before left a steamer in the bay at Port-au-Prince.

Clensy and Adams still stared on the man with their mouths wide open.

"Give us some flea powder, youngster!"

Just for a moment Clensy continued to stare at those sombre yet humorous-looking eyes, then he picked up the tin of powder and courteously handed it to the big man.

"Got any baccy? Don't stand there with yer god-damned mouths open; hand the weed up!"

At this new demand, Adams and Clensy, like two obedient children, felt quickly in their pockets and handed their giant-like bedroom companion their pouches. They couldn't help it! The strange eyes were magnetic, the light in them not only compelled Clensy and Adams to accede to their owner's request, but also gave them pleasure at being able to supply his wants!

"And who may you be?" asked Clensy quietly as he recovered his composure.

"I'm Samuel Bartholomew Biglow! that's my handle!" roared the boisterous stranger. Then he half emptied their pouches, threw them on the floor, and carefully pressed his thumb into his corn-cob pipe.

"So that's your name, and it's a suitable one," Clensy ventured to say; then he smiled, for he vaguely realised that a man had a right to call himself by any name he wished, especially one with such a commanding personality and giant-like proportions.

"I like the look of ye both, damned if I don't," said the stranger; then he well sprinkled his bunk with the flea powder and tossed Clensy back the tin.

"And what might your name be?" he said, as he gave Adams a mighty languishing glance.

"My nyme's Adams," mumbled that worthy in humble tones.

"And my name is Jonathan Canton Solomon Clensy," said the young Englishman, in a voice which intimated that he too could call himself names.

For a moment the big man surveyed Clensy with a glance of admiration, then he yelled out, "Solomon

Clensy and Isaac Adams, I've cottoned to ye both, so I'll see more of ye both in the morning." The next moment he had tucked his immense silken scarf about his throat, and placing two huge, wonderfully white feet over the bunk's side, settled himself for sleep.

When Clensy and Adams awoke in the morning the new-comer was already up and dressed.

"God damn it, rise and shine, lying in bed, ye lazy loafers," he yelled.

They lifted their tired heads and gazed vacantly on the boisterous disturber of their late slumber. For a moment a look of resentment over the man's impertinent manner leapt into Adams's eye. Clensy also gave Biglow a look which plainly said, "Who the devil are you that you have the cheek to order us to rise?" But when Bartholomew Biglow laid his massive hand on his velvet waistcoat and burst into a song that told of the horn of the hunters on the English hills, of grey dawns and the skylark's melodious trills to the sunrise, Clensy and Adams rose, and, looking rather sheepish, commenced to dress. Then Biglow took them both into the big dining-room where lodgers assembled for their meals, and treated them both to a glorious breakfast.

"Get it down ye!" he yelled, as Adams and Clensy munched their toast and poached eggs and bacon. Adams nudged Clensy in the ribs, and chuckled over their sudden luck. After breakfast, the three men went outside their lodging shanty and stood under the shading mahogany trees near Selle Place. Then Samuel Biglow, for such we will call him, told Clensy and his comrade, that though he had been the paramour of queens and the confidant of kings, he reckoned he was well off to have met such a one as Adams. Adams took the big man's hand and said in almost respectful tones, "Same ter you, Myster Samuel Bartholomew Biglow." Then Samuel tendered them his credentials in the shape of voluminous verbal reminiscences, telling them

of mighty deeds he had performed. If the man's own accounts could be relied upon, he had been a wonder in his time.

Then Samuel listened to Adams, for that worthy also started to blow his own trumpet. Samuel Biglow bent his giant form and roared with laughter as he listened. Then Adams said he was "a man of honour," that he would "sooner die than do unto another that which he would not like to be done to him."

"So, so!" murmured Samuel Biglow soothingly, as he gave Adams a kindly, mother-like look, which plainly told Clensy, who thoroughly enjoyed the play, that he, Samuel, didn't believe one word that the sailorman said, and that he was doubtlessly as big a rogue as himself. "Ye've got honesty written on yer mug!" he said, and Adams felt pleased.

The fact is, that circumstances were running as near dire disaster as could possibly be when two men like Samuel Biglow and Adams met in Hayti, where catastrophes were of hourly occurrence. And it can only be put down to extraordinary good-luck that Royal Clensy never got his head into at least a noose of difficulties through associating with such characters. However, let it be said, that all that happened afterwards was not the fault of either Samuel Biglow or Adams; if anything, Samuel Biglow was Royal Clensy's saviour when the hour arrived, and they had to flee, the three of them, from Hayti.

CHAPTER III

SAMUEL BIGLOW was a blessing to Clensy and Adams. As well as possessing enormous cheek, he possessed plenty of money. That which surprised Clensy most about Biglow was his refined demeanour when he entered Haytian society. It seemed to come natural to

the man. He had certainly never been well educated or reared amongst courtly people, yet his self-possession and gallant manners outrivalled the polite deportment of men and women who moved in the best social circle of Port-au-Prince. It must be admitted that the highest Haytian social circle, in those days, was not easily shocked over moral lapses or by those acts which would be considered breaches of etiquette in European society; but still, the Mexican and Spanish-French element of gallant manners and pretty politenesses among the wealthy classes existed in a large degree. These classes were made up of Haytian chiefs, mulattoes and Mexicans, and lusty-looking men who appeared to have a large strain of negro blood in their veins. The government of Hayti was in form republican, the democratic element being especially noticeable when the court officials and lustrous-eyed Haytian maids of the lower classes came together. When Congress met at the chambers, the swarthy ministers discussed public matters with great deliberation, each member holding a drawn sword in his hand and a revolver lying fully loaded on the bench in front of him. In fact, the Haytian Government constitution was up to date, nothing to excel its laws—on paper! And the honest aspect of the officials *par excellence*. All that was really required was an honest Napoleonic Controller of Controllers to help responsible members of the Republic from falling before the lure of bribery and lustrous-eyed beauties of the Court.

Such was the state of Haytian affairs in Clensy's youth, in the grand days when Samuel Bartholomew Biglow smacked the President of the Republic in genial comradeship on the back and patronised the cynical Haytian chiefs by his august presence. Samuel Biglow was not an enigma, he was simply royalty in the raw state. He had the personality and the cool cheek that raises men to eminence amongst primitive or even civilised peoples when they mourn a lost leader. Had

Biglow lived in old Britain in the days of Boadicea, he would have been heard of. School-children would to-day have been compelled to memorise the date of his birth and when and how he died. Antiquated, worn monuments to his ancient fame would adorn the old bridges of our cities. But he was born too late. When he arrived on earth, the moral codes of the heroic ages had become reversed; consequently, it required all his astuteness to save himself from being elected for the gallows or life-long meditation in Wormwood Scrubbs or Sing-Sing. Such is the irony of fame and changeful circumstance. However, Samuel was happy enough. His handsome face would flush with the light of his amorous imagination when the dusky ladies who attended the presidential balls gave him languishing glances; and gallantly did he return them! He had not been in Hayti more than a week before he managed to enter the palace and make the acquaintance of President Gravelot. Adams and Clensy were astonished when one night he came back to his lodgings and informed them that he had had a busy day, being honoured as the special guest of the president of the Black Republic.

"Borrow anyfing from 'im?" said Adams, staring at the big man in hopeful surprise.

"No need to borrow. I've found out that the President is me long-lost father. He's recognised the strawberry mark on me back, and I'm to receive an allowance from the Government exchequer," replied Bartholomew Biglow with his usual jovial mendacity. The truth of the whole business was, that Samuel was doing a bit of gun-running for the U.S. firearm and munition factories. And President Gravelot was anxious to purchase as many Snider rifles and as much ammunition as he could possibly get hold of. A revolution occurred in Hayti every year or so, when a rival for the presidency appeared and was backed up by rebels and sometimes Government soldiers. And so the Government officials

and the rebel officials, who dwelt by thousands in the mountains about Hayti, were for ever competing with each other in buying arms and ammunition, and the United States firms were ever ready to supply the aforesaid arms for cash down. In fact, while Biglow was getting the best terms from President Gravelot, an American steamer was lying in the bay off Port-au-Prince with a cargo of antiquated old stock guns and explosives on board. This steamer had carried a most enterprising super cargo and shore agent, and this supercargo was eminently suitable for the position—his *nom de plume* was Samuel Bartholomew Biglow! So it will be easy to see why Biglow was welcomed by President Gravelot.

Biglow's cheek and convivial ways pleased the President and all the officials whom he came in contact with. Though the national emblem of Hayti was the feathery cabbage palm, and suggested "Peace on Earth, Truth and Beauty," the true emblem should have been daggers and knives and a human skull, with the motto, "Live and be Merry, for To-morrow we lose power or die!" For, as has been said, revolutions came like the punctuality of the seasons, and generally ended in the reigning president being shot and the officials having to flee for their lives. No doubt, Gravelot was immensely pleased to meet such a one as Biglow when he was already feeling uneasy about his waning power. For the Cacaos insurgents had already taken to warfare in the Black Mountains, and day by day rumours were reaching Gravelot which hinted that his presidency was nearing its close. Indeed, during his office Hayti had been in arms, in one long civil war. Gravelot held the highest prestige in the eyes of the British and French Consuls, and so Biglow knew what he was about when he got in friendly touch with Gravelot. It was hard, in the interminable squabbles between the negro, mulatto and Mexican portion of the population, to know which was really the greatest power. All that

can be positively asserted is that no chance was lost by the Haytians and mulattoes to thoroughly enjoy their lives according to their tastes. So Biglow was received with open arms at the presidential balls, where he astonished the lustrous-eyed maids of the passionate south by his magnificent effrontery, in days of old when passions ran riot in Hayti. When Clensy got wind of the truth, heard that Biglow was in with the President, his heart beat with a great hope. Not for one moment had he forgotten the beautiful girl who had spoken to them when he and Adams had stood, two humble troubadours, outside the palace gates. He saw his chance. He had already made inquiries, and discovered that the girl who had so impressed him was the beautiful Sestrina, President Gravelot's daughter. At the earliest possible moment Clensy had informed Bartholomew Biglow that he would feel more than kindly towards that worthy if he would use his influence to get him introduced into the palace.

"You can accomplish anything you wish to accomplish," said Clensy.

"Possibly so," was Biglow's brief reply; then he added, "You see, lad, my business at the palace is peculiarly secret, and I don't stand on safe ground when I commence to introduce white men into the Court of the Black Republic."

Clensy looked glum at hearing this, but he looked more cheerful when Biglow ended up by saying, "I'll think the matter over; p'raps I can see a way of doing the thing."

That same night Biglow happened to hear Adams performing on a banjo at the Sing-Song Café, hard by their lodgings (Adams was a decent banjo player), and Clensy strumming out melodies and dance-tunes on a derelict piano. So when Biglow met Clensy next day he gave the young Englishman a most contemptuous look, and said, "You! You play the piano like that

and yet ask *me* to get you introduced into the palace society ! "

" What on earth has the piano to do with it ? How ? Why ? " said Clensy, mystified.

" Lad, you're a mug, and though you can't see farther than the tip of yer nose, you may consider yourself engaged on the spot as Pianist to the President of the Black Republic."

Clensy, with his usual lack of confidence, began to expostulate and bring forward a hundred reasons to show why such a procedure would be a failure. But Biglow simply gave him another contemptuous glance, and then, pushing his mass of curls from his massive brow, turned on his heel and walked away. Next day, when Clensy returned from a stroll in the town back to his lodgings, Biglow smacked him on the back and informed him that he was engaged as piano-player for the coming presidential ball. The next moment Biglow had handed Clensy twenty Mexican dollars.

" What's this for ? " gasped the astonished Clensy.

" Why, you looney, it's your advance, a bit on account of your wages ! " Then Biglow explained that he had told the President that he, Clensy, was a great musician, the chief Musical Director of the Conservatoire in New York, and that it was a relentless rule of Yankee virtuosos to demand an advance note.

" But I'm not a professional player at all. I can't play well enough," said Clensy, as he recovered from his surprise, and looked at the money. " I'm only a strummer on the piano, and they'll expect to hear some of the classics performed, won't they ? " said Clensy.

" Can't play well enough ! Classics, by God ! " yelled Biglow, giving the young Englishman a withering, pitying glance, then he added, " By heavens, if you refuse the job, I'll take it on ! Do you think these half-caste niggers know what music is ? It's Bartholomew Biglow who knows what melody is ; he'll show 'em ! " So saying, Biglow immediately opened his mouth and

began to sing some weird heathen melody which made the Haytian maids rush from their doorways to see who sang so well and with such vibrant feeling. Clensy at once bowed to the inevitable, and agreed to accept the engagement, and play at the palace ball on the following night.

Royal Clensy discovered that Biglow's assurance that no one in Hayti knew what real music was, was admirably exemplified by himself when he sat the next night in the sumptuously furnished ball-room of the palace and banged away on the imported Erard pianoforte. True enough he had been well primed up for the occasion by Biglow, who had enticed him to swallow much cognac. And so the young Englishman felt that he was seeing tropical life in its most vigorous, romantic stage, as the richly-attired Haytian chiefs and voluptuous-eyed mulatto women, clad in picturesque *sarongs*, did wonderful dances that had been introduced into Hayti by the old-time West African negro emigrants. As the happy guests drank their host's rich, heady wines, the strain of negro blood, which is in the veins of almost all the Haytians, asserted itself. The romantically clad half-caste girls undid their chignons and allowed their shining, dusky tresses to fall in wanton abandonment about their bare shoulders. And, as their softly-sandalled feet tripped and glided across the wide polished floor of the dancing-room, their dark eyes sparkled in the light of the innumerable hanging lamps. Clensy almost forgot to play the tricky syncopated time of the dances, for just by the side of the piano was a large mirror wherein the shadowy forms of the wine-warmed dusky beauties gave misty yet vivid demonstrative exhibitions of their delicate charms, as they did the heart-rending steps of the *bamboula* and the old barbarian *chica* dances! Even Biglow gave a ponderous wink and modestly arched his hand over his eyes as his big dancing feet swerved by the piano, and Clensy looked sideways at him. That ball-room

was a seraglio of smouldering frenzied passion. The semi-diaphanous robes of the women seemed to have been cut out of material that was specially suitable for revealing the shapely limbs of the wearers. The lustrous eyes of those dusky beauties of southern climes gave deliberate, long languishing glances, and so fired the blood of dark, fierce men who had their origin away back in the ancient primitive life of Africa and Arabia.

When the interval arrived, Clensy rose from the piano and strolled about, as he sought to find some trace of pretty Sestrina, she whom he had dreamed so much about. He was almost pleased to find that she was not to be found in that passionate, riotous, high Haytian society. The reason Sestrina was absent was because the president would not allow his daughter to enter the festival rooms when the fetish dances were on. Instead of Clensy being disappointed at not seeing the girl at all, he blessed his luck, for everything turned out beautifully unexpected. The heat was terrific, and so Clensy, after having a cooling drink, pulled the wide heavily-draped curtains of the ball-room aside and passed into the outer corridors. Then he stood by the tropical flowers which grew in pots in the large palace rooms, and breathed in the scented zephyrs which floated through the open windows. The sight of the picturesque grounds that surrounded the presidential residence tempted him to pass out into the open air. As he approached the mahogany groves and lit a cigarette, he was startled at hearing a voice say, "*Suva*, monsieur, 'tis you again! Why this pleasure?"

Clensy turned round and found himself face to face with President Gravelot's daughter, Sestrina! Her rich tresses were ornamented with hibiscus blossoms. And as she stood smiling before Clensy, she did look as perfect as a young man's dream of woman.

"So you are here in the palace, *Suvam kari*, Englees-man?" the girl said, speaking in a kind of Haytian *patois* in an undecided way, as though she was un-

certain as to which language Clensy would understand the best.

"Yes, I am here," replied Clensy, hardly knowing what else to say, as he gazed into the girl's dark, beautiful eyes as she laughed like a happy child. And as he gazed, he heard the buzz and weird hum of the native orchestra's stringed instruments playing in the ball-room. Those sounds meant that his absence from the piano would not be missed, for the dancing had commenced to the strains of the four Haytian musicians, who had sat silent in the ball-room when Clensy had presided at the piano. Though it was night, the trees, the fountains, and even the colour of the flowers, were distinctly visible. Every hanging bough sparkled with the steady lights of the hundreds of hanging garden lamps. The mystery of night and the stars and the dark orange groves was in perfect harmony with Sestrina's type of beauty. Perhaps Sestrina knew this, for she stood perfectly still under the mahogany tree's branches, staring earnestly at Clensy as the warm scented winds drifted her tresses in confusion over her shoulder. The young Englishman could hardly believe his luck as the girl took his arm and walked away with him into the shadows as though he was a very, very old acquaintance! Though she had made a great impression on his mind when he had first seen her, he had endeavoured to thrust her from his memory as something quite unattainable, beyond his hopes and the ordinary possibilities of his humble position in Hayti. But there he stood, Sestrina holding his arm, gazing into his face with a childlike expression in her eyes. Yes, it was all true enough. Fate had thrown them together, some immutable law had decreed that it should be, that all that was to happen in their lives afterwards, had been carefully planned out and sighed over by destiny. Clensy's heart thumped with happiness, no premonition of coming sorrow in far-off days came to dispel his unbounded joy as they both, in mutual

secrecy, stole away by the tropical fuchsia trees so that they could get away from the prying eyes of the stragglers near the palace.

"Have you come to stay in Hayti, Engleesman?" whispered Sestrina, as she gave Clensy a swift bright glance.

"I don't know yet," responded Clensy. And as he gazed down the moonlit orange groves he fancied he could see the happy phantoms of his imagination dancing in impish delight on the footpath. The rich odours from decaying pineapples and the hanging overripe lemons and limes made a perfect atmosphere for Clensy's romantic meditations. And Sestrina?—her heart fluttered, it was almost like a dream to her, too!

"Oh, how different are the sun-tanned flushed faces of the handsome Englishmen to the yellow-skinned Haytian men," she thought as she sighed and looked at Clensy again. Everything in nature seemed to feel kindly disposed towards them both. The moon intensified the dark loveliness of Sestrina's eyes as the scented warm zephyrs lifted her tresses and tumbled them in artless confusion about her neck and shoulders.

"I am only in Hayti for a holiday, I'm travelling. I'm a tourist, you know," said Clensy. Then he remembered under what circumstances Sestrina had first seen him, and added with excusable mendacity. "I've been most unfortunate, I lost all my money in a shipwreck just before I arrived in Hayti."

"Oh, how sad!" exclaimed Sestrina, then she gave a low, merry peal of hushed laughter. Clensy wondered why the girl should laugh so, and cursed the very memory of Adams. For, if ever he had wanted to appear refined and gentle, and one who loved delicate associations, it was at that moment in his life. However, Clensy was wrong in his suspicions, the girl had believed every word he uttered. Sestrina was unworldly. She was Gravelot's only daughter. Her mother was an inmate of an asylum at Rio Grande, a fact of which

Sestrina was not aware, she having been brought up to think that her mother was dead. She had led a secluded life in the palace since her father had been made President of the Black Republic. Her father had had her reared with jealous care. The girl's constant companion had been and was still, an aged negress nurse named Claircine. Claircine had ever watched over the girl with that affection which is characteristic in the coloured people when they become attached to those who are placed in their care. This negress had cultivated Sestrina's imagination by telling her pretty legends and, as Gravelot had wished, had kept her mind childlike, quite ignorant of the world and ways of men and women. The only knowledge of the world that she had acquired had come to her through the medium of the sensational French novels which she obtained and read in secret. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say, that Sestrina, like many Haytian maids, had educated herself and obtained her knowledge of the great world around her, from French novels. Of course, the girl did not realise the meaning of a deal that she read. And so, to her mind, the words—"Passion, and passionate," only conveyed some idea that the hero or heroine possessed bad tempers, or were endowed with a poetic passion which resembled the wild moanings of the mahogany trees when the fierce tornadoes broke over Hayti. And whenever she asked the negress uncomfortable questions, Claircine adroitly changed the conversation or misinformed the girl. And so Sestrina went every day with great punctiliousness to confess to the aged Catholic priest, Père Chaco, also knelt every night by her bedside to pray with absolute faith over the goodness of men and the boundless mercy of God.

Such was the simple wisdom of Sestrina's mind. And Royal Clensy, as he stood in the palace gardens with Sestrina that night, did not misunderstand her when she boldly intimated that she was supremely happy in his company. A girl's character is generally clearly imaged

in the mirrors of her soul—her eyes. And Clensy's mind was not the kind that gives a distorted view of the truth. When she took a flower from her hair, touched it with her lips, and then placed it in the lapel of his coat, he realised that it was all innocent enough. And he was happy as they both walked up and down in the moonlit shades of the orange groves. "Adams's wretched accordion-music has its compensations," he thought as he realised that had he not gone off busking with Adams he might never have met Sestrina. "It's fate, Sestrina was destined to come into my life like this," he mused as Sestrina stumbled, and nearly fell over the cactus hedge. Sestrina gave a little cry of distress.

"Destiny!" was his mental ejaculation as he leaned forward, and with an apologetic look in his eyes, said "Allow me!"

Ah, the girl's innocent manner made a fascinating picture as she lifted her pretty ankle a few inches from the ground. How tenderly Clensy examined it so that he might staunch the tiny flow of blood—a thorn had torn the soft flesh! His solicitude eased the pain! Only a born artist could have pulled the brown stocking down as he did! It was perfect art, a subtle poem in curves, maiden artlessness, and the impertinence of passionate youth. But all was well. Royal Clensy was in Hayti! Hayti, the land of flowers and song. Hayti where the passions ran riot, where pretty maids had a strange golden gleam in their large dark eyes, and all their actions were inspired by the romance and glamour of flamboyant French novels!

"And how, and when shall I see you again, Mademoiselle Sestrina?" said Clensy as he gazed in an insane way into her face. Poor Clensy, it was a case. However, his malady had its compensations, for Sestrina also seemed beautifully insane as they both held each other's hands, loth to part! Only the cry of the blue-winged Haytian owl disturbed the silence of the giant mahogany trees that stood like mighty sentinels

around the palace walls. The sounds of revelry by night had ceased, for quite an hour had passed since they had heard the last wails coming from the violins and weird Haytian musical instruments played in the Presidential ball-room. Clensy had forgotten the flight of time. Sestrina was the more practical of the two in the matter of time, since she dwelt within walking distance of the paternal halls. She knew that her father would raise the roof, so to speak, if he discovered that she was absent from her chamber at such an hour. "Monsieur Royal, I will see you again, fear not," said Sestrina.

"But—how? And when?" said Clensy as he glanced about him in desperation. Had not Sestrina told him a few moments before that she was not allowed away from the palace precincts without old Claircine?

"Ah, foolish Engleesman," said Sestrina as she fell back on her fascinating *patois*, and placing her finger to her lips as though in deep meditation, gave Clensy a roguish glance. Ah, how swift-witted is woman in comparison with dull-witted man? Sestrina had solved the problem as to the means of their meeting again. She well remembered how Dumas' heroes and heroines managed such delicate matters as lovers' meetings when a parent stood in the pathway of happiness.

"I will tell *mon père* that I wish to learn to play the pianoforte, and you whom I wish to see again may easily be the favoured one to give me those lessons, and the harmony be the sweeter for the strange though happy coincidence that you of all men should be the chosen teacher!"

Before the young Englishman had realised the full import of Sestrina's remarks and her pretty wit, he was alone. Sestrina had passed away like some shadowy form of a dream. He was still standing under the orange trees that fronted Sestrina's palatial residence. Then he moved away and hurried home, his footsteps walking on air as he recalled the lovely light of Sestrina's eyes.

That same night Clensy's life seemed to have become

extra valuable to him. For the first time he began to realise what a waste of his days he was making by associating with men like Adams.

"By Jove! she's a beautiful girl, well educated and poetic too," he muttered, as he pulled off his boots and recalled Sestrina's pretty phrases and those poetic sayings which she had memorised from the pages of her beloved French novels. Then, and for the first time for many a long day, Clensy said his prayers, and asked God to give him Sestrina and make him really happy. He lay for quite an hour in his humble bed in the lodging-house at Port-au-Prince, thinking and thinking. His mind roamed far away into the realms of romance as he stared through the window at the stars, a bright constellation that shone just over the mountains, inland from Gonaives. And as he reflected on Sestrina's beauty and the deep impression she had made on his mind, he began to realise what it all meant to him. His thoughts eventually became entangled in dire confusion as the possibilities of the future presented themselves to his mind. Would she really accept his hand in marriage? Was she earnest, and did she really understand what a man's love for a woman meant? Why did her eyes look so childlike when he had whispered those words of love in her pretty ears? What would the President think when he became aware that a humble pianist had the infernal cheek to aspire for his daughter's hand? And what would his people in England think if they heard that he had married an olive-hued Haytian girl? And could he take her back to England with him—if she was willing to go? And as he continued to reflect and conventional obstacles presented themselves to his mind, all to be brushed ruthlessly aside as they came to him, he realised that his personality had come under the complete domination of a passion. He tried to sleep, but only closed his eyes to find his imagination became more lively than ever. Then, opening his eyes again, he drifted into a philosophical vein of thought.

"I am what I am! I cannot change myself. To attempt to control one's nature is as ridiculous and as hopeless as to attempt to revise and reform the work of God Himself, and all that is written on that strange manuscript—the human heart!"

Clensy fell into a fatalistic mood. He lit his pipe, and pitching his tobacco pouch across the room, murmured, "I'm done for! Royal Clensy of yesterday, Mr. *No. 1* of myself died of a passionate spasm before the palace gates at Port-au-Prince on October 14th, 18——, was ruthlessly slain by the magic of a Haytian maid's eyes. Alas! what is man but a wandering bundle of dreams and vague desires? A scarecrow of himself wrapt in old rags, standing in the lonely field of his imagination, his thoughts fluttering like starving crows about his fleshly skeleton. Where's the corn and the oil that maketh glad the heart of man?—It exists only in the golden sheaves of dreams, and the sickle that ever reaps is the wide sweep of our hopes being borne back into the dust, scattered by each inevitable disillusionment."

Ah, Clensy, you had indeed got into a sadly morbid state.

As the young Englishman continued to reflect over the careless, inconsequential splendour of his life up to the time when he met Sestrina, he realised that his passion for the girl was as deep as his own interest in himself, and, knowing this, he saw the brighter side of his strange reflections and was cheered up. "I shall be happy even though I fail, so long as Sestrina loves me," he thought. Then he turned over on his rickety bed and joined Bartholomew Biglow and Adams in the calm, deep bass measure of their respective snores.

CHAPTER IV

AFTER Sestrina had taken her sudden departure from the infatuated Clensy, she ran down the pathway by the fuchsia trees so that she might enter her home

unobserved. She did not fear meeting a stray servant who might be abroad in the cool of the night, but she knew that her father had been absent from the Presidential ball since six o'clock. His absence was an ominous sign for Sestrina—when her parent returned from his mysterious nocturnal visits into the mountains he usually behaved like a frenzied maniac.

"I do hope I shall not see father to-night," she thought, as she entered the little doorway by the wine vaults, and then peered in fright down the corridor. She was no longer the gay, inconsequential Sestrina whom Clensy had parted from a few moments before. The Englishman had dispelled all the heart-aching fear that had worried Sestrina's mind for the last few weeks. Clensy little dreamed of the skeleton in the cupboard of the Haytian girl's home, how it haunted her soul with a fearful wonder and terror when it roamed about before her eyes! Even as she peered along the silent corridor she gave a startled jump that made her shadow leap down the whole length of the white wall. A sigh of relief escaped her lips—it was only the shuffling footsteps of the old negro, Charoco; he was putting out the lights in the large rooms from which the festival guests had lately departed. The next moment Sestrina had slipped down the corridor, and had run across the large drawing-room where she had to pass through ere she could reach her chamber.

"*Garou! nate!* What's that!" said a hushed, hoarse voice, speaking first in Creole and then in English.

Sestrina gave an instinctive crouch in her fright, and then swiftly turned round—a dark cloaked figure was standing behind her—it was her father, President Gravelot.

"I've been out on the verandas, it was so hot inside the palace," said the girl quickly, for her parent's face looked like the face of a fiend. It was not the calm, handsome President that the Haytians knew by daylight, but a demented, bloodthirsty fanatic who stared

at Sestrina with burning eyes. Sestrina gazed on the man in horror. She had seen her father in a state of frenzy before, but that night he hardly resembled a human being at all. The bigotry and heathenish lust of his Southern blood shone in the brilliant cruel gaze of his eyes. It was not the juice of the grape that had fired the man's brain, transmuting him from a human being into a devil of cruelty and lust, it was the living hot blood mixed with white rum he had swallowed that made him look like that. It was the blood of *The Goat without Horns!*—the symbolical term for the blood of little children and men and women who had been sacrificed at the terrible altars of the *vaudoux!*

Yes, and not far off either, for the altars were in the secret fetish temples near the mountains of Port-au-Prince. President Gravelot was a devotee to the *vaudoux* worship! It was a terrible creed, and though the French and Haytian authorities had taken drastic measures to put down the horrors indulged in by its worshippers (the negro adherents often indulged in cannibalistic orgies after they had slain the sacrificial victims), children were missing from their homes every week, were kidnapped and taken away to the temples of the terrible *papaloi.*

It seemed incredible that such a creed should be, but Sestrina's trembling form, and the blood-frenzied man who stood before her in the dark corridor of her home, was sufficient evidence of the terrible truth. It was a cruel creed, and had been introduced into Hayti by the first negro emigrants from the West Coast of Africa. Hundreds of "high class" Haytians were staunch adherents to the *vaudoux* sacrificial altars and the monstrous demands of its deity—*The Goat without Horns.* These altars were situated as near as La Coupé, not more than five miles from Port-au-Prince. And the fury of the strange paroxysms that transformed the *vaudoux* devotees into fiends of blood and indescribable lust was exemplified by the distorted

face and the burning eyes of the soul-powerless man who stood before Sestrina. The reeking atmosphere of the worship clung about its devotees like an evil spirit, the warm blood of the victims they had sacrificed gleaming in their eyes. The frenzied bigotry and uncontrollable lust of the *vaudoux papaloi* (head priests) stopped at nothing to satisfy their terrible desires. No man, woman or child was sacred enough to stay the knife and the bloody libations when once in the *papalois'* merciless grip. Even graves were desecrated in the secrecy of the night.*

"Father!" whispered Sestrina in her terror. She saw a wild look in his eyes that horrified her. She lifted her hands as though she would ward off a terrible blow. The gleam of the fevered eyes sent a death-like chill to the girl's heart. She instinctively realised that the personality of the man before her was lost in some deadly sleep, though she did not dream that the fumes that had done this thing to her father were the fumes of human blood and white rum. Though Sestrina had heard the word "*vaudoux*" whispered in awestruck tones by the negresses and negroes of the palace, she had no idea as to what it really meant. All she knew was, that it caused madness among many people, for the blood and rum drinking, and the strain on the *vaudoux* worshippers' frenzied imagination, generally ended in paralysis and idiocy, and often in violent madness.

"*Vaudoux, loup garou!*" whispered the man as he stared at the girl. Then he seemed slightly to recover himself.

(*) Several Haytian men and women were arrested for the murder of children whom they had kidnapped and then offered up to the *Vaudoux* on the fetish altars somewhere in the mountains near Port-au-Prince. One of the prisoners, a negress, turned informer and told how the *papaloi* bribed men to dig up the newly buried dead from the cemeteries, where many graves had been found disturbed.—See "Memoirs of Moreau de St. Mery."

"It's you! you! Sestrina!" he murmured as the girl took his hand very gently, and in pathetic, mute appeal looked up into her father's face. Her heart thumped violently as she watched the expression of his eyes. Then she gave a sigh of relief. And still she fawned before him, caressed his bloodstained hands, delight on her troubled face as she saw the gleam of reason stealing back into his bloodshot eyes.

"It's me! me!" she whispered, as she once more caressed that hand in her terrifying eagerness to press her advantage. She saw the look of recognition leap into his eyes.

"Sestrina, what did I do? What have I said? help me!" he moaned, as he leaned forward and gazed into the terrified eyes of his daughter. What had he said? What had the devil that possessed him muttered for the girl's hearing?

Gravelot's stupefied brain had begun to realise the relationship and the wickedness of his own terrible nature as he threw off the vile spell that *vaudoux* worship had cast over him. The change in his manner was swift; already the fever of his eyes had changed to a look of tenderness. "Go to bed at once, Sestrina," he muttered in a hoarse voice that Sestrina hardly recognised. He reeled about like a drunken man as he began to take off his flowing cloak, which he wore as a disguise whenever he stole away to the fetish temples in the mountains.

Sestrina fled. In a moment she had run along the corridor. Entering her room she had begun to cry. For a long time she could think of nothing else but the terrible expression which she had seen on her father's face. After a while her heart ceased to thump, and her thoughts strayed into more pleasant channels. She began to think of the young Englishman. "Oh, if only I could fly from here with him, elope just as I have read folks do," she murmured to herself as she rose and stared at her image in the large mirror. Then she turned away

and pushed the settee against the door. Of late she had been very nervous at night, and this nervousness was due to her father's strange madness, which was becoming worse of late. "What does it all mean? Why does he want me to go to the mountains with him? Is not Père Chaco, the Catholic priest, a good man? Did he not bless me with holy water and say beautiful things about the world? And yet he flung me from him, yes, only a week before, and raved like a madman when I refused to leave holy Père Chaco, and go away into the mountains to pray before strange priests."

As Sestrina mused on, she began to remove her picturesque attire; first she cast aside the loose *sarong*; then she loosened her under-bodice. Her hair fell in confusion down to her shoulders, tumbling in shining ripples about her bosom, that was the whiter for being untouched by the hot rays of the tropical sunlight. She was fast leaving her girlhood behind; her footsteps, so to speak, were already on the threshold of womanhood, the rose of beauty and innocence on her lips and shining in her eyes. She half forgot the horror of her father's distorted face as she gazed at her image in the mirror. Though her mind was naturally refined, the romantic passion of her Southern ancestry began to sigh in its sleep; and Sestrina's lips echoed the sigh, though she knew not why they did so. She thought of the handsome Englishman, and of the sweet things he had whispered into her ears. She thought of the rapture of love, of the meeting of lips, and the romantic sorrows of parted lovers, and all those things which had influenced her mind as she poured over her French novels. "Ah me!" she sighed, then a startled look leapt into her eyes. She looked towards the window in fright. It was only the "Too-whoo-bee!" of the blue-winged Haytian owl that watched her from its perch in the mahogany tree just outside. She opened the vine-clad, latticed casement wide, and then stared out on the loveliness of the tropic night. She could just see the

dark, palm-clad slopes of the mountains, faintly outlined by the moon's pale light. "Ah, if he were only here, how happy I should be!" she murmured as she watched the swarms of fireflies dancing in the glooms of the bamboos, and then looked across the plains where she could see the twinkling lights of the homesteads near Gonaives. After that, she opened a little door that divided her chamber from another small room. It was where Claircine, the negress, slept.

"Oui, Madamselle Sessy!" said the ebony-hued negress servant as she sat up in bed and rubbed her large, sleepy eyes, wondering why her mistress should disturb her at so late an hour.

"Claircine, I feel so unhappy."

"Why so, mamselles, there am nothings to be misleraable 'bout, is there?"

Sestrina responded by giving a deep sigh. Then the old negress started to gabble away, as Sestrina sat on her bed for companionship. The woman's inconsequential chatter cheered Sestrina.

"You look so beautiful nows you be coming womans," said Claircine as she touched her mistress's mass of glittering hair and ran the shining tresses through her dark fingers, and sighed in the thought that her own locks were so short and woolly. "Ah, Sessy, you ams like your mother," said Claircine, who had been her mother's maid from the time of Sestrina's birth. Then the old negress continued: "She too had nicer hair and white flesh, for she had a father who was a real handsome white mans!"

After a while the conversation changed. Sestrina and the negress began whispering. Several times they glanced as though in some fright towards the bedroom door as a moan came to their ears. It was only the noise of the wind sighing down the orange groves that murmured like sad phantoms just outside the open casement as the girl and negress talked on. There was something eerie and dreadful sounding in the slightest noise that night!

Claircine had also seen President Gravelot come home under the terrible influence of the *vaudoux* fetish. The old negress had seen the President behave like a maniac, and had then seen the after effects as he came round, laid his head on the table, and moaned in remorseful despair.

"'Tis the terrible, but wonderful *papaloi* who he see at the secret mountain temples where they do drink ze blood and rum; yes, dey make your father look like dat!" said Claircine. Then the negress added: "I no tell you such tings, Madamselle Sessy, but I now tink it be best dat you know such tings since dat you be getting older."

"Do you really believe in such things, that the *papaloi* are the chosen priests of the heavens?" whispered Sestrina, as she heard such things as she had never heard before or dreamed of. Claircine had spoken to the girl in an awestruck, reverent way, about the terrible *vaudoux* priests.

"No, madamselle, it am no good me believing, I am only low-caste, and so am not allowed to attend great *vaudoux* worships." Then the old negress sighed, and added: "If I'd been good enough, I would have marry handsome Chaicko, for you know that women who am *vaudoux* worshippers are watched over by ze god of the *Goat without Horns*, and am always happy in dere love affairs."

"Surely you don't mean that, or believe that my father would drink human blood?" whispered Sestrina, as she looked despairingly into the negress's eyes. Her face looked pallid, almost death-like, dark rings about her eyes.

"Ah, Madamselle Sessy, this chile *does* believe in the greatness of ze *papaloi*. I do often see ze *zombis* (ghosts) creep 'bout under de mahogany trees when the great *papaloi* chant in ze forest."

"But what about my father? Do you think that he really does visit these awful places which you have just described to me?"

"P'raps not; I may be wrongs, madamselle," said the old negress, who felt upset to think she had told her innocent charge so much about the *vaudoux*. And though Claircine rambled on, telling Sestrina many things about the cruelty of the fetish worshippers and the attendant superstitions of the bigoted adherents, she adroitly made it appear to Sestrina that she spoke of a far-off time.

"'Tis not like that now. Oh, no! ze officials did shoot mens and womens for drinking ze sacred wines from the *Goat without Horns*, and so 'tis long past!"

So did Claircine attempt to undo the harm she had done by making Sestrina feel so miserable and ashamed. But though the negress had chatted on till the night grew old, the girl was still full of trouble and fear over her own thoughts.

Bewildered over all she had heard, Sestrina crept back to her chamber to dream of the dark *papaloi* who chanted somewhere up in the black mountains. For a long time she could not sleep. She thought of the terrible look she had seen in her parent's eyes, and, wondering what was really the matter with him, forgot all else. For Sestrina, deep down in her heart, had a great love and reverence for her father. "He looks so different, so good and kind when the evil spirit does not possess him," she thought, as she wiped the tears from her eyes. Then she thought of the young Englishman, of his blue eyes, his manly ways, and wondered what he would have thought had he seen her father that night! Then her reflections ran into a calmer channel, and with the pretty words that Clensy had whispered that night still lingering in her ears, she at last fell asleep.

CHAPTER V

A WEEK after the events of the preceding chapter, Royal Clensy found himself standing by the Erard pianoforte in President Gravelot's home. Sestrina had suddenly developed a passionate desire to play and sing. And President Gravelot, who was always eager to please the girl when he was in his sane moods, had agreed to hire a teacher. Sestrina's face had looked very troubled when she had approached her father on the matter, for she did not like the idea of deceiving him. But she easily overcame her delicate scruples, and so, looking her parent straight in the face, she had said, "I much prefer a white man as a teacher; the white men are better educated, more simple and refined in their manners." And so the great coincidence which usually comes when the opposite sexes seek a chance to meet each other, came about. Clensy, of all men in the world, received a note from President Gravelot in which he was asked if he would accept a position as Sestrina's teacher for singing and pianoforte playing! The terms offered were good too! When Bartholomew Biglow heard that Clensy was teaching Sestrina to sing and play, he smacked our hero on the back and gazed on him with splendid admiration. "Couldn't have done it better myself!" he had roared, and that was the greatest compliment the big man could pay anyone. And so, there sat pretty Sestrina, her heart bubbling with delight as her hands ran along the ivory keys, diligently going through the five-finger exercises! She had also arranged that Clensy should teach her to sing from the tonic sol-fa system.

"No, no! like this," said Clensy, as he forced a serious look into his eyes and struck the pianoforte keys.

"Ah, monsieur, I see!" murmured the beautiful, guileless Sestrina, as Clensy wondered what she would

think of the contents of the note which she had slipped into the folds of her pretty blue *sarong* a second before! They both had to be very careful! Old Gravelot kept walking into the room and went shuffling about as though he was suspicious. His brilliant eyes certainly *did* stare in a critical manner at the handsome music teacher, as that sanguine worthy leaned over his daughter and guided her fingers along the keyboard, rippling out the scales! Clensy knew that the president was all-powerful in Hayti, and that, were his suspicions aroused, he would be shot. True enough, the worst construction possible would be put on Clensy's reason for seeking Sestrina's society. Sestrina trembled inwardly, but, like most women, she was a born actress —she struck the pianoforte keys, *just so!* and looked as solemn as a nun. Then her father walked out of the room. Oh, the change in Sestrina's face and manner when the heavily-draped curtains divided, and the president disappeared, leaving them alone again. It was magnificent! The discordant strumming of the scales resolved into the perfect harmony of living music that shone from Sestrina's eyes and thrilled Clensy's soul with unbounded happiness. Then our hero took an unwarrantable liberty; he leaned forward, struck a delicious chord on the piano, and kissed Sestrina's pretty ear! Ah, parents of all countries, beware of music teachers! Yes, Royal Clensy was making good headway. He knew that there was much wisdom in the old saying, "Faint heart never won fair lady." It was a pretty picture as he stood there by the side of the seated Sestrina; her hands still rested on the keys as she looked up into his face. Her beauty was the beauty of the tropic starry night, and Clensy was as fair as sunrise on the morning mountains. His fine blue eyes charmed Sestrina the same as he was charmed by the starry darkness of her own.

"I dreamed of you last night, sweet Sestrina." Saying this, Clensy rippled out a tender cadenza.

"And I of you, monsieur!" sighed the lovely pupil, as she dropped her gaze and gently twiddled her fingers over the scales.

"Really? and what did you dream? pleasant, I would——!"

They heard the tasselled curtains, ornamented with brass, tinkle as they were hastily divided—the president had entered the room again!

"No! No! Mademoiselle, *twice* have I told you—like this!" Once again Sestrina's shining tresses tossed as she warbled the notes of the tonic sol-fa system, and ran her fingers down the pianoforte keys! The president lit a cigar, then shuffled about. Clensy smelt the richly-scented odour of the smoke drifting about the room, for old Gravelot had opened the window wide to let the cool airs drift in from the orange groves. And though the president watched with wary eyes, the calm expression of his handsome wrinkled face did not change. He was outwitted. Sestrina's voice sounded sincere, and the expression on Clensy's serious face told of the phlegmatic, unromantic Englishman! So did Clensy find means of furthering his happy courtship with the beautiful Sestrina, though it must be admitted that the happy result was brought about more through Sestrina's brilliant wit than Clensy's superb nerve.

As the days went by, Royal Clensy became deeper in love, and so did Sestrina. And it must be admitted that greater progress was made in their secret courtship at the piano than in Sestrina's music-lessons.

Adams and Biglow saw very little of Clensy at that period, for he would go strolling about Hayti seeing the sights and, presumably, dreaming of Sestrina. Indeed, Adams got a bit jealous when Clensy hired separate lodgings just down the town, and gave his reason for doing so by saying that he was suffering from insomnia.

"He's getting 'igh-toned, I fink, since he got in wif the presydent's darter. Damned if she won't git all 'is money when 'is remittance arrives." So spake the

derelict sailorman to Bartholomew Biglow. But Biglow knew human nature better than Adams did.

"The young whippersnapper's true enough. You haven't been in love like him, or like I have. It's a terrible complaint, something stronger than rum fumes!" said Biglow, as he gave his fascinating smile and patted Adams on the shoulder. And Biglow was right, for when the mail came in, a few days after, bringing Clensy's remittance, Adams got a fair share and had a regular "bust up." The reprobate sailorman felt remorseful when Clensy behaved so generously, and while he was drunk, kept patting Clensy on the back, and saying, "You're an honest youth, and, by God, you've been a father and a son. It's fact that Gawd sent yer to comfort me in me ole age." Adams wasn't all bad, for he did *mean* what he said. He couldn't help being a cadger. He reminded Clensy of the Australian gentry who are sometimes called larrikins, individuals who make cadging a fine art and always carry lumps of blue-metal in their pocket to throw if the stranger will not part with his loose cash or resents their appearance in any way whatsoever.

Though Clensy was a bit rash with his remittance money, he took good care to keep a needful supply of cash in hand. His affection for Sestrina had made him less improvident. Biglow refused to take one penny of Clensy's money. The fact was that he had plenty of cash in hand himself. Indeed, he was busy, and would go off on private business for a whole week sometimes. Clensy and Adams couldn't make out where he went to. All they knew was, that he seemed very flush of cash and mightily pleased with himself when he returned. The fact was, that Biglow was in league with the Black Mountain insurgents, as well as being in league with the Haytian government officials, for he was supplying the insurgents with Snider rifles and ammunition, which had arrived at Port-au-Prince on suspicious-looking schooners. However, Biglow's commercial enterprises

have little to do with all that happened when the revolution broke out in Hayti some time afterwards, and which was a serious matter for all concerned. For, as has already been hinted, the insurgents always razed the towns by fire and murdered half the population, sparing neither women nor children.

One night Clensy and Biglow were sitting playing cards with a half-caste Frenchman, a Monsieur de Cripsny, a government official, when Adams suddenly walked in the room and said, "Heard the noos?"

"What news?" exclaimed Biglow and Clensy, as they looked up from their cards. Then Adams, with an awestruck look in his eye, proceeded, "Why, these 'ere damned Hoytians are blasted cannibals; got a kinder relygion that they call Voody-worship on ther brain."

"What's that to do with us?" said Clensy quietly, as he puffed his cigarette and reshuffled the cards. Bartholomew Biglow's ears were alert at once; he lifted his hand and, smashing at a fly that had settled on Adams's sweating bald head, said, "What have ye heard to make ye so excited, man?"

Thereupon, Adams loosened his red neckcloth, and swallowed the proffered glass of cognac, began to gesticulate and tell his comrades all which he had heard. It appeared that Adams had that same day heard how thousands of the Haytians were adherents to the *vaudoux*-worship. Some one had told him how the *vaudoux* folk went in for bloodthirsty orgies, drank human blood and sacrificed children on the fetish altars, doing such revolting, blood-curdling things as would have made a pre-Christian South-Sea islander shiver with disgust.

De Cripsny, who sat curling the tips of his moustachios while Adams narrated all that he had heard when visiting some grog-shanty in the lower quarter of the town, astounded Clensy and Biglow by calmly corroborating all that Adams had told them. "'Tis nothing new to me, monsieurs," said the half-caste Frenchman. Then

he calmly sat there and told the wondering Englishmen how many of the Haytians were staunch devotees to *vaudoux* worship, secretly attending the orgy temples, which were situated somewhere by the mountains, a few miles away. De Cripsny, who was a friend of Biglow's and had some connection with that worthy's successful exploits in the gun-running line, pulled his moustache and told Adams to shut the door. Then the Frenchman calmly informed the three men that they were liable to be strangled and offered up as sacrifices to the deities of the *vaudoux* if they went into the forest near Port-au-Prince after dark!

Adams opened his one eye and his mouth wide. Then he hitched his trousers up and said he had been seriously thinking of taking to the sea again; "nothing like the open seas!" he said, as he looked with fright at the door.

"Don't you worry, monsieurs; I tink you are quite safe; you are Angleseman, and p'r'aps it would not be good for you to die on the *vaudoux* sacrificial altars."

"Thank Gawd for that much," exclaimed Adams, as he took another drink.

Then de Cripsny told them that the authorities had lately discovered that many children were missing each week from the villages round Port-au-Prince.

"What do you think has become of them?" exclaimed Clensy and Biglow.

"Why, monsieurs, they have surely been caught while strolling or playing in the jungle and taken away to the mountain temples to the *papaloi*, who do strangle them and drink blood—like so."

Saying this, de Cripsny put his hands out, and, to the Englishmen's horror, squeezed an imaginary throat, made a pass with his knife, and, lifting an empty goblet, illustrated to the astonished listeners how the *papaloi* slit the victim's throat and drank their blood!

"'Tis mixed with rum and called the wine from *the Goat without Horns*."

"Surely it's not possible in these enlightened times?" said Clensy.

De Cripsny gave a grim smile, and, taking the *Haytian Press* from his pocket, translated the following:

"Anyone giving information which would lead to the discovery of the hiding-place or temples of the *Vaudoux* worshippers will receive a reward of £500."

On hearing this, Biglow brought his big fist down on the table, crash! and yelled, "By the gods of heathen lands, we're saved! *Vaudoux* worship; splendid thing; we're saved!"

"Saved? what jer mean?" said Adams, as Clensy looked up and wondered why the horror that they had just heard about should appeal to that capacious intellect as a blessing instead of a curse.

"Five hundred pounds reward! It's mine!" reiterated Biglow.

"Yours! Ours!" gasped Adams and Clensy, as they both realised that their sanguine, uproarious comrade had got an idea in his head that he could discover the *vaudoux* miscreants and receive the reward.

"Yes, mine!" replied Biglow, as he swallowed his grog. Then he burst into song. His hilarity was contagious. Adams lost his woebegone expression. In less than ten minutes they all felt assured that they were not only safe from the terrors of the *vaudoux*, but were likely to receive a portion of the reward that Biglow seemed so certain of obtaining.

It was at this moment that de Cripsny looked up and said, "It is mostly the high-class Haytians and negroes who are adherents to the *vaudoux*."

"Not surprising," replied Biglow, as he rubbed his hands, his face flushed through the intense enthusiasm of his thoughts.

Then de Cripsny stared hard at his three companions, and continued, "Would you be surprised to hear that President Gravelot is King of the *vaudoux* worshippers?"

Clensy visibly paled. In a flash he realised that he was in Hayti, and nothing in the way of surprises was impossible. Bartholomew Biglow, on hearing the last bit of information, behaved in his usual boisterous manner; de Cripsny dodged his head, and Adams and Clensy fell under the table, but by a miracle none of them were hurt. Biglow, who had suddenly knocked the table over to emphasise his surprise, immediately grabbed it and stood it up on its legs again. De Cripsny looked quite spiteful as he rose to his feet and stared about him with his brilliant small eyes.

"I speak truth only, and then you go and knock table over and nearly kills me. Why so? You Englishman are too rude and noisy to speak to."

"Beg pardon, Crippy, old pal," said Biglow, as he patted the incensed Frenchman on the back and soon soothed his ruffled feelings. Once more the four seated themselves. Then de Cripsny began to tell them a lot about the *vaudoux* horrors, and hinted that many of the high officials of the government were adherents to the fetish creed and cannibals. He even hinted that many of the Haytian ladies were in with the *papaloi* and attended the fetish dances, giving themselves up to all the abandonment that the rites of the fetish demanded. When the Frenchman leaned across the table and hinted that President Gravelot's daughter, Sestrina, was possibly a *vaudoux* worshipper, Clensy had great difficulty in controlling himself.

"Have you proof of such things?" he demanded, his voice quite hoarse-sounding.

"No, monsieur, but I say 'tis possible, dat is all."

This admission eased Clensy's mind considerably. Then de Cripsny, who seemed to love to illustrate the horrors of all that he was telling the Englishmen, said, "If I do not speak truth, then I cut mines throat like dis"—thereupon he drew an imaginary knife across his skinny throat.

As the conversation proceeded, Biglow tried to get

information from de Cripsny as to where he thought the *vaudoux* temples were. The Frenchman only shook his head and seemed to be unable to give Biglow any useful information. It is quite possible that de Cripsny was ignorant as to where such temples existed. Though de Cripsny had been a government official for many years, he knew very little about the doings of the people or of Haytian politics proper. He had been superintendent of the burial of the dead in the great malaria plague of nineteen years before, when an official had to be appointed to see that the death-carts called at the homes of the victims and gave the dead immediate burial in the cemeteries. And though the plague had long since passed away—indeed, had become a dim, grim memory to the Haytians—de Cripsny had still remained in office till about three weeks before Clensy met him. De Cripsny might have been a splendid example of the latest thing in government officials of civilised lands had he not have been dismissed, only three weeks before, because he had omitted to attend to his duties. For years and years he had drawn up his weekly report on the blue government forms, filling them in so—"Deaths from malaria, none. All buried according to Act 9, Statute 14. Disinfected death-carts and burnt victims' clothing." But through illness he had not filled in the usual form, and this, having been noticed by some alert official, had been the means of his dismissal from office. Even Bartholomew gave a loud guffaw when de Cripsny, after giving him the aforesaid information about his own private affairs, suddenly said, "But, monsieurs, I care not that I am dismissed from office."

"How's that, Crippy, old chum ?" exclaimed Biglow.

Then the Frenchman informed them that his grandfather had been sanitary inspector of the high-roads in Hayti for thirty years, and though he had been dead twenty-one years, he, de Cripsny, his grandson, still received the old man's salary, no one having missed his

grandfather, or noticed any neglect of his duties as inspector of roads in Port-au-Prince. Ask Haytians why they do not clean or mend their streets, they answer, "*Bon Dieu, gâté li; bon Dieu paré li*" ("God spoilt them, and God will mend them"). So de Cripsny was not a man of deep integrity, neither did he trouble himself to delve deeply into the mysteries of the *vaudoux*. His information was something that could have been given to Biglow and Clensy by any negro in Hayti. Only a few days before, a nurse had been out walking on the Champs de Mars when a huge negro, who had presumably been prowling about on watch, suddenly snatched a white child from her arms and ran off with it into the forest. The child was never seen again. And more: It was known that human flesh, dried and salted in tubs, was for sale in the markets of Port-au-Prince! When Clensy and Biglow were given these unappetising bits of information about the revolting practices of the lower orders of the *vaudoux*, they thought more than their tongues could adequately express on the matter.

When Clensy arrived back at his lodgings that night, he turned about and tossed on his bed, and could not sleep. De Cripsny's hint that many of the Haytian ladies went in for fetish dancing and the terrible debauchery of the *vaudoux*, had upset his mind. He thought of President Gravelot's jealous care over his daughter's life, and how Sestrina was seldom allowed out without being accompanied by the negress servant.

"A man who is particular like that is not likely to persuade his daughter to attend cannibal fetishes!—impossible!" Then he thought of Sestrina's eyes, her innocent ways, her girlish laughter and tears, for sometimes she had wept while in his company. "Never! the last girl in the world to succumb to the temptations of her father, however much she respected his wishes." So thought Royal Clensy in the final summing up of his haunting thoughts about Sestrina and the possibility

of her being an adherent to the *vaudoux*. "She's too wide-minded, too pure in heart and soul to kneel before the altars of cruelty and lust!" Then the young Englishman pulled the mosquito curtain together and settled himself for sleep, happy in the thought that Sestrina was innocent. And he was right.

CHAPTER VI

TWO nights after de Cripsny had given the three Englishmen the information about *vaudoux* worship, Clensy, who had been haunting the vicinity of the presidential palace grounds, met Sestrina. She had managed to slip out of the palace unobserved. She was trembling in her delight.

"Away, Monsieur Royal, away from here, or we be seen!" she whispered as she gazed appealingly up into Clensy's face.

"Where shall we go, Sestrina?" said the young Englishman, as he tenderly gripped the Haytian girl's arm and stared about him.

"Away to the forest, the orange groves at H——; anywhere away from here!" said Sestrina, as she looked around with frightened eyes, waved her arms, and then pointed towards the big mahogany trees in the direction of Gonaives. The aftermath of the sunset had left a blue twilight in the skies, which were faintly dazzled with the gleams of a thousand stars. In a moment they had passed away into the shadows.

"Oh, glad am I to be away from the palace walls. You be killed, monsieur, if they see you there!" said Sestrina, as she fondly pressed Clensy's arm over the thought that harm should come to him through her.

In less than half an hour Clensy and Sestrina sat in the seclusion of the mahogany trees. He felt happy. He had long since banished all ideas of the *vaudoux*

from his head. If the remotest suspicion over the possibilities of Sestrina being interested in the fetish creeds remained in his head, one glance from her eyes dispelled it. He was in an emotional, poetic mood, and so he made passionate love to the girl beside him. Love is a contagious complaint when the first afflicted is handsome and tenderly persuasive. Could anyone have seen Sestrina and Clensy, as they sat on the dead palm stem that night, it would have been hard to tell which one was in the most advanced stage of the romantic malady. Sestrina's eyes sparkled like diamonds, and Clensy's surely rivalled those lovely gems of warm, living light, when he gazed into her face and sighed.

"Ah, you do not mean these nice things you say," murmured Sestrina.

"'Tis true! I should never be happy again if we were parted," replied the enraptured Clensy. And then he softly slipped one arm about her waist, and drew her face near to his own, and in the rapture of a strong man's—— But why pry into the secret, insane, but innocent actions of these lovers? No vulgar inquisitiveness stained the purity of their wonderful belief in each other.

"Ah, Sestrina, you are more beautiful than I dreamed, even when I first saw you," he said in a reflective way, as he thought how the girl's merry manner at the pianoforte had slightly led his thoughts astray. It was not boldness at all, it was only the boisterous innocence of the girl's warm heart that made her respond so readily to his impassioned advances. As she sat there, under the mahogany tree, chatting about her pet parrots, the characters in her novels, and confiding little domestic matters to him, he discovered how really innocent and romantic her mind was.

"This beautiful creature a *vaudoux* worshipper! Oh, traitor to her memory! to have had such dreadful suspicions," muttered his mental remorse. "You are the loveliest woman on earth!" he exclaimed.

Poor Clensy, there's no doubt he was feeling badly in love to say such things. But he meant what he said, the same as thousands of men have meant the same strange things. The girl's personality enchanted him, had appealed to the best that was in him, and so had made him a child again.

"Have you never seen nice girls, like me, Monsieur Royal?" murmured Sestrina, as she gazed in wonder on his face.

"No, I never have, never!" was Clensy's emphatic reply, as he pressed his advantage, Sestrina had taken a flower from her hair and was fastening it on to the lapel of his coat, and, as she leaned forward, he kissed her brow and touched her shining tresses with his lips.

"But surely there are beautiful girls in Angleterre! I've read about them in books," murmured the pretty Haytian maid as she looked up into Clensy's face in a wistful way.

"Ah, Sestrina, but the authors of those books, which you say you have read, have never been to Hayti and sat beneath the starlit mahogany trees with you!"

Sestrina seemed to like that explanation immensely. Her eyes shone with delight, as the pale gleams from the rising moon dripped like silver through the overhanging boughs and tropical loveliness of the mahogany trees. It was easy enough to see that the girl was deeply in love with the young Englishman. She opened her eyes and stared like a pleased, wondering child, and then she did exactly that which Clensy asked her to do—lifted one pretty sandalled foot up so that he might kiss her ankle. It was a pretty ankle, no mistake about that. But, oh, propriety! Oh, self-respecting maidenhood, alas! where wert thou at that moment?

"It's not wrong, Monsieur Royal, to do that, is it?" she whispered as she quickly dropped her foot and arranged the delicate fringe of her *sarong*. She looked Clensy straight in the eyes. He made no reply. The

first rapture that followed his impulsive act and the sudden serious stare of Sestrina's eyes as she asked that question, rendered him speechless. In a flash he had realised that his mind, compared with the girl's beside him, was full of sin.

"I always go and confess everything to kind Père Chaco, the priest, so I must be careful, you know," murmured Sestrina in a meditative way, as though addressing her own reflections.

"Do you really?" said Clensy, as he turned his eyes away and stared thoughtfully into the shadows of the forest. Then as he sighed and gazed at the girl again, she placed her finger to her lips and gave Clensy a coquettish glance.

"Why do you dream?" said Sestrina softly, as she noticed how quiet he had suddenly become.

"I cannot help dreaming while in your presence, Sestrina."

"My father will be very angry if he discovers that I have been out so late," said the girl.

"Is your father religious and good like you, Sestrina?" said Clensy swiftly, taking advantage of the opportunity to get Sestrina's private opinion of her parent.

"Yes, he is very religious, but he does not go to kind Père Chaco as he once did," replied the girl, as she swung her foot and sighed.

Clensy did not press his advantage. He saw by the girl's manner that, whatever her father's sins were, she was not a party to them. As they sat there conversing, Clensy tried to probe the Haytian girl's mind. He asked her many questions, and found that she was a child so far as her knowledge of the world was concerned. Her manner and her girlish views charmed him. She had not gripped him by the arm and, in fierce accents, tense with emotion, started to declaim materialistic mad views on social questions. She did not jump to her feet and, with flashing eyes and chin thrust towards

his face in magnificent female aggressiveness, reveal some bitterness which rankled in her irate soul over some peculiar notion that resembled a kink in the brain. She had simply let Clensy touch her brow with his lips, and had said, "I know so little about the world and these things which you ask me; all I really know is, that you have made me feel happy." Then she had looked quietly into his face for a moment and added: "It's so good of God to let me meet you like this, and I'm sure Père Chaco won't mind." And so the fragile girl had conquered. With the almighty power of her own innocence she had accomplished that which a thousand designing, worldly women could never have accomplished. She held Clensy's life in the rapture of a merciless grip. The young Englishman was doomed! He at once robed the girl in all the religious glamour that his mind was capable of conjuring up. She sat there beneath the mahogany trees, clothed in those lovely symbols of wistful beauty that come to the minds of men who aspire to find the world's best in woman; his mind exalted her from the ruck of mere woman into some goddess-creature, possessing attributes divine. Sestrina did not realise her great victory over Clensy.

"Wonderful! beautiful! clever too." Though Royal Clensy had never heard Sestrina make one remark that could be construed as "clever" by a worldly or deadly sane man, she had set her magic seal on his soul. From that moment it was Sestrina's advice and views that would impress him more than the advice of great philosophers. Had he been writing a book or building a new kind of house, he would have yearned to plan the book's plot or build the house according to Sestrina's views on the matter. Old men who took snuff and weighed their words well and wisely before they spoke, would tug their beards of wisdom—in vain! Clensy would have none of them! And, in the inscrutable wonder of simple things, it is quite possible that Sestrina's advice would have been the wisest of all! And

so, when Sestrina once more reminded Clensy of the swift flight of time, he at once realised that she was the wiser of the two. The next moment he was gallantly fastening the pin of the pretty ornament that kept the folds of her *sarong* in place. Then, without any undue argument, he obediently began to brush the green fern spores and leaves from her tresses.

"Ah, 'twould be most awful should they see me return home so late with moss in my hair and grass and leaves on my *sarong*," murmured Sestrina.

"It would indeed," said dull-witted Clensy, as he brushed the girl down, his hands gliding over her as though she were some misty wraith standing in the pale moonlight of the forest gloom. Then they hastened away under the tall trees, and stole down the orange groves by Selle gully. When they arrived near the palace, they stood under the palms and whispered insane farewells. Again Clensy bowed before the wisdom of Sestrina's advice.

"Ah, monsieur, we may not stand here for ever saying good night."

And so they parted. In a few moments Sestrina had slipped unobserved into the silent palace, and Royal Clensy walked away under the mahogany trees, and seemed to tread on air.

* * * * *

"Ah, Claircine, he is indeed beautiful, and there is no need for such alarm."

So spake Sestrina, for when she had run along the corridor and entered her chamber, she found the old negress Claircine anxiously awaiting her. Sestrina, who had just told the negress that she had been in the palace grounds singing to herself and gazing at the moon, hung her head in shame.

"Alas, madamselle, here ams another—and yet another! 'Tis as plain as zé plainest ting can be!" said the shocked Claircine as she held another small

fern leaf and bits of dead grass up to the light of the hanging oil-lamp and examined it critically with her large dark eyes. Oh, infatuated, dull-witted Clensy! careless betrayer of innocent woman, such was thy handiwork! And what did poor betrayed Sestrina do at this incriminating evidence of her guilt? She threw her arms about the negress and wailed:

"Sweet, dear Claircine, you will never, never tell on poor Sestrina?"

Claircine rolled her eyes for very joy, and then shook her head in a kind, chiding way. Though Claircine was an inveterate scandal-monger, she loved Sestrina and secretly yearned to hear that which she expected to hear at that moment. Claircine lifted her hands to the ceiling and looked terribly shocked when Sestrina had finished telling her the truth. Then Sestrina, finding that Claircine was sympathetic with her, went into ecstasies over Clensy's perfections.

"But all ze maids do tink that each man who dey know, and who say nicer tings 'bout them, is de one best mans, and full of nobblyness," reiterated Claircine as she rolled her eyes till the whites expressed her scepticism over the virtues of mankind.

"Ah, you will see him some day, and *then* you will surely believe me when you see for yourself," said Sestrina, as she stood before her mirror and swerved slightly so as to convince herself that Clensy had really meant all he had said about her hair and her beauty. Sestrina was really modest, and, being really pretty, was dubious about her good looks.

"Ah, madamselle, you am bootiful's enough," said the negress, then she put her dark skinny hand against her chin in a meditative way, and said: "This young Englishmans may be one really nice mans; de good God must surely 'ave made *one* good white mans to walk ze earth," said Claircine, then she solemnly added: "Yet it would be most strange if he should come here, to Hayti."

The expression on the cynical old negress's face was utterly lost on Sestrina, who, suddenly remembering, burst out: "Oh, how foolish of me to forget; why, Claircine, he has seen you and you have seen him!"

"And de debil wheres?" exclaimed Claircine.

"Why, it is Monsieur Clensy!"

"Ze gods in heaven! You do not mean the music-teacher?" gasped the astounded Claircine.

"Him and no other!" exclaimed Sestrina. Then the girl swiftly added, for she was anxious that Claircine should feel friendly towards Clensy, "Why, he said to me, only this night, 'Ah, I remember her whom you call Claircine; she has kind, beautiful eyes and a face that tells me she might be a good friend to you and me.'"

Claircine, at hearing this, opened her mouth and revealed all her white teeth in one broad grin.

"P'r'aps he *is* one good mans. I somehow tink that he is good mans," she said, and then she too turned and gazed into the mirror.

After that Sestrina and Claircine talked over the matter till far into the night. Then the negress kissed her mistress's hand and, opening the small door that led from the chamber, crept into her own room to sleep.

Sestrina retired to bed, feeling very happy in the thought that Claircine had promised to be a friend to her and Clensy.

And Clensy? Immediately he arrived back in his lodgings after leaving Sestrina, he stole away into a vast, solitary dream-world of his own, a world whereon only one other than himself breathed—and that was Sestrina. And as he dreamed by the musical fountains, Sestrina came back to him in shadowy form. She tempted his soul with the magical fruit from the Tree of Knowledge—not the forbidden fruit, but the rosy, wine-scented apples that hung from the phantom branches of beauty and romance. Clensy seemed to come under some mystical spell as he dreamed on. He fancied he could hear and see Sestrina as she stole down

some memory on sandalled feet, singing by a murmuring sea-shore, the light of the stars in her eyes, the rose of beauty on her lips. It was not so strange that he should have such wild fancies, for Clensy was a believer in the reincarnation theory and in anything that seemed more hopeful than the dubious possibility of the resurrection of dead bones. He had also come across a book in Acapulco which had greatly impressed him, since it told him that five hundred millions of mortals who dwelt in the wise East, believed in the reincarnation and transmigration of souls. Adams had wondered what on earth our hero was reading about when he had sat up all night dipping into the pages of magic that told the mysteries of old Japan and the ancient Eastern creeds. It was no trouble for Clensy to reverse the mythical significance of Greek sculptural art, such as the god Hypnus with his two children, sleep and death, holding inverted torches in their hands. Clensy felt assured that he had known the oblivion of Lethe's dark stream, and yet could remember a life across the ages where he had eaten the golden apples of the Hesperides.

"It's better to think the Fates have honoured me with the immortality of mortality, so that I can at least feel assured of the mortality that *dreams* immortality, far better than believing in the dubious things people seem to believe in," he mused.

And as he sat there, indulging in strange metaphysics, hobnobbing with Semiramis and a few Assyrian kings and queens he had known somewhere away in the background of his creed, he dropped his pipe from his listless fingers—crash! on the floor, and the sound rumbled like an avalanche down the corridors of his dreaming mind. The visions vanished. Adams's solitary eye loomed before him; back came the fetid smells and wretchedness of a present existence, making Clensy shiver as though with cold.

"God forbid that this is the great reality of life, and not the illusive dream!" he muttered, as he silently

cursed the dab of that great sponge of reality which had swept across the mirror and had shown him such beautiful dreams.

It was only natural that Clensy's metaphysical speculations should give him kaleidoscopic glimpses of physical beauty and not glimpses of visionary beauty, which men associate with the heavens. For to believe in the incarnation of the soul is to believe in the immortality of the flesh. Clensy realised this, and often tried to explore the depths of his own mind, but invariably returned to the upper regions with a sigh, convinced that he was his own heaven and hell. "It's no good, I'm a sinner; the beauty of that which I can see and feel is greater than that which I must imagine." So he mused in his foolishness, unable to read his own soul. But do not condemn Clensy. He was young; the fires of youth ran molten in his veins. The great alchemist, Sorrow, had not yet knocked at his door, bringing those phials and magic potions that transmute men and women into their older, other selves—sometimes changing them into Angels and sometimes Devils.

CHAPTER VII

"HULLO, boy! how's the wind blowing?" said the boisterous Bartholomew Biglow when he met Clensy a week after the young Englishman had betrayed Sestrina, through so carelessly brushing the fern and dead leaf from her *sarong*.

"I wish the wind would blow a bit cooler," replied Clensy as he fanned his perspiring face with his silk handkerchief.

"Thank God you're alive and up where the wind blows!" said Biglow as, to Clensy's great relief, he released his vigorous grip from his hand.

"You might lift your hat or blow me a friendly kiss

when we meet," said Clensy, as he spread his tingling fingers out and made a wry face.

"Would you like to come with me on a splendid adventure, something that will interest you, a sight to please the gods while the Haytian ladies exhibit their dusky charms as they do the *chica* dance before dear, nice, religious old men."

"What do you mean? It sounds interesting, I admit," said Clensy, as he looked calmly into the handsome flushed face of his strange comrade.

"I mean that I've got a pretty good idea where at least one of the *vaudoux* temples is situated."

Then Biglow told Clensy that he had received certain information, and meant to go off into the mountains without delay to try and get a glimpse of the terrible papaloi and see what really happened when they attended the rites of their creed.

"We'll see a sight, as well as receiving the reward that's offered!" said Biglow, giving one of his magnificent winks.

"Isn't it a bit risky?" said Clensy, as he thought of all he had heard about the *vaudoux* horrors, and imagined what desperate characters men must be who attended such revolting orgies.

Biglow pooh-poohed Clensy's misgivings.

"You can either come or stop away. I'm going tomorrow, and Adams is coming with me."

Saying this, Biglow shrugged his shoulders and again waited Clensy's reply.

Clensy was not a coward, neither was he a fool; he knew that a reward of five hundred pounds would not be offered for information of the *vaudoux* worshippers if getting such information was as easy as Biglow's manner seemed to suggest. Besides, had not de Cripsny hinted that President Gravelot was a *vaudoux* worshipper? And what would Sestrina think if she ever heard that Clensy had been one of the party who had caused her father to be shot! For that's what would

happen if the French government officials got hold of the miscreants.

As Clensy stood reflecting, Biglow, who had been watching his face, said, "Don't you worry about Sestrina's pa. I won't hurt him if we *do* find out that he is anything to do with these damnable cannibals." Then the gun-runner added, "Besides, I know what I'm about; even if we were caught, I've got the trick card up my sleeve." Saying this, Biglow explained to Clensy how he was in league with the Cacao insurgents, who were deadly enemies of the British and French authorities, and were staunch friends to the *papaloi* and all who were connected with the *vaudoux* fetish.

"You don't understand. I can easily turn the tables if things turned up rough." And as Biglow chatted on and made things look quite rosy, Clensy, though he really did not understand half the gun-runner said, made up his mind to accompany Biglow in his search in the mountains hard by for the secret *vaudoux* temples.

The risk of the adventure and all that he might see of the inner working of the strange fetish, warmed Clensy's ardour up immensely as he reflected over it all.

"Perhaps Biglow will be so successful that he will get such information as will enable the authorities to smash the whole infernal fetish creed up!" And as he continued to reflect and thought of all the possibilities, his zeal increased till he was as eager to go in search of the secret fetish places as was Biglow. His imagination worked and worked till he pictured Sestrina standing before her father with bowed head, as he tried to lure her to become a convert to the revolting creed which he himself indulged in.

"Who knows! I may be the means of saving Sestrina from falling before a father's vile temptation and becoming steeped in the blood, superstition and debauchery of an old West African cannibalistic fetish creed!" So ran Clensy's thoughts; and when Biglow, Adams and he set out the next day for their journey to

the mountains, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, Clensy was the most enthusiastic over the great possibilities of the venture.

The weather was very hot, consequently they had given themselves plenty of time for the venture. Biglow, who had once been employed by the American Government to help put down slave traffic in the South Sea Islands, was in his element. He had made all plans for the venture without a hitch. Both Clensy and Adams were equipped with revolvers and murderous-looking clasp-knives. When Biglow had handed Adams the clasp-knife and revolver, the derelict sailorman had turned quite pale. It wanted those deadly-looking weapons and Biglow's serious-looking face to make his dull brain realise that they were not going off to gather strawberries. Even Clensy looked thoughtfully at the open clasp-knife's bright blade and at the revolver, and then, taking his silk handkerchief from his pocket, blew his nose vigorously, just to relieve his feelings.

As soon as they had got away from the town they entered the thick jungle country that lies inland from Port-au-Prince. After tramping three miles they camped by the palm-clad elevations of the lower mountain slopes, near Chocalo gullies. As they sat smoking their pipes, Biglow tugged at the tips of his big moustachios and gave repeated chuckles, presumably over all that his sanguine mind expected to happen when he had discovered the hiding-place of the fetish devotees.

"Don't yer fink it's dyngerous a-coming up 'ere alone to catch myderers and cannibals?" said Adams as he took another deep swill from his rum-flask and glanced nervously across the gullies and on the sombre forests of mahogany trees. Then he proceeded to remind Biglow that de Cripsny had intimated that the agents of the dreadful papaloi roamed the forests, looking out for likely folk whom they could strangle and sell to the fetish priests.

"Almighty Gawd, don't!" suddenly moaned Adams.

Biglow had replied to Adams's fears by bringing his huge hand down with a tremendous whack on the sailorman's back, and at the same time had given vent to a peal of laughter that echoed across the silent hills.

Adams rolled his eye. It was easy enough to see that he was losing his temper. There's a limit to all things. Even Clensy realised that it was more than unwise to give such a shout when they might be within a mile of the *vaudoux* stronghold. Observing Adams's consternation, Bartholomew Biglow only laughed the louder. When the swarms of bright-plumaged lories and frightened cockatoos, that had ascended in screeching clouds from their perches, had settled down again on the topmost branches of the mahogany and palm-trees, Biglow cheered Clensy and Adams up by saying, "Look ye here, I can lick a hundred niggers myself, and I happen to know for a fact that there are only about twenty-five Haytian niggers in the fetish hole which we are bound for."

"Um!" mumbled Adams, as he began to look more healthy and pleasant.

Clensy also looked more amiably settled in his mind. The fact is that their giant comrade's fearless eyes, as he sat before them pushing huge morsels of toasted damper into his mouth, inspired them with fullest confidence over the possibilities of the enterprise.

"'Ow on earth yer know all about these 'ere myderers and the exact plyce where they worshyps their gawds and women up 'ere, licks me!" said Adams, as he poured another dose of rum into his mug of hot tea.

"I take good care to know everything that's worth knowing when I come out on a game like this. Do you think I'm leaving all the knowing to the likes of you?" said Biglow, as he put forth his big boot and scattered the fire's glowing ash till it seemed that the awakening constellations of the darkening skies were sparkling in miniature in the gloom of fast-coming night which had suddenly fallen over the silent gullies.

"Smoke tells tales; can be seen miles away," said Biglow, as he glanced towards the mountains, far away to the south-west.

"Wish you'd thought of thet afore yer 'ollared so loud just now," said Adams in a complaining voice.

They had been resting about forty minutes when Biglow suddenly leapt to his feet and said, "Now's the time, come on, lads."

In a moment they were off again. The moon had risen and was sending a pale glimmer over the palm-clad slopes and distant mountains. Biglow carefully examined his revolver. Adams and Clensy did likewise.

"Wish ter Gawd it wasn't so dark," growled Adams.

"Wish the moon wasn't so high!" replied Biglow with his usual cussedness, as the three men started to creep down the slope, Adams following very carefully in the rear.

"He'll git us mydered out 'ere in this damned 'ole, and I ain't been the best o' men," whispered Adams in a hollow voice as he leaned towards Clensy's right ear. Then he added: "Wish we was a-buskin', earning money honest, as of old, pal."

"So do I," whispered Clensy, as he broke the pledge —took the proffered rum-flask from Adams's hand and took a rather big nip.

After crossing the gradual curves of the slope, they passed through a wide stretch of jungle and found themselves in a beautiful valley that seemed to wind away between the mountains. To the right of them the rugged hills slowly increased in height till they were lost below the peak of a mountain that strangely resembled a vast cross, quite distinct in the moonlight.

It was Biglow who called his comrade's attention to that strange resemblance, for he suddenly said: "Old de Cripsny was right! It *does* look like a cross in the moonlight, though I'm damned if I could see any resem-

blance when I first sighted it whilst we were tramping across the plains, way back."

"So that peak was your guide," thought Clensy, as he stared up at the distant peak, and no longer wondered how it was that Biglow tramped along in one direction without the slightest hesitation, as though he was going over some well-known track.

"This way, lads, don't keep on that path," suddenly said Biglow in a low voice. Then he pointed to the ground and showed them a pathway that had most certainly been made through the tramp of human footsteps. Biglow's voice had become subdued. His erstwhile jovial countenance had become serious-looking.

"If *he* looks serious, there's something to be serious about," was Clensy's uncomfortable reflection as he looked at his revolver and began to wonder if he would ever see the sunrise again.

"Keep to the sand; for heaven's sake keep to the sand!" said Biglow in a premonitory voice, as they sank up to their ankles into the silvery dust as they got off the beaten track.

"There's no telling who might come along that pathway," said Biglow, as they found themselves once again in the shadows.

"Look out! a light on the starboard bow!" whispered Biglow, just as Clensy and Adams were hoping that they had been brought on a wild-goose chase. Sure enough, right below the cross-shaped peak, far away at the end of the valley, gleamed a tiny light.

Clensy and Adams stared in each other's eyes. What was going to be Biglow's next move, they both wondered? The big man's ears had gone stiff, alert, like a mastiff's, as he stood there, his hand arched over his brow, his eyes staring as though with delight at the tell-tale gleam that flickered somewhere between the palm trunks ahead of them.

"Blest if the moon isn't over the peak, in the exact position that I want it!" said Biglow.

"Wa jer mean ?" said Adams, as he lifted his solitary eye and gazed nervously towards the mountain peak.

"Why, the moon's the clock of the *papoloi* cannibal priests, and when it hangs over that peak it is a sign that the priests must offer sacrifices on the fetish altars of the *vaudoux*. Old Crippy said so, and he evidently knows, or else why is that light down the valley and the moon hanging like a Chinese lantern exactly over that big cross up there with a cabbage on top of it ?"

Adams and Clensy looked towards the mountain. "It do look loike a cabbage that 'ere nob on top of it," growled Adams as his eye shifted about, so nervous did he feel.

"Come on," said Biglow, "don't stand there gaping."

The next moment Adams and Clensy obeyed Biglow's orders. Without hesitating both went down on their bellies and crawled along the silver sand, Biglow leading the way. Adams began to make a bit of a fuss as he went wriggling along on all fours, dragging his stout corporation as high as possible over the stones and scrub. Presently the three of them had crossed through the thick scrub and bamboo growth that divided them from the treeless slope that led nearly to the end of the valley. Peeping through the edge of the jungle growth, they peered across the sands that ran towards the place where the tell-tale light gleamed, and stared like men in a dream. There before them, not more than five hundred yards away, stood about a dozen dark men robed in white surplices, the goats' horns, the *vaudoux* symbol, stuck on their heads. The horns gave a weird, devilish appearance to the huddled, slowly moving figures.

"Keep yer peckers up, don't get nervous," said Biglow, as Adams and Clensy suddenly bobbed their heads back into the jungle leaves, dreading that they might be observed. Adams looked like having a fit when Biglow nudged him violently in the ribs, and said in a stage whisper; "Five hundred pounds, old boy! Five hundred!"

"You've gone mad ter talk loud like that in a hawful time like this 'ere," Adams almost hissed. Biglow seemed delighted to see Adams's extreme funk, and the vicious light of his solitary eye.

"We're not at a picnic, Biglow," said Clensy as he too stared at his giant comrade, feeling a trifle irritated.

"We're at something a damned sight better!" replied Biglow as he pointed in the direction of the white-robed priests moving about in the gloom.

Most certainly, the scene before their eyes was more like the description of some brigand's cave in a dime novel, than anything that Clensy could liken it to. Even Biglow rubbed his eyes as he stared again, and the light from the head priest's torch fell in such a way that they distinctly saw two coffins lying at the feet of those swarthy, surpliced, fetish worshippers. And as the three men watched, they saw those dark forms stoop and slowly lift the two coffins, and then begin to move towards the wide, but low entrance of a cavern that ran deep into the mountain's side. So brilliant was the moonlight that they distinctly saw the figures bend their horned heads as they carried their gruesome load through the low-roofed cavern doorway.

"You'll see the sight of your lives when you get in there," said Biglow.

For a while Adams refused to budge, and said he wasn't going to be murdered by cannibals for twenty thousand pounds. But Biglow's fearless eyes and sanguine manner revived the ex-sailorman's courage. "Awl roight, Gawd forgive yer if I'm mydered!" said Adams, and then the three men started to crawl slowly along the edge of the jungle, making their way towards the cavern's entrance.

"Don't get flustered," said Biglow as he turned his head while still on his stomach, then added: "All you've got to do, is to hold your revolvers ready, and shout your loudest if I give the signal, and all will be well. I've fought three hundred niggers down at Sumatra,

and routed an army of nine hundred niggers armed with drums and spears on the West Coast of Africa."

"'Ope it ain't all talk," wailed Adams as they crept under the fern trees that grew thickly within a few feet of the cavern's entrance. They suddenly stopped. They could hear sounds of music.

"They're dancing to the *chica* jigs! Now for a ju-ju show!" chuckled Biglow. The gun-runner's careless levity braced Clensy's and Adam's nerves wonderfully. "Come on, lads!" The next moment Biglow had boldly stood erect, and had run across the soft sands that separated the three of them from the cavern's entrance. In another moment he had glanced hastily round, and seeing no sign of the *vaudoux* devotees, had slipped into the opening, the rocky cleft which led into the subterranean chambers of the secret *vaudoux* temples. Clensy and Adams immediately revealed their implicit faith in all that their courageous comrade did—they at once followed him.

"Keep close to me, lads," said Biglow as he stole slowly along the side of the rocky wall of a passage that widened as it deepened.

"Well, now!" muttered Clensy. They could hear a voice singing a weird, sweet strain to words in a strange tongue. It was a woman's voice, and the subterranean hollows produced a magical effect as the echoes of the song floating about and re-echoed, sounding like exiled strains of music in despair, calling for the brightness and beauty of the world outside.

"Gawd save me bacon!" said, or rather moaned Adams as the three of them dodged back into the deeper shadows, and hid behind the boulders that stood like massive pillars holding up the glittering crystalline subterranean roof. So silent were they as they stood there that they could hear each other's breathing.

"All's well, so far," whispered Biglow. They were in a risky position though, for the slightest sound would betray their presence. The passage where they stood

was about eighteen feet wide, so they were fortunately out of the way of anyone who might pass in or out of the fetish chambers. They stood still, breathless, like wonderfully chiselled statues, the highest thing in sculptural art, when a big mulatto fellow, clad in a surplice, walked down the passage from the chambers. They saw him go to the cavern's entrance and peer cautiously out into the night. He was doing sentry duty, was on watch to give warning should anyone be seen approaching the *vaudoux* caves. The three hidden men saw his huge form glide by them as he passed along the passage on his way back to the hollow chambers. So close was he to Clensy that he felt a cool whiff of air touch his sweating face as the mulatto's surpliced robe swished by.

"Come on," whispered Biglow. The next moment they had arrived before the opening of some large inner chamber. By the dazzling glimmer of hanging lamps they knew they were close to the sacrificial altars of the terrible *vaudoux*, the altars that inspired strong Haytian men with fear, making them tremble when they passed through lonely forests by night, altars that inspired women and children with a vague terror of the devil as they whispered and stared with awestruck eyes by the firesides of the lonely homesteads round Port-au-Prince.

Biglow had already fixed his eye to a chink in the rocky wall. He could see all that was passing in the lofty chamber beyond. Adams, who had crouched behind Biglow, was vigorously chewing tobacco plug in an attempt to calm his excited nerves.

"Come you here, lad," whispered Biglow; and Clensy, taking a place beside the intrepid gun-runner, at once fixed his eye to the chink. The sight Clensy saw made his brain swim in bewilderment. The scenic effect, while peeping through that tiny hole in the rocky wall, was as though he had fixed his eye to the tube of some marvellous telescope that revealed a scene of revelry on another world beyond the stars, some dim

landscape faintly lit by a little sky, shining with the glittering light of starry constellations of stalactites. Had Clensy suddenly taken a peep at the heavens through a telescope and discovered God enthroned, hail-fellow-well-met with the devil on some infinite night-out, in a seraglio down a back alley of the constellation of Hercules, roaring forth the infinite laughter of the spheres, watching His own voluptuous houris and puppets dancing in the drama of some sensuous lapse, his face could not have expressed greater surprise. But the scene which Clensy saw had no kindredship with human conceptions of the mysteries of the unknowable overwatching the knowable. Relentless reality, unshadowy, full of mortal frailness and sensuous passion, and lacking that æsthetic sanctitude of beauty and coldness which mortals imagine when dreaming over immortal things, was vividly expressed on the faces of that secret assemblage. The weird atmosphere of indescribable remoteness which the scene conjured up in Clensy's brain was intensified by the swinging glow of innumerable lamps which hung from the cavern's wide roof, giving the scene of impassioned abandonment an unreal, misty effect, as the handsome mulatto girls and women and men whirled about, waving their arms, chanting melodies in Haytian patois. The creole women, clad in blue and yellowish diaphanous robes, specially fashioned for the vigorous performance of the *chic* and *bambalou* dances in their primitive form, moved their shadowy-like limbs rhythmically to the chanting accompaniment of stern-looking papaloi and negroes. Haytian chiefs, who stood by, staring with burning eyes, repeatedly raised their sacred goblets full of white rum, and murmured "*Wanga Louye garou*," which was the cry of the terrible papaloi priests who were known as "Les Mystéres."

Notwithstanding the terror, the lust and cruelty associated with the rites of the fetish, Clensy and Biglow came under the magic spell of the music, and the alluring

movements of the dancing houris, for such they looked. Three of the Haytian girls appeared strikingly beautiful as they performed the mystical passes of the forbidden ritual. Suddenly they stopped whirling, and, forming rows, swayed in front of the dreaded papaloi making graceful obeisance to those fetish priests, holding their robes high, bowing with delicate grace before the burning eyes of the swarthy white-surpliced voluptuaries. Under the influence of the fetish drinks and frenzied fanaticism the girls' and women's eyes shone like living jewels.

"Holy Mary!" exclaimed Biglow. The misty forms of the dancers stood perfectly still, and the two coffins which Biglow and Clensy had seen at the cavern's entrance, were suddenly dragged into view by two huge negroes.

"Lou potoa," moaned one of the papaloi, a venerable looking aged debauchee who wore a poetic-looking white beard. Then a pretty creole maid ran forward, and, severing the ropes which were round the two coffins, removed the lids. Nothing seemed too strange to occur that night as Clensy and Biglow stared in astonishment —the inmates of the two coffins sat up, were gazing on the assemblage with glazed, vacant looking eyes, their jaw-bindings still on! Clensy noticed that their hands were tied behind them.

"God!" was all that the young Englishman could mutter, but it sufficiently expressed his feelings at that moment when God seemed so far away.

"They're sick men or women who have been buried alive, drugged, and hurriedly buried."

"Good heavens! what do you mean?" gasped Clensy.

"I simply mean that those two men (one was a man and the other a woman) have been sold to the papaloi while they were sick, and after being drugged and buried have been dug up by the *vaudoux* thugs, stolen from the cemeteries by night, coffins and all!"

"Are they going to kill them, do——" Clensy said no more. A tall negro had stepped forward, and had

dragged the coffins with their inmates back into the shadows. It was the sight of the terrible papaloi priest who had suddenly stepped forward, and had placed a large basket down on the stage that had startled Clensy. This individual was the sacred executioner, and he wore the horns of a goat on his bald, polished skull, which gave him a demoniacal appearance. The rows of creole and mulatto girls prostrated themselves before the executioner.

The whole assemblage of that cavern chamber stood in perfect silence when the negro priest stooped and raised the lid of the basket, revealing the enclosed victim, trussed, ready for the sacrificial altar—a terror-stricken mulatto girl! The girl's eyes gazed in vacant terror at the stern chiselled-like faces of the papaloi who at once surrounded her. No mercy shone in the eyes of those hungry looking fanatics of the most blood-thirsty creed that has ever sent cries of anguish to God. The girl's mute appeal, for her mouth was gagged, made no impression on the hearts of the hot-blooded African and Haytian men and women who witnessed that sight. The greater her grief, the more terrifying her convulsive throes, the more glory to the fetish deities whom they worshipped. The wretched victim was the *Goat Without Horns;* her living blood the anticipated libation that must be drunk with white rum when those terrible fetish men and women knelt before the *vaudoux* altars. No Marquesan, no Fijian cannibalistic orgy of the old pre-Christian times ever approached in cruelty and lingering terror the torture that those semi-civilised Haytians meted out to their victims. The *Goat Without Horns* was the chosen of the dark powers, the honoured of their people, and so why should their hearts be touched by the victim's anguish?

Undoing the sennet thongs that bound the girl's legs together, they made her stand on the *vaudoux* altar. Her terror was so great that her limbs trembled like blown leaves, her fingers moving convulsively.

"*Savoot, garou*!" wailed a hoarse voice. That voice and those dreadful words sent a death-like silence and chill into Clensy's soul. Even Biglow's bosom gave a half-stifled sigh as he quietly drew his revolver from his pocket. A tall, handsome man had suddenly stepped forward; he removed his cloak.

"Good heavens! impossible!" murmured Clensy. But it wasn't impossible at all, for there, as real as Clensy's surprise, stood President Gravelot, Sestrina's father. The fear of Clensy's heart over the risk he was running through being in that place, was extinguished as his whole soul became centred with an intense curiosity on the scene before him. His eyes began to scan eagerly the rows of robed women and girls, many in their teens, who made up the strangely assorted audience of that terrible seraglio of bloodthirsty superstition and indiscribable lust that was sanctified by the presence of the *vaudoux* priests. A great fear had begun to haunt Clensy's brain—was Sestrina among that crew? Why were some of the female adherents as well as the men, wearing masks that only revealed their burning eyes? Already the frenzy of drink and superstition had seized those fetish devotees. The hot-blooded negro and Haytian priests were already lifting their hands as they chanted the weird *vaudoux* melodies. They were wonderful strains that they chanted, inasmuch as they suggested the indescribable debauchery of the men and women who sang. Some of the young mulatto and creole girls were already lying in postures of stupefied abandonment on the couches and settees of that sumptiously furnished subterreanean temple chamber, some weeping and laughing in the hysteria and religious fervour which had seized them. Others stood as though transfixed by a terrible curiosity, yes, as they watched in fiendish anticipation to see the coming torture of the sacrificial victim.

By the wall, just behind the altars, stood a large stone figure of the Virgin Mary, one chiselled arm

outstretched, holding the figure of a little child—it was a diabolical, blasphemous perversion of the beautiful symbol of the Christian creed. Even Clensy and Biglow became imbued with a sudden tinge of heathenish superstition at that moment, for a strange-looking black figure, that had been standing by the altar, had commenced to dance in a silent, unsubstantial manner. It was waving its shadowy hands, mimicking every movement of the priests who were going through the mystical passes of the *vaudoux* rites. And as that shadowy figure danced and the whole audience stared, spellbound, the gleams of the lamps on the figure of the Virgin just behind it, were distinctly visible through its form! Clensy, his eye still fixed to the chink, slowly recovered his mental equilibrium, and was convinced that Sestrina was not present with her parent.

"Thank God, *she's* not here," he muttered to himself as he too gripped his revolver. He knew that Bartholomew Biglow was not going to stand there and see the young mulatto girl sacrificed before their eyes. Biglow turned towards Adams, "Clear out of it, run your damndest."

Adams needed no second request to take to his heels; he, surely, had never run so fast in his whole career as he ran when he bolted down the passage, and vanished from sight. Clensy and Biglow were good runners, and they well knew that Adams, through being stout, would be a terrible encumbrance were he with them when the time came for flight.

"Keep still, lad, leave it all to me," whispered Biglow. Then he added; "Wish we had my best pal, Samuel Bilbao here, he'd glory in a fix like this, he would!"

And as the big man muttered the foregoing, alluding to a celebrated South Sea character who was noted for his pluck and adventurous career, he gave a quiet chuckle and clicked the trigger of his revolver. "Keep quiet, lad!"

"All right!" whispered Clensy, for he knew that

Biglow was a splendid shot, whereas he might fire and miss. The head papaloi priest had stepped forward. The whole audience stood breathless, spellbound, as they watched to witness the fatal thrust that would make the victim's blood gush into the sacramental goblet. Clensy felt sick. The victim already stood on the terrible slab, her anguished paralysed form held up by two white-surpliced negroes who stood on either side, gripping her arms. Then the aged, almost venerable looking papaloi priest, stepped forward and began to mumble something. His head was thrown back, his beard raised towards the roof as he continued mumbling the sacrificial thanksgiving prayer! It all happened in a few seconds; the aged papaloi stood with hand raised. Clensy and Biglow saw the shining steel of the long blade hover before the victim's terror-stricken eyes—the slayer must aim true!

"Crack!" the papaloi-slayer's arm was shattered near the wrist! Four more shots followed in swift succession. Gravelot was winged in the shoulder, another fell with the top of his head blown off! Then Biglow snatched Clensy's revolver from his hand, and, rushing into that chamber of horrors, snatched the sacrificial victim up in his broad arms!

And what did the bloodthirsty *vaudoux* worshippers who drank human blood and sacrificed helpless children, do? They bolted like a drove of frightened shadows, went flying in all directions. Maybe they imagined that a hundred government gendarmes had charged them. Sure enough, Biglow yelled loud enough for such an idea to seize their cowardly imaginations as the echoes of his mighty voice and Clensy's shouts rumbled through the chambers of that subterranean place.

Clensy never could give a coherent account as to how he got safely out of that terrible *vaudoux* temple in the mountains. He had long legs, and probably that fact, more than his heartfelt prayers, saved his life.

CHAPTER VIII

THE next day Clensy, Biglow, and Adams sat whispering together over a table in the small café chantant near Toujeaur. They all appeared calm enough after their adventure. Adams was the only one who had escaped from the *vaudoux* temple unscathed. Clensy had a swollen lip and Biglow had got out of the mêlée with nothing more than a large contusion over his left eyebrow. Biglow seemed in high spirits. He was delighted to think that he had been able to save the wretched mulatto girl from being slain on the *vaudoux* altars.

"What a fine missionary I am!" he said, as, smacking his leg with his hand, he gave a huge smile of approbation over his pleasure in the thought of all he had accomplished. "Nice little kid she was too!" he said as he referred to the maid he had rescued. "She's as safe as houses now; I've placed her in the hands of an aged Haytian woman, a special friend of mine, one whom I can trust."

"Wasn't she thankful! and the way she clung to you and kissed you when she came to!" said Clensy, referring to the rescued girl's hysterical delight when she found herself safe in the jungle, her brow being fanned by Biglow and Clensy when she regained consciousness.

For the moment the three men sat silent. Even Adams's solitary eye looked dim as they sat there and thought of the mulatto girl's delight when she, realising the whole position, had clung like a child at Biglow's breast.

"Do you mean to inform the authorities about it all?" said Clensy.

"No lad, I've thought it over, it wouldn't be much use. You see, Gravelot is in with the fanatics, and he

would be sure to deny everything, and possibly turn the tables on us. By now they've wrapped their wounds up and buried the dead too."

"But Gravelot got a shot in the shoulder, I saw him stumble and clap his hand to it; how would he explain that?" said Clensy.

"Oh, he'd say that we waylaid him, shot and robbed him while he was on his way to church, evening Mass, or something, and we'd get shot for that," replied Biglow as he swallowed a tumbler full of whisky and water.

"Maybe you're right," said Clensy feeling much relieved. The fact is, that Clensy was trying to find out what Biglow's intentions in the matter really were. The young Englishman didn't want Sestrina's father arrested by the British officials and shot. He knew that he would be called upon to give evidence in the courts, and that Sestrina would naturally look upon him as one who had helped put her father to death.

Biglow's capacious mind had swiftly come to the conclusion that it would pay him better to have the president under his thumb than to attempt to claim the reward from the authorities.

"Stroikes me we'd better clear out of this blasted 'ole; it's getting 'ot for us, there's a revolution a-coming too!" said Adams as he turned and shot a stream of tobacco juice through the open window.

"I don't believe all I hear about the coming revolution," exclaimed Clensy.

"You don't, don't you?" said Biglow. Then he continued: "Would you be surprised to know that the Cacaos insurgents have already had the first skirmish in the mountains with the government soldiers? Bless you, they came down only the other night and robbed the Haytian banks and shot several of the nigger police. No one's safe here. Men are arrested every day and shot for openly showing their dislike to Gravelot. Duels are being fought in the streets every day in

Port-au-Prince. The French chargé de affaires seems to have no power over the mad population, or is indifferent to all that's going on. Its quite a common thing to hear shots in the night coming from the direction of the hills when the government scouts met the insurgents."

"Surely things are not as bad as you paint them," said Clensy. Then he suddenly remembered how he had heard sounds of shooting while in bed, and had thought some one was out by night shooting owls in the mahogany forests near Selle district.

"Not a very rose-tinted account of the present state of affairs here," thought Clensy as he left his two comrades and strolled back to his lodgings. But Clensy was really more worried about Sestrina than anything else. The idea that her father was an adherent to *vaudoux* creed had greatly upset him at first. He was quite assured that Sestrina had nothing whatever to do with the *vaudoux*. And as he thought over it all, he realised that daughters are quite helpless so far as their father's sins are concerned. "Children can't rear their parents and subdue their passions and lead them on the better path; things might be better if they could," he thought to himself as he stood before his looking-glass and brushed his hair. He was making himself look spruce, for he had made up his mind to go that same evening and see if he could meet Sestrina wandering by the palace. He had met her several times by appointment, but she had not turned up at the last appointment. "Old Gravelot must be home, laid up with a shot wound in his shoulder, so he's out of the way," he thought, and as he reflected he made up his mind to ask Sestrina if she would elope with him and clear out of Hayti.

"I'll see her to-night if I have to sneak into the palace," was his mental reflection as he hastily brushed himself down. It wanted about two hours before sunset, and so he began to wander about. Then he

strolled out into the street and started to go through the town so that he could take a walk in the country before it was time to go and haunt the palace grounds in an attempt to meet Sestrina.

"Biglow did not exaggerate about the people here being mad over fetishes and possible revolutions," he thought as the dark-eyed mulatto maids and handsome creole girls and men stared at him as he passed down the street. "Pretty fine state of affairs," he thought as he began to ponder over future possibilities, what might happen to Sestrina if a revolution did break out in Hayti. Then he eased his troubled mind by recalling de Cripsny's words when he, Clensy, had asked him about the matter.

"It might be months and months and den all smooth down again, like it has done before," the half-caste Frenchman had said. But still, notwithstanding de Cripsny's sanguine outlook, Clensy noticed that the old characteristic levity and song and brightness of the city's inhabitants had gone. And even he knew that the insurgents, or Cacaos, as they were called, had become very powerful as they massed together and gathered recruits from the cities as far away as Vera Cruz and the sea ports of the Caribbean Sea. Indeed, no one in Hayti knew exactly which was the potent authority, the Cacaos or the Government, by virtue of the superiority of numbers, for, in Hayti, force of arms inevitably decided all political controversies. Biglow was about the only white man who knew the true state of affairs, and he knew that the insurgents were the most powerful so far as numbers were concerned, also that they had been so well supplied with cash from a secret source that they had been able to purchase several steamers from the American shipowners. Even as Clensy arrived at the top of the slope and gazed seaward, he could see the tips of the mast of the steamer, which was one of many, that had stolen into the harbour loaded up with guns and munition from the United States.

Clensy had arrived into the wooded part of the country, half a mile from the crowds of ugly houses in the valleys below. He quickened his footsteps. His heart was thumping with apprehension as he thought of Sestrina, and wondered if any harm would come to her if a revolution did break out. "Oh, to hold her in my arms, kiss her lips, and feel she was mine for ever! I'd starve, risk anything, do any crime to possess her, body and soul, to gaze in her eyes and touch her sweet flesh with my lips!" And as the young Englishman reflected, the ecstasy of his feelings for Sestrina seemed to overwhelm his senses like a mad frenzy. The thought that he might lose the girl seemed to stun him, as though destiny had given him a tremendous blow on the heart. "Why, I'm as bad as the frenzied *vaudoux* worshippers," he muttered as he vaguely realised how strong a factor his passions were in the ecstasy which came when he thought of Sestrina.

"I haven't always felt like this. Perhaps it's some peculiar effect through seeing those terrible *vaudoux* devotees the other night," he thought as he felt a great wave of passion sweep his better self away, till he wished he was some fanatic so that he might make Sestrina the symbol of his creed and worship the shrine of her loveliness! Clensy's passion for Sestrina had strangely materialised, changed his old spiritual ideals into sensuous dreams. Beauty, religion and all the soulful wonder over the unknown were no longer visible to him in the mystery of the skies, but were expressed in woman's eyes, her loosened hair, her red lips and the amorous beauty of her form.

Biglow, only a day or two before, had slapped him on the shoulder and said: "All men go mad once in their lifetime over a woman, but they're not in love till they stand over a woman's grave, as I've done, and then seen all her beauty shining in the sunlight on the flowers over her."

It must be admitted that Clensy had stared long and

curiously at Biglow when he spoke like that; it was so unexpected from the lips of one who seemed to be the last man who he would have expected to show signs of spiritual sentiment.

The visible world, to Clensy, existed only as a vast garden wherein love could walk and enjoy the physical emotions and ecstatic pangs of the senses. He saw Creation as an almighty impassioned lover, holding the stars in her eyes of night, the oceans kissing her feet of a thousand shores. Sex had become the godhead of his desires. In short, Clensy saw the world, nay, the universe itself, as a vast deification of himself, whereas he was only the tiniest, humblest miniature of creation's conscious yearning to make the leaf green; his own life no more than a sunbeam's warmth on a wild flower.

And Sestrina? the maid of southern blood, the light of the tropic suns and stars in her veins? She did not rave when she thought of Clensy, she made no god or goddess of her physical sensations. Neither did her mind conjure up poetical impressions and pictures over high aspirations which were only daubs painted from the fires of a plysical passion. No; Sestrina saw Clensy as some wonderful apostle of her own simple faith, the religion which was Père Chaco's, the Catholic priest, the one who had encouraged the girl's spiritual dreams since she was a toddling child. It was a pure woman's faith, and was destined to expand, to grow like a lovely tree on *the lonely desert isle—the soul which is in all of us—set in the boundless seas encircled by the dim starlit horizons of mortal imagination.*

As Clensy stood on top of the lovely hills and drank in the sombre beauty of the shifting sunlight on the ancient trees, he began to feel strangely calm. "I'm worrying about revolutions like a foolish child; it's only a rumour; yet, if anything happened to her! Ah, after all, she is only a woman, and so little dreams

how deeply men can love, how eternal their faith in woman is." Ah, Clensy!

As Clensy so reflected, he walked into the shadows of the palms and then started to climb the slope's side. Though he was well aware of the risk he ran in wandering alone into the solitudes around Port-au-Prince, he walked carelessly onward. All that worried Clensy was how to kill time till dusk fell over Hayti so that he might steal back to the palace precincts and haunt the orange groves in the hope of seeing Sestrina. Gazing around, he discovered that he had already arrived at the lower slopes of the mountains. He could see the tiny spirals of smoke ascending from distant villages that were nestled in the valleys far to the right. The brooding silence of the wooded country calmed his feverish thoughts. His mind became absorbed in the deep philosophy of the whispering trees and the picturesqueness of nature's lovely talents which were expressed in all the tropical scenery. The cool sea winds, drifting inland, stirred the tops of the leafy trees and the multitudinous patterns that decorated the flower-bespangled carpet of the valleys, the slopes and rolling hills. What lore of the ages were the wise old trees about him whispering? He distinctly heard them sigh the far-away romance of the distant seas. "How beautiful!" he murmured as a faint breath came to his nostrils from the decaying tropical flowers. In the magic of his poetic mood those richly scented floating wines of creation's oldest vintage, intoxicated his senses and whispered infinite wisdom to him. The big fiery blossoms, that resembled the blooms of the Australian waratah tree, brightened the gullies and hillsides as the sun sank behind the western peaks of the mountains. There was grandeur, a majestic kind of beauty in the sight of the mighty mahogany trees that stood to the left of him. But somehow, the sight of it all sickened Clensy's heart. The scenery lacked the refreshing green of his native hills. Clensy had the

artistic eye that loves nature's brooding handiwork in leaf and flower, and the solid architectural grandeur of gnarled trunks. It was born in him, a strain deeper than his love of sensuous beauty, and, so, was the strain which would survive the mad passions of sanguine youth.

"Ah, there's no scenery in the world that can outrival the peaceful loveliness of the English woods, the pine-clad hills and the undulating pastures of richest green." So ran Clensy's meditations, and as his eyes roamed over the sombre forest pigments, he thought of the wild hedge-rose of his native land, the spring-quickening valleys and the waking primroses, and felt homesick. The sombre mahogany trees and the broad-leafed palms, in which droves of parrots and cockatoos screeched, made no appeal to him. Where was the melodious poetry of the full-throated brown thrush's song, or the wintry piping of the robin in the apple trees, or the idly flapping crows fading away like the weary dreams of sad men and women into the sunset? The cockatoo's dismal screech and the discordant cry of the daylight owl have their music too; but ah, what music can outrival the soaring song of the skylark, pouring forth its silvery chain of melody between the billowy green of the fields and the eternal blue of at English sky? And as Royal Clensy stood on the Haytian hills and asked himself these things, he wondered if he would ever see the Old Country again, till he almost forgot the flight of time.

In a moment he had turned about and had begun en retrace his footsteps. "By the time I arrive near the palace it will be dark," he mused, as he stared towards the west—sunset was flooding the horizon with ethereal pigments of saffron and liquid gold, hues that seemed to be magically reflected in opposite colours of purple, crimson, and orange tinted streaks on the mountain ranges to the east. One distant mountain peak strangely resembled a mighty dark, forest-bearded giant,

an Olympian god putting forth promontory-like arms into space, holding great sheafs of golden sunset in its hands. It looked like some tremendous shadowy symbol of the eternity of the past and the dubious hopes of the future, as though it would steal a portion of the dying day's splendour to cheer the night of gloom when the stars whispered about its rugged, calm, time-wrinkled brow.

As Clensy turned away from that weird, yet strangely beautiful symbolical sight of light on the mountains, he sighed. Then he passed swiftly down the slopes and faded into the shadows of the forest below. In less than half an hour he found himself standing by the spot where he had twice secretly met Sestrina after dark. It was a lovely trysting spot, for it was close to an inland lagoon and was sheltered by feathery palms.

"Hist, monsieur!" whispered a voice in the shadows.

Clensy turned and stared in astonishment.

"Good heavens, you!" he exclaimed, as he looked swiftly this way and that way to see if the dark woman who stood before him was accompanied by her whom he so wished to see. It was old Claircine, Sestrina's serving maid, who stood before him!

"I been 'ere ebery night, for two nights, hobing to zee yous, monsieur," whispered the old negress as she hastily took a note from the folds of her rather dilapidated *sarong* and handed it to Clensy. He ripped the *billet doux* open in feverish haste and read:

"Oh, Monsieur Royal,

"*Unhappy am I. I send Claircine every night to the trysting place hoping that she might find you there, since I cannot come myself. I know not why, but my father is having me watched, and so I have been unable to get out. I write this so that you may understand that Sestrina is always thinking of you. Ah, monsieur, you do not know how deep are the thoughts of a woman who truly loves. And since I am unable to get to you,*

I would ask you to come to me. I am in the room that is just above the balcony at the back of the palace, by the orange groves where we first met. And, Monsieur Royal, I would have you to know that the grape vine grows thick on the walls below my chamber's casement, which is ever open. So, Monsieur Royal, should an enemy wish to climb up the wall and enter my room to slay me, it could be, alas, easily accomplished. Think well, O Monsieur, over this danger of mine, and I will retire late to-morrow night.

Believe me, O Monsieur Royal, to be your
"unhappy SESTRINA, *till I see you."*

So ran Sestrina's note. The style had obviously been inspired by French novels. The delicate hint thrown out in that epistle thrilled Clensy. What else could Sestrina mean than to hint that he could, with ease, climb up the grape-vine which grew thickly on the walls below her chamber? In another moment he had taken a small bit of paper from his pocket and had written:

"*Beloved Sestrina,—If woman loves deeply, how deep must be the love of man? I will be with you to-morrow night a few moments after dusk. The grape-vine outside your chamber's window will bear the sweetest thoughts and fruits of love as it brings me to your lips and eyes.*

"*In haste.*

"*Yours,*
"ROYAL."

Claircine curtsied, then greedily grabbed the coin.
"Go immediately and give this note to your mistress."
"Dat I will, monsieur!"

No sooner was the kind old negress out of sight, than Clensy began to reflect. "What an ass I am! Why on earth didn't I say that I would go to-night and

climb the grape-vine ?" And as he mused and thought over Sestrina's letter, he resolved to go to the palace that very night. "By Jove ! what a chance, only a grape-vine to climb and then—Sestrina's eyes and arms."

Night lay over the palm-clad hills around Port-au-Prince. Clensy had already reached the palace grounds. He had escaped the vigilant eyes of two big negroes, who did sentry duty at the palace gates, by climbing over the stone walls in the rear of the palace. "Thank heaven the moon isn't up yet," Clensy thought as he slipped into the shade of the bamboos and looked up at the sky.

The tropic twilight and the ethereal, pulsing gleams of a thousand thousand stars gave sufficient light for Clensy's requirements that night. For a moment he stood perfectly still. Being assured that no one was about, he crept stealthily forward, pushing the tall ferns and scrub apart with his hands, very softly, so that his advance made no rustle. Slipping noiselessly under the orange groves he felt more at his ease. He was now familiar with the surroundings. He was at the spot where he had first met and walked with Sestrina after his first engagement as pianist at the presidential ball.

"How romantic, I'm like the hero of a romantic novel, blest if I'm not," he thought as he peered cautiously through the thickets of bamboos and spied the balcony that fronted the chamber wherein Sestrina slept.

Creeping close to the wall he spied the thick stems of the grape-vine that soared to the vine-covered casement. To Clensy's romantic soul it was indeed the magic casement that opened on the green foams of leafy, wind-stirred palms and perilous seas of romance. Even as he watched and listened Clensy heard the palms sigh some whispering melody that came in from the ocean. The fireflies were dancing like miniature constellations of stars in leafy glooms. A strange bird

began to sing, somewhere up in the mahogany tree hard by. "Too-willow, too-willow it-te-willowy lan-lone, wee-it!" it went, ere it burst forth into a merry tinkling song, as though it had suddenly got wind of all that was happening!

Clensy stood still and gazed intently up at the half-open casement: he could see no light. "Perhaps she's asleep? Or maybe she hasn't retired yet?" And, as he reflected, he lit a cigarette, carefully hiding the gleam of the lighted match in the closed hollows of his hands. Already his romantic imagination had begun to picture Sestrina in her chamber. He began to feel nervous.

"Perhaps I should first throw a pebble, give her some warning," he thought as he puffed away at his cigarette and wondered what Sestrina would think to see him appear at her chamber-casement without due warning. "Pish! what does it matter? She is a sensible Haytian girl, not a namby-pamby European girl," he muttered as he tried to find an excuse for his own meditations.

Clensy's adoration for materialised beauty, the inherent greed of his love of the sensuous—which he imagined was spiritual love—had made him secretly aspire to see something different to the shadowy, divine loveliness that the pure poetic imagination pictures when dreaming over the charms of the woman loved. He aspired to see something which would correspond with all that his physical senses felt, not the visionary form that feeds the imagination eternally with increasing hope and beauty, making the Fates whisper into the lover's ears:

> "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
> Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!"

And so Clensy was bound to be disillusioned. True enough, it was a brief disillusionment, but it came like

a hint that would reveal the briefness of sensuous beauty: and that's all. It did not give him a hint, one prophetic glimpse of the terrible drama, the unspeakable irony of human things, the vision of the truth which his eyes were to see, when, with wisdom and sorrow in his soul, he goes out of the last page of this story.

As Clensy stood there in the shadows of the bamboos his eyes brightened over his thoughts. Yet he still hesitated. He had been reared in polite society; he was the son of a gentleman and had ever lifted his hat when he passed a lady. And now—where was his spirit of chivalry?

"Men have done worse when they have truly loved a beautiful woman. And this is Hayti, not England! Hayti!"; and thinking in this wise, he thought of Sestrina sitting in the seclusion of her chamber and scattered his qualms to the winds. "Hayti, land of romance and song, and Sestrina," murmured his ardent thoughts as he put forth his hands and began to climb up the thick runners of the grape-vine! The thought of what he might see when he reached the balcony and peeped into Sestrina's chamber intoxicated his senses.

As he slowly climbed, he seemed to drift into a subconscious state. How carefully he climbed. Hand over hand he stealthily ascended, one false step and the spheres would roll askew! He suddenly stopped and breathed a sigh of relief. He had reached the jutting floor of the balcony. With his right hand he gripped the thick stem of the grape-vine, then, throwing his head back, he put forth his disengaged hand and grasped the outer support post of the railings. The next minute he had twisted his body back—for one moment he hung suspended in space, the next moment he had clutched the vine-clad railings, and had pulled himself up—he was standing on the balcony! His form was hidden in the deep shadows of the overhanging mahogany tree's branches. For a moment he groped about in trembling

indecision. It was then that he noticed the glimmer of light stealing through the clusters of flowers that grew about a casement to the right of him. "Her chamber!" He hesitated. In that supreme moment his grosser thoughts vanished. He felt as one might feel if about to fix the eye at a telescope tube that would reveal the ethereal landscapes and roaming angels of another world. The next moment he had boldly fixed his eye to a chink in the half-open shutter.

He stood in perfect safety, for the clusters of flowers and hanging vine completely hid him. "In bed!" was his mental ejaculation. He saw the bunched counterpane, its crimson lace fringe all crumpled. The outline of the lone occupant was distinctly visible through the misty mosquito curtains that draped the bed, hanging tent-like from the four high brass-nobbed posts.

"She's reading! How small a chamber, how poorly furnished!" A chill of disappointment struck his heart: he expected to see something so different. Where was the wild confusion of falling tresses? Where the magic of dreaming eyes, and the secret loveliness of a maiden's deshabille? Ah, Clensy! He had yet to learn that nothing corresponds with a mortal's conceptions of beauty, that only dreams bring happiness; that beauty like the horizon is to be imagined only, shadowed stars in water, yes, even as the stars are only the reflex of their hidden realities.

And still he stared. "Only the outline of her form under a sheet! Well! I'll tap the casement and then she'll turn in her bed, yet—perhaps I'd better——!" He gasped. The mosquito curtains had been swiftly pushed aside! "Heavens, she's getting out of bed!" He gazed with burning eyes. The supreme moment had arrived. The ecstasy of his imaginings, all that mystery and loveliness which he expected to see, made his brain reel. Just for a second he closed his eyes, yes, one wondrous blink ere his eyelids parted and he gazed again. What had happened? Anguish had wrinkled

his brow! He could hardly suppress a cry of horror escaping his lips—two bony, skeleton-like legs had suddenly protruded from beneath the laced edges of the counterpane! The castle of romance, all the loveliness which his imagination had conjured up, fell with a silent crash! The sight of those skinny legs, covered with shrunken flesh, looking like unfilled sausage skins, sent an icy chill to his heart. That awful sight was, to him, like the Egyptian skull of death shown, not before the festivities, but in the presence of empty dishes and wineless goblets.

"Thank God!" he murmured as he stared again—he had peeped through the wrong casement, it was upon the old negress, Claircine, that he had spied. She had leapt from her bed to put the lamp out! Clensy's ludicrous mistake made him feel sane. The sight of Claircine's skinny legs waving in space for one second ere they attained the perpendicular, had taught him more about the vanity of human wishes and the briefness of beauty than all the philosophies in existence.

For a moment he felt an abject fool. Then the reaction set in. His imagination began, in feverish haste, to conjure up voluptuous pictures of Sestrina's beauty, all that she must look like when compared to poor emaciated, shrunken Claircine.

"What an ass I am," he murmured as he began to creep in haste on his hands and knees towards the next casement. The shutters of that casement were also half opened and conveniently hidden by clusters of flowers and twining vine. Pushing the leaves aside with his hands, he peeped once again. No mistake this time! There on a couch was Sestrina's reclining form. She was leaning back on the couch's arm, her hair down, falling in perfect confusion over her half-clad shoulders. The delicate drapery of the couch was disturbed where one of her legs was lifted, the left knee softly couched, inclined over the right leg. The silken brown stocking, barely reaching to the knee,

intensified the soft warm flush of beauty and each dimpled curve. She placed her fingers between the laced division of her unbuttoned bodice, and taking forth a tiny scented handkerchief, placed it to her face, which was half hidden by the tangled folds of her tresses, and wept!

The sight of the weeping girl filled Clensy's heart with sorrow—and shame. He sighed, and then, for all his remorse, stared again. Sestrina had lifted her face, and, placing her hands on either cheek, was staring in tearful thought at the ceiling.

"To-morrow night and he will be here! Ah, how I long to gaze in his eyes, to hear him say those words again."

Clensy had moved closer to the half-open shutter: his perfidious ears drank in every word that escaped Sestrina's lips. She sighed. He saw her lips tremble as she breathed some rapturous thought. "What was she saying to herself?" Clensy leaned forward; the boards beneath his feet creaked! His figure stiffened as he stood alert, breathless in suspense. Had she heard that creak? He breathed a sigh of relief.

Sestrina must have thought it was a night bird fluttering in the boughs of the mahogany tree just beyond her window. She had arisen from her couch. Her eyes sparkled as though in the delight of some sudden happy idea. She moved towards the mirror, and, tossing her ringlets into greater confusion, gazed upon her image. One glossy ringlet strayed from its companions and curled serpentwise down over the billowy softness of her bosom, which was revealed through her unlaced bodice.

Clensy stared at her figure just as a mad sculptor might stare on his masterpiece. The charm of her deshabille, the mystery of her fluttering lingerie as the orange and lemon scented zephyrs floated through the open casement, intoxicated his senses. He stood spellbound, his eyes drinking in the delicate harmony

of each outline. His soul was thrilled with the beauty and mystery of all that was left to his imagination, all that was suggested, since he could only see her pretty sandalled feet, a glimpse of the arms' whiteness and the loveliness revealed between the luxuriance of her falling tresses. "God, how beautiful!" he murmured.

A deep feeling of reverence for the girl crept into his sinful heart. There was something so innocent about her pose, and her every action. She had opened a tiny sandalwood box, and taking therefrom a small powder-puff had softly dabbed it on a pimple that looked as though a ladybird had flown through the open casement and had settled on the warm whiteness of her bosom. Certainly a peculiar impression to get on Clensy's mind, but it was just like him!

"Why does she weep? I had thought to see her happy," murmured Clensy as Sestrina placed the powder-puff on the toilet, and then gazed in the mirror on her own tearful eyes.

Clensy did not know that there had been misery in the palace for the last three days. First of all, Sestrina and Claircine and Gravelot's valet, Zelong, had sat up all night talking about the rumours of a revolution. And then the President had arrived home at midnight in a fainting condition, a bullet wound in his shoulder. He had fallen down in the hall. His eyes had no longer looked cruel.

"Forgive me, Sestrina," he had murmured as Claircine, Sestrina, and Zelong had helped carry him into his chamber.

When Sestrina had found herself alone with her parent, she had wished to send for a doctor. But, no, Gravelot would not hear of such a thing. And so, Sestrina carefully bathed and bound the shot-wound which had been inflicted by Biglow's revolver. That same night the President had confessed to his daughter that he had been under the vile spell of the *vaudoux* worship.

Sestrina tried to soothe her father as he wept. His sobered senses made him realise the wickedness and cruelty of the *papaloi* and their fetish rites.

"Thank God, Sestrina, that *you* were strong enough to resist and keep true to your old Père Chaco," he tried, as he thought of all that would have happened to the girl had she responded to his wishes and attended the *vaudoux* temples.

Then the President had told Sestrina of his fears, how the Cacaos were rising in great force. Sestrina was astonished when her father informed her that the palace might be stormed by the rebels if they once got into the town. Then he had said: "Sestrina, if anything happens to me, you must fly from the palace and seek safety on one of the Government steamers and so get away from Hayti as soon as possible. The insurgents would surely shoot all who are related to me." And when the President, continuing, said, "You must not leave the palace on any account, for I have received information that several Cacaos chiefs are on watch to get my body dead or alive," Sestrina had felt terribly upset. Consequently she had writen to Clensy and begged him to come to her, and at the same time had kept her true reasons for taking this bold course to herself. It was not till Claircine had gone off with the note in hopes to see Clensy and give it him, that Sestrina, woman-like, had reflected on the matter and realised how dangerous it would be for Clensy, a white man, to be seen stealthily approaching the palace after dark.

"*Mon Dieu!* the sentinels will think he is an assassin, will think he is some Cacaos chief waiting in ambush to slay my father. O, *mon Dieu!* he will be shot, and all through me! It is I who have told him to come and climb the grape-vine to-morrow night!"

And as she sat there on the couch in her chamber, she once more bowed her head and wept bitterly.

"To-morrow night! To-morrow! I must write

another note and tell Claircine that it means death to Monsieur Royal if she does not deliver it to him."

And as she sighed, she gazed tearfully towards her casement, little dreaming that her lover's eyes at that very moment gazed upon her from behind the clusters of flowers of the half-hidden trellis work. As she sighed, Clensy once more inclined his head and listened.

"Oh! kind Père Chaco, I will see him to-morrow and confess all, and then he will pray for his safety, for my beautiful Royal's soul."

Sestrina had taken a tiny crucifix from the fold of her robe and, touching it with her lips, had murmured "Royal!"

Clensy's eyes, as they stared through the scented leaves and crimson blooms, brightened, shone like stars. His impassioned thoughts were expressed on his flushed face. He seemed to lose control over his senses and limbs too—he had leaned forward, and, swaying like something blown by a great wind, he fell through the open casement.

"Royal!"

"Sestrina mine!"

The next second they were in each other's arms.

Since the propriety of the means which Clensy had taken to meet Sestrina that night can be quibbled over, and with perfect justice too, the exclusion of much which they said and did can remain unrecorded without hurting the feelings of the sensitive, conventional minded. It will suffice to say, that Royal Clensy was a gentleman. The fact that the young Englishman had crawled on all fours, and without announcing his presence, into a maiden's bedroom at midnight, must not let it be assumed that our hero had a perverted mind. The strange things that heroes and lovers think are often very different from the things that they do—even when the opportunity of doing strange things presents itself. Though Clensy's love dream was sensuous

more than spiritual, he was not a bad type. He had a love of naturalness and a great hatred for the sickening realities of conventional life.

He had long ago spoken to himself and see through the mighty pretence of civilised communities in the cities, where fat old men and women passed in their robes of splendour through the door of the temple of fame. Metaphorically speaking, he had sickened of seeing the devotees of European *vaudoux* worship kneel before the sacrificial altars of hot meats, burning wines, and highly-seasoned foods. Even in his own little brief worship at the altars of the terrible European *papaloi* he had felt indignation when some wealthy British *vaudoux* chief had caught a maiden of innocence, had lured her into the presence of the gaudy *vaudoux* temples, and had then sacrificed her strangled body on the bloodthirsty altars of his heathenish deities. Let it be said, on Clensy's behalf, that he had often gazed on his own white unsoiled hands and felt compassion for the corn-hardened hands of weary men who had been born where the sad, mechanical charity organisation officials loudly knocked the door. Long ago he had realised that the trembling hand that toiled in the mud or brushed the boots of prosperity, might easily be the hand that could pen the perfect poem, or paint the outlines of the sorrowful saints and Madonnas, yes, the visionary creations that haunt the minds of men who are adherents to the great inborn creed, and worship at the sombre, sad altars of the Gospel of Truth and Beauty. Clensy also had the instinctive insight of the artist in his soul, consequently he saw Sestrina as a child who favoured his presence in her chamber because she felt utterly alone, and was one who had perfect trust in him by virtue of her own innocence.

Sestrina gazed into his eyes a moment, then turned her face away. Ah, how beautiful she looked as she stood there clasped in Clensy's arms, wiping the tears from her eyes with the tiny flower-decorated

handkerchief. For she had wept afresh in her delight at the sudden presence of her handsome lover.

Clensy bade her sit down on the couch. And there, as Clensy held her hand, while the fireflies danced about the wine-scented flowers of the open casement and the Haytian nightingale sang in the palms, Sestrina took delicate sniffs from her salt-bottle and slowly told him all that troubled her.

When Clensy heard of her father's fears over a possible revolution, he could hardly believe his ears. Though he was acquainted with all that rumour told about the mysterious Cacaos in the Black Mountains, he had not really seriously reflected over the matter, but had put it all down to the ignorant babblings of the negro population. It all sounded so different to him, coming from Sestrina's lips. "Revolution! Palace bombarded! Incredible!" And as the girl spoke on and he reflected deeply and began to see things in their serious, possibly true perspective, his first thought was over Sestrina's safety. The ardency of his affection for Sestrina swiftly inspired him with thoughts as to the best and happiest way to get out of the difficulty.

"Sestrina, if the palace is attacked by the rebels, you might get killed."

"I know, Monsieur Royal."

"And, knowing this, Sestrina dearest, I beg of you to consent to fly with me from this cursed hole at the first opportunity. I've got plenty of money, and we can get married somewhere and somehow. Will you do this, Sestrina?"

President Gravelot's daughter gazed at the flushed face of the young Englishman like a wondering child—with wide-open eyes. Then she blushed deeply. She had realised something of the import of what he had suddenly asked of her.

"Do you mean that I be your wife?" she whispered as she gazed intently into his eyes. Then she smiled, and placing her arms round his neck, kissed him softly

on the cheek. Then she softly released her clasp and slid gently to the floor, fell on her knees before Clensy so that he could kiss the flowers in her hair. It was an old Haytian custom, and exactly according to fashion when a maid was willing to accept one as a husband.

Clensy sat perfectly silent. Boundless happiness had left him speechless for the moment.

"Way in Australia; how beautiful!" whispered Sestrina when Clensy had told her that he had wealthy relatives in Melbourne, and it was there that he would take her.

"You agree to fly from the palace and come to me at the first sign of danger?" he said.

Sestrina nodded her head vigorously. Then they planned and planned.

"Should anything occur that separates us, I will fly to Honolulu and wait till you come."

"Why Honolulu, Monsieur Royal?"

"It's there that my people in England will send my next letters with my money in them. Also, we can easily get a passage on one of the ships for Melbourne in Honolulu."

And as Clensy spoke on and arranged a meeting spot at the T—— Hotel in B—— Street, Honolulu, Sestrina's heart bubbled with joy. In the excitement of it all she quite forgot her father's troubles, and the danger of the revolution, should there be a rising.

Though Clensy's plans to fly to Honolulu with Sestrina and go from there to Melbourne might sound foolish to worldly minds, it was the most manly and the safest course to follow. For, as has already been hinted, and as Haytian history shows, the periodical risings in Hayti were conducted with indescribable fury and bloodshed. The element of negro blood in the vast population asserted itself in terrific fury after having been pent up by the laws that compelled restraint for the passions and instinctive love of bloodshedding in the half-caste Haytians. Men, women and children

were shot down at sight by the insurgents; nothing was sacred when the war-fever was raging. Whole towns were fired, razed to the ground, and the adherents of the *vaudoux* creed lit fetish fires in the mountains and indulged in frenzied dancing, debauchery, lust and cannibalism. And so Clensy was wise in advising Sestrina to fly with him or by herself to Honolulu should the revolution break out after all. She was Gravelot's daughter, and the rebels would probably shoot her at sight.

"Your father, the president, owns several steamers, so you would have little trouble in getting away should I lose sight of you," he said, as Sestrina and he sat side by side in deep thought.

"Yes, he has," said Sestrina, and then, in response to Clensy's query, she told him that the steamers ran between Port-au-Prince and the seaports in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, going as far as Vera Cruz.

"But why worry? There may be no revolution, after all," he murmured as he tried to soothe Sestrina's fears. For the girl seemed worried about her father, as she wondered over all what might happen to him if the palace was bombarded.

It was at this moment that the little door that divided Sestrina's chamber from the next apartment opened and revealed Claircine's ebony-hued, smiling face. In her dusky hand she held a silver salver, whereon was a small decanter of light Haytian wine. Claircine had, and with commendable discreetness, kept in the background till that moment. She had heard voices, and had immediately jumped out of bed and, placing her eye to the keyhole, had seen Clensy and her mistress sitting on the settee, their faces turned one toward the other as they kissed and embraced.

"Mon Dieu, si aoe ma eperdi suka," she had cried in the creole tongue as she lifted her hands to the ceiling in horror—and then peeped again.

* * * * *

"Ah, Claircine, is he not handsome?" whispered Sestrina as she and the negress stood trembling by the open casement through which Clensy a moment before had taken his undignified departure.

"You have now heard for yourself what he thinks of you and of your kind face and nice figure," said Sestrina, referring to Clensy's wicked flattery when he looked the negress straight in the eyes a few moments before.

"Ah, si ver du pero, ma seque," murmured the old negress as she placed her dusky hand above her throbbing heart, little dreaming how Clensy had been shocked at the sight of her skinny legs an hour before!

Sestrina's heart fluttered as she leaned over the balcony's railing and watched her lover slowly descend, step by step, down the thick stems of the grape-vine. "Mon Dieu," she wailed as she noticed that the moon-rise was sending waves of pale light over the distant mountain ranges and far down into the valleys by the palace grounds, "he will be seen!" But her fears were needless. She saw Clensy's form hasten across the yam patch far beyond the palace grounds. The next moment he had disappeared into the depths, under the great mahogany trees.

* * * * *

The next day Clensy suddenly walked into Biglow's lodgings, near the market-place at Selle. Adams was sitting by the window that opened on to the veranda, tugging his side-whiskers. His face wore a serious expression, and was as red as boiled beetroot.

"Where yer been to?" he said in a husky voice as he stared up at Clensy.

Clensy made no reply, but simply looked round the room and wondered why Biglow was so busy packing his old carpet bag.

"Going to move again?" he said, as Biglow looked up, gave him a friendly glance and then continued to ram pipes, thread and coloured shirts into the bag.

Biglow suddenly ceased from packing, and, standing erect, said :

" If you hang about here after Sestrina much more, you'll get shot. Savvy ? "

" I'll hang about who I like, Mr. Bartholomew Biglow," replied Clensy, with considerable warmth. He was rather sensitive about any remarks that referred to Sestrina, for Adams and Biglow had chaffed him a good deal of late over his infatuation for Gravelot's daughter.

" So ! so ! good lad ; don't be angry. Sestrina's worth a hundred maids and shots in the back. Got beautiful eyes too. Reminds me of Queen Vaekehu, of the Marquesas, my first wife," said Biglow.

" Your queen wasn't a patch on Sestrina. Never seed a girl wif such beautiful eyes and lovely bust," chimed in Adams, who at the same time gave Clensy a friendly wink.

" Don't be silly," said Clensy as he calmed down ; then he added, " Why are you packing up ? "

" Because it's a-coming, a blasted revolution, blazes and murder, and thet's 'zakley what Biggy here means," said Adams.

Clensy's heart thumped like a muffled drum.

" Look you here," said Biglow, as he regarded the young Englishman with his large serious-looking eyes. " It's coming along any moment now ; the Cacaos are only awaiting the signal to blaze this town to the ground and shoot every one who happens to get in the way. Savvy ? "

The expression on Biglow's face told Clensy that he meant what he said.

" Can it be possible, in these enlightened times, too ? "

" It can ! " said Biglow quietly, as he stared at our hero for a moment as though in some hesitation ; then he leaned forward and said : " I've been doing a bit of gun-running for both sides, the legal authorities and

the rebels too, and you've been seen with me, and that means that they would shoot you at sight to settle their doubts—if they had any!"

"Thank you, Mr. Bartholomew Biglow," said Clensy.

Then the big man looked half sorrowfully at Clensy and said:

"Perhaps I ought to have warned you that I was dangerous company. Anyhow, our only chance of safety is getting away from here by steamer if a rising *does* take place."

"I'll see you both again later," replied Clensy, and before the two men could look round he had vanished.

It was still daylight when Clensy arrived back at his apartments. He had made up his mind to go straight to the palace and warn Sestrina of her danger, and, if possible, get her to fly with him from the palace without further delay. Just as he was getting ready to leave his rooms and go out, his landlady, a creole woman, tapped at his door.

"Some one like to zee yous, Anglesman," she said.

Poking his head out of the doorway, Clensy found himself face to face with Claircine. The old negress looked very excited as she handed him a note. In a moment Clensy had torn the envelope open and read:

"Oh, Monsieur Royal,

"*Do not attempt to come to the palace to see me. They have placed sentinels in the grounds as well as at the gates. Something dreadful is going to happen, I'm sure. My father told me this morning that should I have to fly from here I must get on one of the Government steamers and go to the South American States. If I do that I may never see you again. Oh, 'tis dreadful, Monsieur Royal. Advise me as to what is best for me to do. Claircine will wait about till she sees you and can slip this note into the hands that I love.*

"*In haste,*

"Sestrina.

"P.S. If you would like to see Père Chaco, the priest, he lives in that small wooden house near the groves of pomegranates, where we stood when you gave me your photograph and I gave you mine."

"Wait a minute, Claircine," said Clensy as soon as he had read Sestrina's letter. Then he rushed back into his room and penned the following reply:

"My Darling Sestrina,

"I write in haste. I would risk coming to the palace, but I know you would not wish it. Your father's advice is the best. By all means get on one of the steamers if trouble comes. Do not fear that you will lose sight of me or I of you. I will seek the steamers and find out which one you are on. Now, Sestrina, remember that I am yours, heart and soul. And remember, dearest, that in the event of my losing sight of you, you must make your way to Honolulu and wait for me at the T—— Hotel in B—— Street, or I will wait for you should I get there first. Once there together, we can do all that you agreed to do when I saw you last. Should all go well, I will come to the palace at the first opportunity and climb the grape-vine. Claircine can easily bring me a note from you to say when the sentinels have been removed. Remember, Sestrina, that I love you with all my heart and soul.

"Yours ever and ever,

"Royal."

Handing Claircine the foregoing note, Clensy bade her hasten back to her mistress.

"Ah, monsieur!" wailed the old negress as she looked into his eyes in a sorrowful way, and then added: "Madamsele weeps, and loves you well, *dat* she does." The next moment the old negress had disappeared under the flamboyant trees that grew in front of Clensy's lodgings.

That same night Clensy was suddenly awakened by a crash. He leapt from his bed and hastened out on to the veranda. Notwithstanding all that he had heard about the insurgents, he was surprised to hear the sounds of heavy cannonading somewhere away in the hills—the Cacaos and Government soldiery had met! The streets were alive with frightened, babbling negroes and mulattoes, running about as though they were demented. Children and women ran in and out the small wooden houses wringing their hands and wailing in a weird, dismal manner. As Clensy stared out into the night he saw a great blaze of reddish light up the hills in the direction of La Coupe. The rebels were firing the villages along the slopes and in the valleys! "Good God!" was all that Clensy could say to express his consternation. In a moment he was dressed and out in the streets. "I'll risk it!" he muttered. The next moment he was hurrying off in the direction of the palace. But as he got to the outskirts of the town he found that he was too late. Hundreds of Government soldiers were already entrenched along the main roads outside the town. They would allow none to pass. Seeing some Haytians hurrying along, Clensy asked them what was happening.

"Revolution! War! We must fly or be killed!" they cried.

"Is the palace in the hands of the Government or the rebels?" he asked, a great fear clutching at his heart.

"In the hands of the Government and the rebels too," shouted some one.

Then Clensy gathered that many of the Government soldiers who had been brought to the palace had gone over to the side of the Cacaos. Seeing that he could do nothing, that he was utterly helpless to help Sestrina or even find out anything about her, Clensy took to his heels and made his way to the small wooden house on the outskirts of the town where Sestrina had told him

Père Chaco, the Catholic, dwelt. In less than ten minutes he stood in front of the small wooden building that had a small cross on top of it. He knocked at the door. It was immediately opened by a grey-bearded, serious-looking old man. The face before Clensy was expressive, very melancholy looking, the eyes deep set and clear, the brow high and intellectual.

"Well, my son, and what would you wish of me?"

"I am a friend of Sestrina's, President Gravelot's daughter. What can be done about her?" said Clensy, immediately going into the matter.

"A true friend?" said the father.

"Yes, her life is all to me," said Clensy.

The old priest scanned him steadily with his deep-set, earnest eyes, and then said, "Um!" Then the aged priest told Clensy that his call had already been too prolonged, for he, the priest, had just been about to go off and visit the British Consul to ask about Sestrina and get help in case her life should be in danger.

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Clensy. Then the priest laid his wrinkled hand on Clensy's shoulder, and told him to have faith, and possibly all would be well. The next moment Père Chaco had hurried away, and Clensy was hastening back to the town to see Biglow and Adams.

"Thank heaven you're here!" exclaimed the young Englishman as he entered Biglow's lodgings and found him standing by his old carpet bag, all packed ready for immediate removal. "Well, it's come!" exclaimed Clensy.

"Yes, and Adams and I and you had better be going!" said Biglow.

"I can't go. I must hear if Sestrina's safe first. I'd go mad if anything happened to her," said Clensy, as he almost lost control of himself.

"Don't worry about Sestrina, bless yer, she's on board the *Catholot*, a Government steamer, that's outbound for Vera Cruz," said Biglow.

Clensy's relief at hearing this information may be imagined.

"Sestrina safe. I'll see her again!" he cried out as Adams walked in and said he wasn't going to walk any longer about a place where "myderers" kept firing revolvers and strangling people.

"You're quite sure Sestrina's safe?" said Clensy as he looked steadily in the gun-runner's eyes.

"Safe as houses, and her old man, the president, had the top of his head blown off, and De Cripsny's got his left ear blown away."

"No!" exclaimed Clensy in a horrified voice.

"Well, he's Sestrina's father to you, but *I* don't look upon him in that light," said Biglow when he noticed the note of sorrow in Clensy's voice on hearing that the president had been shot. "He won't be a party to killing any more children at the *vaudoux* altars in the mountains, will he?" said Biglow.

"No, he won't," replied Clensy in a very quiet voice.

Then Biglow began to inform our hero that directly the first shots had been fired by the Government scouts in the hills behind Port-au-Prince, the officials of the British and French consulates had immediately set out for the presidential palace to warn the president and take charge of Sestrina. It appeared that when they arrived at the palace the president, who had foolishly ventured out to plead to the soldiers who had shown signs of going over to the insurgents, had been shot by one in the crowd.

Sestrina, who still remained ignorant of her father's death, had been immediately disguised in a servant's robe, and hurried out of the palace by a back entrance. She had then been at once escorted down to Cap Hatien, and then taken in a boat out to the steamer *Catholot* which lay in the middle of the harbour.

"Must get out to the *Catholot*, whatever happens," said Clensy. Biglow could hear his comrade's eagerness trembling in his voice. "I've got eight pounds,

and I'll give you the lot if you can get me out to the *Catholot,*" said Clensy.

"Keep yer money, lad. It's my fault that you're in this scrape, and I've got enough money to get you out of the fix which I've got you in," said Biglow, as he gripped Clensy's hand, and promised to do all he could to bring Clensy and Sestrina together again, and get them safely away from Hayti.

That same day Biglow kept his word, for he managed to hire a boat and take Clensy out to the *Catholot* himself.

The *Catholot* was a steamer of about two thousand tons.

As Biglow rowed alongside, the funnel was smoking heavily.

"She's getting up steam, ready to sail at a moment's notice," said Clensy, his heart heavy to think that Sestrina might leave Hayti without him. "I'm going to sail with her, if it can possibly be done," was his determined thought as he arrived on the *Catholot's* deck.

One of the sailors, urged by a liberal tip from Clensy, led them down the steamer's alley-way that led aft, and, after making several inquiries, pointed out Sestrina's cabin.

Directly Sestrina saw Clensy's face looking over the shoulders of the other passengers, she rushed forward and threw her arms around him. The girl nearly broke down at that meeting

Biglow stood aside, a kind look in his serious eyes as he gazed on the scene, affected by the refugee girl's grief.

"You will come with me, won't you?" she reiterated, when they told her not to fear, that they would keep in touch with her.

"If it can possibly be managed, I'm coming on this steamer as a passenger," said Clensy, when Sestrina, Biglow and he stood in a quiet spot by the engine room,

out of earshot of the excited refugees who crowded the deck and cabins.

For a long time Clensy and Sestrina stood whispering together. Clensy had never realised till that moment what the girl's life meant to him.

"I reckon we'd better be making a move and try and see the skipper," said Biglow, who had begun to get impatient, for he saw that the lovers were likely to stand there making plans and whispering till it was too late.

Clensy tore himself away from the girl.

Sestrina's depressed spirits had wonderfully revived when Clensy and Biglow left her to seek the *Catholot's* skipper, and to try and negotiate for berths as deck passengers.

When Clensy and Biglow at last found the skipper, and asked for passages, they were sadly disappointed at finding that the authorities at Port-au-Prince had given orders that no more passengers were to be taken without permits being produced. Why such an order should have been given out was a mystery. However, the skipper only shook his head to all Biglow's persuasions. "I've had strict orders from the officials, and not another soul comes aboard. I should probably get shot were I to take you fellows: how do I know who you are?" So spake the skipper. And Biglow, after assuring the skipper that he wouldn't like to see him shot or mutilated in any way through swerving from his duty, told Clensy to follow him.

"Never mind the girl now, she's all right; I'll manage everything."

"Thank you," exclaimed Clensy, who felt humbled through the uncertainty of things, and his fear of losing Sestrina.

In a few moments they had reached the gangway.

"Make haste, no time to lose," said Biglow, as he walked down the gangway and re-entered their boat.

"He's got some good scheme up his sleeve," thought Clensy, as he obsequiously followed his lusty comrade.

Immediately they had re-embarked and had rowed the boat out of earshot, Biglow said, "We'll stow away on her to-night! see?"

Clensy, at hearing the gun-runner say that, was considerably cheered up. He had already told Sestrina not to despair. He had said, "Don't you worry, dearest, I'll follow on by another steamer if I cannot get on this boat." Then he had taken Sestrina aside, and had told her to make her way to Honolulu just as they had planned. "Go straight to this address," he had said, as he wrote down fullest particulars. "I'll come to Honolulu and wait there till you come if you are delayed in any way, trust me, dear." And, as he spoke, Sestrina had looked into his eyes and knew that he meant what he said.

Before Clensy left the *Catholot* he told Sestrina to expect to see him on board again that same night.

The *Catholot* was supposed to sail next morning, so Clensy naturally presumed that he could, at any rate, row out to her and see Sestrina once more before she sailed.

That same night, Biglow, Clensy and Adams packed their few goods and got all ready to clear out of Hayti. They had decided to take a boat from L—— and row out to the *Catholot* after dark, get on board by some excuse and then stow away.

That night, without delay, they hired the boat.

"If *one* can stow away three can, eh, lad?" said Biglow, as they pulled at the oars and got round by the bend of the harbour near S——

In a few moments they had turned the point where they got a good view of the harbour.

"Done! She's sailed!" said Biglow in a mighty voice.

He nearly upset the boat as he stood up and stared over the waters of the starlit harbour.

It was true enough, the *Catholot* had sailed. Sestrina had gone from Hayti!

"We'll all be mydered, sure!" wailed Adams, as he leaned back on his portmanteau—an old red handkerchief—and groaned.

"It's the fear of the blockade that made her sail to-day instead of to-morrow. Hear that?" said Biglow.

And as the three of them listened they could distinctly hear the distant booms of the guns and furious cannonade. It was evident that the insurgents were already besieging Cap Hatien, as in the south the Government soldiers were attacking Jacmel, Jéréme and Les Cayes.

Biglow swore terrifically when he realised their position. Clensy and Adams placed themselves unreservedly in his hands. They knew that if there was a way of getting out of Hayti, Biglow would find that way. And so he did! for, in less than twenty-four hours after finding that the *Catholot* had sailed, Biglow, Adams and Clensy found themselves on board a Government steamer outbound for South America. The reason they did get away so easily was because Biglow, through his gun-running exploits, was well in with the American Consul. He knew so much about the financial side of the gun-running business, that in the event of the Government overthrowing the insurgents and still retaining power, it would turn out more convenient for the officials to get a man like Biglow as far away from Hayti as possible.

"This is hell enough, without being worried out of my mind like this," muttered Clensy as he stood by the bulwark side of the *S.S. Prince*, staring out to sea. The fact is, there was a terrible crush on the steamer which he and Biglow found themselves aboard. There were about two hundred refugees on board, mostly high-class Haytians who could afford to seek safety from the terrors of their war-stricken province. The weather was terrifically hot, too, and Clensy had to sleep in a stuffy cabin with ten refugees. Consequently, after the

first night of unspeakable misery, he slept on deck. His whole thoughts were centred on Sestrina.

"She'll know it wasn't my fault," he mused, as he thought of the girl's disappointment when the *Catholot* sailed before her time, thus making him unable to keep his promise to see her again.

"Don't you worry, lad," said Biglow, who had suddenly walked up to Clensy's side. "We'll find the girl!"

"But we don't really know where she's gone to," said Clensy, as he realised how the Government steamers sailed away from Hayti and gave a false report as to the port they were really bound for.

"I'm sorry, lad, to have placed you in this pickle; it's all my doings," said Biglow, as he stood by Clensy's side and stared across the starlit tropic seas. There was a tender, wistful note in the big man's voice as he spoke to Clensy.

"You couldn't help it. Sestrina would have had to fly from the palace if you had been ten thousand miles from Hayti when the revolution broke out," said Clensy in a mournful voice.

"Perhaps you're right, lad; anyway, I'll stick to you."

"Thank you," replied Clensy. He wanted a genuine comrade. Adams wasn't worth his salt. He had got mixed up with the crew of the steamer. In fact, he had got so drunk and uninteresting that Biglow and Clensy decided to have no more to do with him: and they, and the hidden voice behind these pages, were more than thankful to see the old reprobate Adams go out of the story altogether.

"As sure as my name's Samuel Bilbao, you'll see the girl again, lad. I'm one who believes in everything that no one else believes in," said Biglow suddenly.

"Samuel Bilbao! Is that your real name?" said Clensy in an astonished voice.

The fact is, that Samuel Bilbao was notorious from Fiji to Terra del Fuego as one of the last of the wild,

flamboyant traders who had hunted the blackbirders down in the South Seas slaving days of ten years before. Yes, it was Samuel Bilbao who stood beside Clensy; Bilbao who ran the blockade in the Haytian revolution of three years before; Bilbao who led the Marquesans in the great tribal battle at Taiohae; Bilbao who helped the Tahitian chiefs when they fought the French in 18--, and smashed a well-equipped garrison to smithereens. Yes, such things had been accomplished by that worthy in the splendour of his prime.

When Clensy discovered that he was on the high seas with Samuel Bilbao as his right hand, he blessed the fates. "Things could be worse," he thought.

Samuel Bilbao, to give him his proper name, was the life of the *Prince*. The Haytian ladies on board tried hard to blush as he sang his rollicking songs, extemporising words in their own language as his versatile brain took in the degrees of temperament and the moral lassitude of the female company he sang to. He infused life and laughter into the hearts of the most woebegone refugees as he danced and made the *Prince's* deck like a moonlit ball-room as they steamed along under the stars. Yes, Samuel Bilbao was the best comrade Clensy could have found under the circumstances.

It seemed like the memory of some feverish dream when Clensy, one month after flying from Hayti, sat in the Rio Grande café at M—— and thought of all that he and Bilbao had gone through in their search for Sestrina. "And all for nothing! Sestrina might have been swallowed up by an earthquake for all we've heard to the contrary," Clensy muttered, as he looked through the open window on to the palm groves that faced the veranda. "Thank heaven I've got enough money to take the next boat that sails for Honolulu," he thought, as he counted out his notes and gold. He had only the day before received a generous remittance from England by cable. And, as he reflected and mused on, he murmured: "There's still a good chance that we've missed

her; there's several ways of getting to Hawaii. She might have got on a schooner that sailed from the lower Californian seaboard harbours." And as Clensy mused on and thought over all the possibilities, he became very hopeful.

Samuel Bilbao had kept his promise, had not deserted our hero, for that romantic worthy was just up the grove roaring forth a rollicking sea chanty in the De La Plaza grog-saloon. Even as Clensy listened he could hear the loud clapping and stumping and guttural cries of the delighted Mexicans and Spanish hidalgos. Bilbao had managed to cheer Clensy up many times during his fits of depression. For Royal Clensy had become a different man since he had left Hayti. His love for Sestrina and the uncertainty of the girl's fate had strangely humbled him, had made him look out on life with wiser and sadder eyes. Just as drink and debauchery changes a man and debases his character, Clensy's mind had been elevated and made sympathetic and thoughtful through sorrow.

When Clensy at last arrived at Honolulu and still no news of Sestrina, it wanted all the hilarity and flamboyant song of Bilbao's cheerful personality to bring a ghost of a smile to our hero's lips. Not once did the young Englishman's faith in Sestrina waver. He was convinced that if Sestrina never turned up at Honolulu it was because she was either dead or very ill. As the weeks passed his hopes of seeing Sestrina again faded, but his desire for her presence increased. His imagination began to clothe his memory of her in all the beauty and the mystery which men of his temperament imagine a good woman possesses. His romantic passion for the girl transmuted his memory of her till her eyes sparkled as far-off stars shining on the horizon of his imagination. She became the unattainable, the mystery and spiritual wonder of the great undiscovered lands that must ever lie beyond the skylines of mortal dreams, filling human hearts with passionate longing and yearning for far-off

divine things. All that was beautiful in sounds lingered in Clensy's memory of Sestrina's voice ; her songs resolved into a dream, and became the unheard music of his own soul, till he seemed to hear the dim murmurings of the shells on the shores of the ocean that divides romance from reality. The sorrow and uncertainty of their parting became his calvary of anguish and the heart-crying creed which nourished a dim yearning hope of some future. He vaguely realised that, though he might never see Sestrina again, she had brought him boundless wealth ; that he could kneel at the altar of his great faith in her love and get as near the realisation of his best ideals as man can get when he imagines the world holds things that will correspond with his soul's conceptions of the beautiful. He knew well enough that his mind had got into that morbid state which worldly men term foolish and sentimental. But the happiness that his sentiment brought him and his knowledge of the little happiness he would get from such dreams as worldly men indulged in, inspired him with that wisdom which enables men to reign as king over their imagination.

Through reading the musty volumes which he discovered in his apartments in Honolulu, as he waited through weary months for Sestrina, he began to get quite philosophical. His outlook on life became cynical, yet was softened with the old sympathy of his earlier and happier days. "I was a fool to ever fall in love and get unhappy like this. I thought I was so wise, too!" The wisest men who ever lived are only little children crying in the dark for light as they throw pebbles into their little ponds of dreams and imagine they are sounding the depths of infinity, of human nature and the mystery of life and death. Men know nothing! The present is a chimera, the past a remembrance of it, and the dim future the uncertainty that is the soul of religion. Why, even that bedraggled old cockatoo on the palm outside my window might easily

be some reincarnation of a dead disillusioned philosopher. Its dismal discordant cry sounds as though it curses the memory of some far-off day when its mad intellect soared above the yearnings of its digestive apparatus, when it fell into the abyss of its own thoughts and broke the backs of its faiths one by one.

As Clensy soliloquised over his mad metaphysics, he saw a tawny Hawaiian lift a gun to his shoulder, and prepared to aim at the very bird which had inspired him with such mad ideas. "Don't shoot, for heaven's sake," he shouted, as he leaned out of the window and threw the Hawaiian a coin. "Thank God I've saved it," he muttered, as the aged, dilapidated cockatoo looked sideways from its leafy perch, and muttered its deepest gratitude ere it took its flight. "Perhaps it's some dismal thought of Sestrina's reincarnated, now a cockatoo, hovering by my window to let me know the truth why she cannot come? Ah, it's madness to encourage such fancies. Who would believe me were I to tell how I remember the harvest girls singing as they sat with sickle in hand by their golden sheaves in the cornfields of ancient Assyria? Why did the scent from the big dish of overripe yellow oranges in the drawing-room of my home in England send my thoughts adrift, make me go to sea—in search of what? They said I was a fool—had romantic notions. What are romantic notions? And why do millions of sensible and great-minded men and women kneel in true devotion before the shadowy altar of that Heaven which no living mortal since the birth of Time ever saw except in dreams."

Crash! Some one had banged at Clensy's door and had swept his peculiar imaginings and metaphysical speculations to the winds, which are the only elements that know how to deal with such wild fancies.

The next moment Samuel Bilbao's huge personality and figure stood in our hero's apartments.

"Well, how are things going along?" said Clensy,

as he swiftly released his hand from the mighty grip of his comrade's painful clasp.

Then Bilbao sat down and informed Clensy that trouble was brewing in one of the South American republics, and that he was wanted. "It's something better than gun-running; there's a wealthy president's daughter waiting to be abducted, whipped off into another state *against her will*, so that she can marry the rival president's only begotten son. There's plenty of money in the game, too." So spake our worthy friend Samuel Bilbao, giving out hints but leaving Clensy's brain in the usual maze as to what the big man had on his mind.

"Do you mean that you are leaving Honolulu?" said Clensy.

"Yes, lad, keep your heart up, I must go," said Bilbao. Nor was he leaving Clensy unduly, for he had stopped religiously with our hero in Honolulu for eight months, and eight months in a place like Honolulu was dead against the grain of a man like Samuel Bilbao.

"Eight months waiting in this hole of a place!" sighed Clensy. "I wish to heaven I'd never seen Port-au-Prince."

"Cheer up, lad, as sure as God made little apples you'll see the girl again some day," said Bilbao. "If a girl with canny eyes like that Sestrina's got loves a fellow she'll find *some* means of letting him know what's become of her, I know!"

"But supposing she is dead," said Clensy in a pathetic, mournful voice.

"Being dead makes no difference, lad, the dead are the only folk who are living as they walk before us," said Bilbao, in a soft, earnest, almost religious voice!

"Well, *you* of all men on earth!" thought Clensy, as he stared at the gun-runner's flushed face and the large, grey, expressive eyes.

And as Samuel Bilbao spoke on, his voice became as tender as a girl's, a troubled something wrinkling his

fine brow. Then he laid his hand on Clensy's shoulder, and said: "Lad, the girl I loved has been dead fifteen years, and it was only the other night she stood beside me. 'Don't drink that,' she said, as she knocked the goblet full of rum from my hand, smashing it to atoms at my feet! And all the traders and shellbacks in the grog-shanty at Murrumbee Creek stared like blasted lunatics as I took her hand and laid my head on her shoulders and then looked into the eyes—of nothing! So the blind fools said!"

As Bilbao ceased, Clensy gazed in wonder on the expressive face before him. He hardly recognised the great blustering, boisterous Samuel Bilbao in the face of that superstitious, yet intellectual looking sunburnt man of the seas.

"Yes, lad, dead women don't forget," said Bilbao softly, as he sat there in Royal Clensy's room in Honolulu, and the stars crept over the blue skies to the east of Mount Pepé.

Years afterwards every word Bilbao had uttered that night came back and lingered in Clensy's memory, coming like echoes from the songs of the long dead nightingales that had once sung in the mahogany forests by the presidential palace in Hayti when he was a boy.

PART II

CHAPTER I

WHEN Sestrina, on the morning after the *Catholot* had sailed from Port-au-Prince, awoke and found that she was far out at sea, she felt greatly depressed She could hardly believe her own ears when she heard the muffled thumping of the steamer's screw and the pounding of the engine's pistons. She immediately ran from her cabin and sought the skipper. He was a Yankee, and a kind-hearted man.

"Oh, I am so unhappy, I expected some one to come and see me last night or to-day; I quite understood that your ship was not leaving Port-au-Prince till to-night."

"Did you, missy?" replied the skipper as he looked into Sestrina's tearful eyes and explained to her that the *Catholot* had sailed before her time so that they might not be locked in the harbour through the blockade, for months. "It's not my fault, missy," he added, as he gazed in a sympathetic way at the distressed girl.

"Am I alone on board? Where's my father and Claircine?"

"I guess there's no Pa or Claircine on board here with you," replied the skipper.

When Sestrina discovered that she was quite alone on board the *Catholot* her distress was deep indeed. But hope ever reigns in youthful hearts, and so Sestrina calmed herself by taking Clensy's last two letters from the folds of her bodice and reading them over and over again. She felt quite certain that Clensy would hasten to follow her, and at once made up her mind to get to

Honolulu as swiftly as possible. Then she clasped her hands across the hidden crucifix in the folds of her bodice, and thanked God that Royal Clensy had been thoughtful enough to make plans to meet the strait in which she found herself. Then she began to wonder if Clensy would be able to get safely away from Hayti.

In her mind she could still hear the furious cannonade in the hills round Port-au-Prince and see the entrenched soldiers round the palace. And, as she thought on, the terror and horror of it all became intensified; her imagination began to picture all kinds of dire disasters.

"He might be killed. Oh, Royal!" she murmured, and then she stole into her cabin again and wept.

Two of the saloon passengers, an elderly American and his wife, took compassion on Sestrina when they saw her grief, and did their best to cheer her up. Their interest in her deepened when they discovered that she was the daughter of the late President Gravelot of the Black Republic at Hayti. The American had belonged to the U.S.A. Consulate at Port-au-Prince, and had heard that President Gravelot had been shot; but he did not tell Sestrina about the disaster which had befallen her father. Sestrina became much happier when the American and his wife invited her into their cabin and promised to do their best to place her in good hands till such time as she could return to Hayti.

"The revolution won't last for ever, you know," said the American. But Sestrina soon let her new found friends know that she had no desire to return to Port-au-Prince again.

"Have you relations in Hawaii, mademoiselle?" queried the American, when Sestrina once more emphatically informed that gentleman and his wife that she wished to get to Honolulu with all speed.

"Yes, it is in Honolulu where I shall meet my best friends."

It is almost needless to point that the pluralty of Sestrina's "best friends" in Honolulu were comprised

in the sole personality of Royal Clensy, who she expected to meet there.

When the American informed Sestrina that the *Catholot* was bound for Vera Cruz, in the Gulf of Mexico, and it was a fairly easy journey to the Pacific coast where she could get a ship that sailed for Hawaii, she was delighted. She went straight into her cabin and, falling on her knees, kissed the crucifix, and felt that God had listened to her heartfelt prayers at last. The outlook began to look quite rose-tinted to her sanguine eyes. She had a thousand dollars in her possession, which her father had thoughtfully provided her with. For, like a good many sinners in this world, President Gravelot had a better side to his nature, a side which was revealed when calamity came his way to remind him that the world was made for sweetness and not for the gratification of the passions alone.

So did Sestrina find friends when she became a refugee and fled from Hayti with only Royal Clensy's memory and his love letters to comfort her.

When the *Catholot* arrived at Vera Cruz, the American and his wife went ashore with her and placed her under the care of the U.S.A. Consul at Plaza Mexo. This estimable gentleman made himself very busy on Sestrina's behalf. He eventually advised her to leave Vera Cruz and go to the United States.

"You will be in direct communication with Hayti and will know exactly when to return, for the war may be over soon, or even now," he said.

As can be imagined, Sestrina listened respectfully to the advice tendered on her behalf, but was still determined to follow the course of her prearranged plans, which agreed with all her hopes and sole ambition in life.

And so, about one week after Sestrina had arrived at Vera Cruz, the U.S.A. Consul called at the hotel where Sestrina was staying, and was somewhat surprised to find that she had gone, had vanished, leaving

no trace whatever behind her! The fact is, that Sestrina had made inquiries, and had found out that by getting to Acapulco or Yucata, on the Pacific coast, she could get a passage to Honolulu on one of the many schooners that sailed for the South Sea Islands for cargoes of copra, pearls, etc.

It is a trite but true saying that "Man proposes and God disposes," and equally true is it that "Coming events do not always cast their shadows before." No prophetic hint of all the sorrow that lay before Sestrina's sad path in the new world which she was entering, came to disturb her dreams as the winds stirred the palms just opposite her window at her lodgings at Yucata. She had only arrived at the ancient seaport town the day before and so was still feeling the fatigue of the long journey she had undertaken after giving the U.S. Consul at Vera Cruz the slip.

So often had the passionate, impulsive Haytian girl thought of Clensy, so often had her mind dwelt in the imaginary happiness of dreams that corresponded with all that her sanguine heart anticipated would happen when she met Clensy again, that her whole soul was centred on one burning ambition—the swiftest way to get to Honolulu.

She had been greatly upset when she first arrived at Yucata, for, when she tendered some of her notes as payment for her apartments, the tawny half-caste Spaniard, her landlord, informed her that half of her money was worthless paper, through the overthrow of the Haytian Government that issued it. However, she had a good sum of legitimate cash in hand and was greatly relieved to find that for about forty dollars she could get a passage to Honolulu, on the *Belle Isle*, a rakish-looking schooner that was due to sail for Hawaii in a day or two.

Though her Spanish landlord strongly advised her to wait till one of the larger steamers was leaving with mails for Honolulu, she would not wait. Her unthinking

impulsive mind had begun to fear that Royal Clensy would arrive at Honolulu and, not finding her there, would leave again thinking she was not coming.

"Perhaps now that I'm far away from his sight he will cease to think so much of me, and even think that I've forgotten him," she murmured, as her feverish imagination began to think over it all.

She looked into the mirror of the low-roofed hotel room and saw dark rings around her eyes, her face was drawn and haggard too. In the natural modesty of women that possess looks, she gazed with distress on her imaged, beautiful face. "I'm not beautiful at all! He only said those things to please me. I mustn't wait! He might forget me! He might forget me!" she almost sobbed, as the shadows of night fell over Yucata and the drunken Mexican sailors passed below her window, singing strange words to ancient sounding melodies as they tinkled on their guitars.

Sestrina had been in Yucata for eight days when she found herself on board the *Belle Isle*. There was only one other passenger on board, and that was an extraordinary looking aged Chinaman.

Though the *Belle Isle* was called a schooner, she was a brigantine, a hermaphrodite, square-rigged schooner, that carried square sails on the foremast and the main. She was due to sail at any moment; was only waiting a favourable wind.

The *Belle Isle* looked as though she was off on some buccaneering voyage, that is, if the character of the crew was anything like the expression on their faces. The fact is, that Sestrina had entrusted an aged Mexican priest to arrange for her passage, also the choice of the boat. And it will not be defamation of character to positively assert that the aforesaid old priest had secured Sestrina the cheapest berth on the rottenest schooner he could find, so that he could put half of the money entrusted to him in his own pocket. And though the Mexican ecclesiastic had fallen on his sinful

knees and prayed for Sestrina's soul and a pleasant voyage when she bade him farewell, Sestrina was convinced that she had been swindled directly she set foot on the deck of the *Belle Isle*.

The skipper was a swarthy Mexican. He looked as though he wouldn't die of remorse after cutting a man's throat for the bribe of a dollar. However, he had gallant manners, for he bowed profusely when he saw Sestrina jump down on deck, and seemed to be quite elated to find that his saloon passenger was so prepossessing.

The crew were a mixed lot: two or three full-blooded Mexicans, a Chinese-Tahitian, two Yankee niggers, one old man who looked like a civilised Hottentot, and two Kanakas. There was also a tiny lad, Rajao, about nine years of age, he was the child of one of the Mexican sailors.

Sestrina's dismay was very obvious when the nigger steward showed her into her mingy cabin that was situated in the schooner's cuddy (saloon). But the Haytian girl accepted the situation with wonderful fortitude. "It's not for long!" she thought as she looked up at the ancient-looking yellowish-hued hanging canvas aloft, and thought of how they would spread to the winds and bear her across the ocean to Honolulu and Clensy's arms.

As she stood on deck that night and felt the breeze coming that would cause the skipper to up anchor and set sail, she became quite happy. "On a ship at last, bound for Honolulu!" she thought. "And where is he? Perhaps still in Hayti. I will wait till he comes and then we will meet again and remember the sweet nights and the grape-vine and be happy!" Ah, Sestrina!

All wise men agree that happiness is only a fleeting anticipation of some longed-for event which, in its best consummation, can only end in disillusionment. And so it was as well that Sestrina should dream her own

happiness that night. It was to be brief enough, God knows.

She little dreamed the true nature of the schooner on which she had embarked, and why it took a ghastly cargo on by stealth at midnight. Alas, through being educated from French novels instead of realistic South Seâ novels, Sestrina was quite ignorant of the terrible dramas of the Pacific seas and lonely island groups. Had she known more of the ways of the world and life and sorrow in those seas, she would never have placed herself in the most terrible position that a girl could well be in. Even wilful Sestrina began to wish she had listened to her Spanish landlord's advice, to wait for one of the large steamers that went to Honolulu. For as she lay in her bunk that night, just before the *Belle Isle* sailed at dawn, she felt sure she heard strange groans and the clankings of iron chains!

"What did it all mean? Was that a smothered groan and then a farewell as some one wailed 'Talofa! Aue! O Langi!'? Why had the skipper shut the cuddy's door tight, as though he wished to keep those moans and murmurs on the deck that night from the ears of his fair passenger? Was that a phantom bay that the *Belle Isle* lay anchored in as the red tropic moon bathed the palm-clad shores by Yucata with ghostly gleams. What nightmare could it be where chained men, with bulged, vacant eyes, were being carried and helped on deck of the *Belle Isle*, and then secretly dropped down into the fetid hold? The *Belle Isle* was not a blackbirding schooner (slave ship), for King Hammerehai of Hawaii had issued an edict that all persons found dealing in slave traffic were to be 'shot at sight.' And the *Belle Isle* was bound for Hawaii. So what was the mystery of that dark hold's cargo?"

Sestrina awoke in the morning and half fancied that she must have dreamed the terror that had haunted her during the early night hours.

Before the sun was well up on the horizon the *Belle Isle*, with every stitch of her old-fashioned canvas spread, was fast leaving the Pacific coast. Sestrina was very ill for the first two days, then her languor left her. As she stood on deck, the boundless loneliness of the tropic seas depressed her. She stared over the bulwark side, the dim blue horizon seemed as far away, as illusive as her own hopes and dreams. The noise of the half-filled canvas sails depressed her, as they filled out to the lazy hot wind and then collapsed with a muffled rumble.

Only two members of the crew were visible as she stood on deck, and they were stalwart ferocious-looking men, who wore strange tasselled caps, and somehow reminded her of the pictures of the pirates of the Spanish Main which she had seen on the walls of the British Consul's residence at Petionville, Port-au-Prince. One of the men seemed to be busy over an endless coil of rope. The other man stood like an inanimate figure, some fixture amidships, by the hatchway. Only the tobacco smoke issuing from between his blackened teeth destroyed the statuesque effect as he stood sentinel at that spot.

"Noa come dis way, miss," the man muttered as he put forth his skinny hand and warned Sestrina away as she started to walk forward.

Finding she was even denied the freedom of walking about the schooner as she pleased the girl's heart became heavy with dim forebodings. She began to realise that something was being hidden from her.

Hoping to find some one congenial to speak to, she strolled aft, then concluded that her own reflections were the better company.

The man at the wheel was a wrinkled, weird looking Mongolian. As he stood there, his hands gripping the spokes of the wheel, his pigtail, moving to the rolling of the schooner, swung to and fro like a pendulum, and to Sestrina's overwrought brain, seemed to be ticking

off the slow minutes of the hours to pass, ere something dreadful happened! The aged Chinaman, Sestrina's fellow passenger in the cuddy, had been the more congenial to Sestrina had he never come on board: he lay in his bunk day and night chanting weird words as his yellow-skinned hand clutched an ivory idol, some heathenish symbol of his religion. It was only little Rajao, the Mexican boatswain's child of nine years of age, who Sestrina felt inclined to welcome. Once he came running up to the girl, and after staring into her face curiously, he said, "You nice, Señorita, I like you." Then he ran away forward.

"Morning, Señorita, nicer day." Sestrina turned round and saw the Mexican skipper. "You speak Englesse?" he said.

Sestrina nodded. For a moment she could not speak. There was something sinister-looking about the man's face. His small, brilliant eyes and thin, cruel-looking lips made her heart quake. He had stepped forward and had touched Sestrina under the chin, giving her a vulgar leer. The next moment the Haytian girl had swiftly brought her hand up and knocked his arm aside. So did Sestrina let the Mexican skipper of the *Belle Isle* see the quality of her mettle. After that incident, she made up her mind to keep severely to herself. She had scanned each member of the crew and had come to the conclusion that she had never seen such a pack of cut-throats before. Only the negro steward seemed human. He *did* have the grace to say, "Marning, missa," and waited on her at the cuddy's table without giving lascivious leers. Sestrina's heart resented the weird music that accompanied her meals, for the Chinese passenger, who was suffering for some mortal disease, intensified the gloom of the cuddy as he chanted continuously to his ivory idol.

When the skipper discovered that Sestrina would allow no undue familiarities, he tried to redeem his lost

character by giving her dainty dishes: tinned Californian pears, mangoes, yams, pineapples, and sweet scented preserves and candies adorned the mingy cuddy's table.

Sestrina discovered that every time she went out on deck, she was shadowed by one of the crew, who would not allow her to go beyond the galley which was situated just abaft the hatchway. This restraint placed on her movements irritated her, as well as filling her already worried mind with apprehension. Though she thought and thought, she could not guess what the mystery could be. Why was the hatchway always open during the sweltering heat of the tropic days, while the *Belle Isle* rolled becalmed on the glassy sea, and guarded by at least one member of the crew day and night? Who was down there in that fetid hold? Sestrina was certain that she could hear strange mumblings and faint wails, and sometimes a sorrowful-sounding song being hummed in the *Belle Isle's* hold during the vast silence of the tropic nights. Perhaps they were prisoners, convicts being transported from South America to some penal settlement away in the Pacific Islands, or refugees, like herself, and afraid to show their faces by the light of day?

As Sestrina reflected over the mystery of the schooner a nervous fright seized her heart. She began to dread the cramped cuddy, and so she stood on deck each night, watching the hot zephyrs drift across the glassy sea and ruffle the mirroring water, shattering the crowds of imaged stars. As the days went by, the plomp of the yellow canvas overhead and the interminable moan and mystery of the beings down in the hold began to tell on the Haytian's girl's brain. At last she would sit on deck all night, too terrified and miserable to stay in the cuddy.

The aged Celestial passenger was dying, and in his delirium would incessantly put his withered yellow-skinned hand through his cabin porthole—which faced

the cuddy's table—and, clutching the ivory idol, would moan and chant strange words to it. Sestrina felt like screaming in her horror over that heathenish, but sad sight.

One night the Mexican skipper knocked the skinny, yellowish hand back and gave a terrible oath as the sight got on his nerves too.

"*E fitu, padre meando,*" he said as he touched his brow significantly and gave Sestrina a sympathetic look.

But Sestrina hated the man. She knew that he had deceived her; had placed her in that precarious position with his cut-throat crew so that he could make a few extra dollars by securing her as a passenger.

On the second week out from Yucata, the Chinese passenger died, and the ivory idol and the withered, yellowish hand disappeared from the porthole; the chanting was over for ever. But strange enough, Sestrina felt terribly lonely when she heard that the Celestial was dead. The skipper, seeing her nervous state, had the grace to attempt to keep the Chinaman's death from her. But Sestrina knew what had happened at once, for she saw two of the crew go into the silent cabin and pull in yards of sailcloth. Then she saw the crew collect on deck at sunset, ready to commit the body to the deep. The Mexican captain, for all his villainy, became religious in the presence of death.

Whether it was carelessness, or had been done deliberately, she did not know, but the hammock-shroud was sewn down so that the skinny, yellow hands were still visible, protruding about four inches through the canvas. In a few moments the skipper had murmured the solemn sea burial service as the crew stood in a row, their strange tasselled caps held respectfully in their hands. The sight of it all fascinated Sestrina. And as the weighted shroud softly splashed, alighted on the waters, she half fancied she saw the yellow fingers move, as though they, at that last moment

in the world of the sun, sought to clutch the ivory idol. Then she saw the coffin-shroud slowly sink, and, like some sad symbol of all the universe of mortal desire, one bubble came to the calm surface—and burst!

After seeing that sight Sestrina hurried into the cuddy, in some strange fright seeking to hide from the memory of that sorrow which she had just seen. But, in the great irony of accidental things, the first thing that caught her eyes was the ivory idol lying on the cuddy's table. She stared on it, fascinated, picked it up, and then dropped it in fright. Little did Sestrina dream that a day would come when she too would kneel in humble pagan faith before that tiny carven ivory god.

On the third week out from Yucata, the barometer began to fall.

"Señorita, ze wind is gwing to blow, big waves come over deck, savvy?" said the skipper.

"I don't mind," replied Sestrina as she gazed up at the deep blue of the tropic sky and noticed flocks of strange birds travelling out of the dim horizons. On, on they came, speeding across the sky, travelling south-west on their migrating flight from some distant land, outbound for another continent. Those winged travellers of the sky, voyaging onward, had read their wonderful compass, instinct, and so had unerring knowledge of the coming hurricane. Many of them had long necks and peculiar loose hanging legs, and as they passed swiftly over the lonely *Belle Isle*, Sestrina heard the faint rattle and whir of their ungainly wings and legs rushing through space.

"Big winds blow, birds they know, and so fly fast," said the captain as he too followed Sestrina's gaze and watched the flight of those migrating birds.

"No, Señorita," said the skipper when Sestrina attempted to pass out of the cuddy and go on deck that night.

Perhaps it was as well that Sestrina obeyed the Mexican skipper, for the first stars had hardly pierced

the velvet blue of the evening skies when the typhoon struck the *Belle Isle*. The sound of the storm's first breath came like the massed trampling of infinite cavalry and low mutterings of mighty guns that fired the thunders and lightnings of the heavens.

Sestrina, who had never been to sea in real bad weather, thought the schooner was sinking.

"Rip! rpppppppppp!" the stays and jib were torn to ribbons, were flapping like mighty wings, making a noise which could be heard above the universal clash and clamour of the thundering seas. The skipper helped the crew put fresh sail out to steady the schooner that lay over as though about to turn turtle. The crew worked with a will, for they well knew that their lives were at stake.

"Let me out! I don't want to be shut in this dismal place," said Sestrina, in an appealing voice to the skipper who had just entered the cuddy. The schooner was rolling and pitching furiously. The girl had to hold on to the iron stanchions of the cuddy to stay herself from being violently flung to the deck. The skipper, who had rushed into the cuddy for some rope and tackle, tried to soothe Sestrina's fears. She noticed that his manner had completely changed; he looked serious, more manly. But this fact did not ease Sestrina's mind, since she knew the change in his demeanour was because he saw danger ahead. Nor was the girl wrong in her surmise. The skipper well knew that if the typhoon lasted much longer, the *Belle Isle* was likely to get broadside on to the great seas and would possibly turn turtle, or the seas would sweep everything on deck away.

"You stay, no fright, Señorita," he said.

Then the man ran out on deck again.

At this moment little Rajao, the boatswain's child, rushed into the cuddy and clung to Sestrina's skirt.

"Ze wins blow! Señorita," wailed the child, a terrified look in his eyes, as he stared up into her face.

"It's all right, don't be frightened, Rajao," she said.

Sestrina laid the boy down in her bunk and left the cabin door open so that he would not be frightened. Seeing by Rajao's sudden appearance that the skipper in his haste had left the cuddy's door unfastened, Sestrina immediately rushed towards it, and opening the door, stared out into the night. By the flashing light of the stars, that seemed to flicker to the force of the typhoon's breath, she saw the great seas rising up! up! They looked like travelling mountains, foaming liquid ranges and multitudinous ridges lit with phosphorescent foams, that were tossed and swept into tremendous cataracts of glittering sprays as the typhoon's breath swept the world of water like a huge unseen knife.

Crash! The schooner stopped, seemed to sink by the stern, then giving a shivery jerk, fell before the dead weight of the onrushing seas that crashed over her. The scene the lonely girl saw was as though God again held the oceans in the hollows of His hands, as though the universe of water had been re-thrown into the infinite; majestic liquid mountains tossing mighty arms that resembled promontories of fiery foams, triumphantly travelling through boundless space, bound for new regions, taking the millions of marching stars with them, as like a lone ark, with its little terrified mortality, the *Belle Isle* flapped its broken wings, bravely struggling in some effort to survive the chaos of a new creation!

In her fright Sestrina shut the cuddy's door, bang! and then stared in terror through the porthole. She knew that something terrible had happened. She distinctly heard faint wails, like the despairing cries of helpless children calling from somewhere out in the infinity of dark and wind. The square-rigged foremast had been snapped off just above the mainyard—it had gone! The whole crew who had been aloft had disappeared, washed overboard. Sestrina and little Rajao, the child, out of all the crew, were left alone. The

Haytian girl stood at the porthole, horrified by the catastrophe which she knew had overtaken the *Belle Isle's* crew. Like most women of her type, she revealed true pluck in a great emergency. She rushed to the child Rajao. He had given a terrified scream.

"It's all right, Rajao, I'm near you," she said as she clutched the child in her arms, then standing him on the cuddy's floor exhorted him not to move. Then she stood waiting. An eternity of apprehensive terror passed ere she felt the heavy rolling and pitching of the vessel subside. The distant wails out in the night, the silence on the deck, where a few moments before she had heard loudly shouted oaths, made her realise that all the crew had gone. She knew that no human beings could live in the chaotic crash of the charging seas that loomed before her terror-stricken eyes like mountainous, glittering icebergs travelling triumphant across the world! In the first realisation of her own terrible loneliness, her thoughts flew to the imprisoned beings who, she knew, were down in the hold of the *Belle Isle.* Looking out on deck, she anxiously awaited her chance; the seas were still leaping over the side, great liquid masses washing to and fro as the schooner pitched and rolled. An opportunity presented itself; she ran out on deck and reached the main hatchway. Inclining her head, she could distinctly hear above the clamour of the charging seas muffled groans and wild cries coming from below the hatchway. The crew had battened the hatch down just before the typhoon had burst over the *Belle Isle.* As she stood there and listened in terror, wondering what to do, a small shadowy figure ran towards her. It was the child Rajao. He was wringing his hands and calling for his father.

"Go back! get into the cuddy, quick," cried Sestrina. The next moment a tremendous sea crashed on board. The girl gripped a rope that was hanging from the ratlines near the galley, and so saved herself from being washed away. She let go and was immediately washed

into the scuppers on the windward side. In her horror at the terrible cry that came to her ears, she ran to the side, and, careless of her own life, stared over at the great seas—little Rajao had gone to his father! A faint cry came out of the waters; then nothing more to tell of Rajao's existence. This new disaster upset Sestrina more than anything else that had happened that night. She rushed back into the cuddy, and throwing herself on the floor beat her hands and moaned like one demented. After a while she calmed down. She had wisdom enough to realise that it was no good grieving. Then she sought comfort by kneeling, and with the crucifix in her hand prayed. And never did girl pray more fervently than did Sestrina Gravelot that night on the storm-tossed *Belle Isle*. She called Clensy's name aloud in her prayers so that the word "Royal" might bring comfort and companionship to her loneliness. Remembering the appealing cry which she had heard when she had stood by the hatchway, she calmed herself and longed to release the prisoners.

"Thank God that I'm not alone, there is some one near me," she cried, as she once more went to the cuddy's door and anxiously waited a favourable moment to get to the main hatch again. The first wild breath of the typhoon had passed, but the seas were still running high. Seizing the first opportunity she once more ran along the deck. Directly she came to the main hatch she gripped a long piece of rope, and making one end fast round her waist, tied the other end into the bolt at the bottom of the mainmast. The whole time that she stood there she could hear muffled wailings and voices speaking in a strange language, beseeching her to release them from their perilous position.

Sestrina strove to lift the hatchway, but found it quite impossible to do so with her delicate hands. Placing her face close to the cracks in the hatch, she shouted, "Who are you? I'm all alone, the storm has washed all the crew of this ship overboard!"

Then she listened. At first she heard a lot of mumbling, as though insane men were gabbling in an unintelligible manner; then to her immense relief a voice said:

"Wahine! Oh save us or we die!" It was a musical, clear voice and sounded strangely calm in the midst of the hubbub of other voices that gabbled incessantly.

"I cannot lift the hatch; I'm not strong enough," she shouted back as the wind swept her hair streaming behind her. A sea crashed on board. She was only saved through her forethought in lashing herself to the bolt in the mainmast. As soon as the water had subsided the schooner ceased to roll.

Again she placed her mouth to the chink in the hatch and shouted once more, "The crew have been washed overboard; I'm a woman, all alone up here; and who are you?"

"All gone, wash way?" replied the melancholy voice, the only voice that spoke in English. Then the voice continued, "You woman's all alone?"

"Yes, I'm quite alone."

"Getter hammer or lump of iron and knock lumps of wood, bolts, out of the sides of the hatch so that we stricken men, O Wahine, may open it," said the voice in pathetic appeal.

The next moment Sestrina was groping about the dark deck seeking something that would enable her to knock the large bolts from the hatchway. At last she found an iron bar in the galley. Risking the danger of the heavy seas that still leapt on board every time the *Belle Isle* rolled and lay over to windward, she lifted the bar and smashed away at the bolts with all her might.

"I cannot move the bolts!" she cried when she had struck away till her fingers bled.

"Oh, try again, Wahine, for the sake of dying men," replied the voice as the gabbling ceased.

"Who are you? and why are you locked down there?" replied Sestrina as she stood breathless on the

deck and for the first time realised her position. There were evidently many men locked up in that fetid hold, and she was there, a woman alone, about to release them. Her natural instincts had begun to warn her.

"Ah papalagi, kind Wahine, we are only poor men who have been taken away from our homes because we be ill." There was an appealing, earnest note in the voice that said this, that sounded unerringly true.

Sestrina's fears vanished. "Ill!" she cried, as the winds swept the deck and slashed her mass of wildly blown hair about her face. "Is that the only reason that you have been locked up down there?" she called back.

"'Tis all that is the matter with us, and by the light of truth and the great Kuahilo, Pelê, and the White God, I say this, O Wahine," replied the voice in a trembling way.

Sestrina's heart was touched. The next moment she had once again begun to deliver direct blows at the hatch bolts. Then she discovered that she had been knocking them the wrong way. Crash! out came the first bolt; crash! out came another. In a few minutes she stood still again; all the bolts were out except two, one bolt on either side. Dawn was stealing across the storm-tossed seas.

Though the first passion of the typhoon had blown itself out, a steady wind of hurricane force was still blowing. Up! up! rose the tremendous hills of water and the *Belle Isle* creaked and groaned as she lifted and the great seas passed safely under her! For a moment the lonely Haytian girl stared seaward. It was a terrible, yet grand scene from the derelict schooner's deck as the battered wreck laboured like a brave, conscious thing and the torn sails flapped and the seas leapt on board and romped about her like hungry monsters.

Sestrina had opened the hatchway, and had at once hastily retreated towards the cuddy's doorway. As

she stood there watching by the dim light of the breaking dawn, which had barely extinguished the stars to the west, she fancied she could hear the thumping of her own heart.

"Who had she rescued from the fetid depths of the schooner's hold?" Her eyes were fixed on the opened hatchway. First one head appeared; just for a moment it wobbled and then sank back, as though from extreme exhaustion through climbing the ladder that led from the schooner's bottom up to the deck. In another moment the head had reappeared. Sestrina saw the face! She stared like one paralysed at that terrible, ghastly sight. It was a skeleton of death, and the face noseless, disease eaten; the head wobbled and swayed helplessly; the fleshless lips grinned as the bony forehead turned and the face stared towards the dawn of the far skyline with blind eyes! Then another head appeared; it was white and blotched with snowy patches, hairless. The face might have been some symbol of all sorrow and misery under the sun, so pathetic looking was it, as it, too, shifted about, staring first to port and then to starboard, as though it would scan the dim horizons of the grey dawn-lit seas for help! Then came up another head. It was apparently the head of the one who had stood below, behind the others, assisting them, helping them ascend the ladder. There was no sign of disease on the head or face of this one. He was a tall, handsome man with fine bright eyes. Sestrina stared in surprise. She began to seek comfort in the thought that all she saw was only some terrible nightmare of her afflicted brain. The tall Hawaiian, for such he was, was attired in picturesque costume, a tappa-cloth girdle and flowing robe, such as Hawaiian chiefs wear. The man's alert eyes at once espied Sestrina's form as she stood in the shadows, just inside the cuddy's doorway. He had leapt on to the deck and was moving in a hesitating way towards her. Sestrina gripped the door handle, quite prepared to rush in

the saloon and shut it; then she stared hard in the soft grey light of the tropic dawn, and saw something in the man's face that told her he deserved her deepest sympathy and not her fear!

"Who are you, and who are they? What's the matter with them?" she asked of the handsome Hawaiian, as she pointed towards the deck by the main hatchway. Ten terrible-looking beings stood swaying like skeletons in their ragged shrouds, drinking in the fresh air of the fast-breaking dawn, as dying castaways might drink in water. What more terrible sight could the whole world present than that lonely, wrecked, waterlogged schooner, and on its deck those wobbling heads with half-blind eyes, the rags of the skeleton frames flapping in the wind, their forms falling to the deck as the schooner rolled and pitched on the storm-tossed seas. The fallen figures were on their knees, with lifted hands, praying feverishly in some musical tongue to the skies where the first deep blue of the tropic day was stealing.

"Are you quite alone, Wahine?" said the Hawaiian, who had sadly watched Sestrina's terrified gaze on that dreadful sight of his fellows.

For a moment the girl looked steadily into the man's eyes, then replied, "I am quite alone; the crew were all washed away last night."

It was then that the tall Hawaiian stood erect with bowed head, as though lowered before the girl's eyes in some shame, and said, "Wahine, we got kilia (leprosy), and this ship was taking us to the leper settlement, Molokai." Saying this to the girl, the tall, melancholy-looking man seemed relieved. He raised his head and said softly, in the biblical style of the Hawaiians who have learnt their English from the missionaries, "And Wahine, who art thou?"

Sestrina was speechless. She could not reply, for in her despair and horror she forgot who she was. "Lepers!" was the only word that escaped from her

lips when the great mist left her brain, and once more the *Belle Isle's* deck became a solid something being beaten by the chaotic waters of an infinite sea. She had suddenly turned, as though she were about to flee from that terrible presence, a scourge that made the living dead still stand in the light of the sun, that they might watch their bodies dissolve before the ravages, the canker of a loathsome pollution, a malignant scourge that made its victims bless the blindness of their afflicted eyes as the third stage arrived, the stage when they could no longer see their disease-eaten limbs, the polluted flesh, and the peeping, whitened bones of their own unburied skeletons. Where could Sestrina fly to? Where? Already a faint odour from the pestilence of those swaying, moaning lepers came floating to her nostrils. What had she done that she should be cast away on a world of waters, alone on a living tomb where the dead clamoured in their shrouds, put forth bony fingers, and with half-blind eyes sought with pathetic indecision to locate her whereabouts, as they appealed for water and food! Food for the dead! Nourishment to sustain the loathsome body in that hellish purgatory where men hated and feared men, where pain and misery came as a blessing divine to stay memories of past love and homes, the anguished thoughts that haunt the living grave! "Food! wai (water!)" they cried. Such is the love of life in mortals who have once dwelt alive under the sun!

The intermittent sounds, the beseeching mumblings of their parched, almost fleshless lips, told Sestrina of their hunger and thirst. The language they wailed was unintelligible to her, but the appeal of the shrivelled outstretched hands and the stare in the bulged glassy eyes spoke in that language which is intelligible to all mortals who dwell under the sun. The horror that had partially paralysed Sestrina's senses vanished. She was a woman. The slumbering instincts of divine motherhood, the sympathy and self-denial which springs

into the hearts of most women when they are put to the supreme test by some heart-rending catastrophe, or when despairing men appeal, awoke in her soul. The inscrutable will of Providence, that so often stabs the heart with one hand and with the other soothes with sweetest balm, had given Sestrina the divine faculty which enables one to forget one's own sorrow when in the presence of a greater grief. And so Sestrina's fragile form was enabled to bear the weight of grief at that moment in her life, grief of a nature which was surely about the cruellest that the fates could devise. Her desire to flee from the presence of those afflicted men was swept away by a flood of sympathy and a feverish desire to help to alleviate their sufferings. She looked into the eyes of the tall, almost dignified-looking, handsome Hawaiian who stood before her. No sign of the scourge was visible on his countenance. Seeing the girl's hasty glance at his face and over his form, and divining the reason why she had stared so, he at once pulled up the sleeve of his native jerkin, and, pointing to his arm, just under the muscles by the shoulder, said, " See, Wahine ? "

A small bluish patch, not larger than a penny piece, was visible. The Hawaiian's earnest, simple manner and the thought that he was still strong and possibly a doughty protector if trouble came, acted like magic on Sestrina's stricken nerves.

" Come on ! " she said.

The next moment she had dodged the green seas that were leaping over the side, and had entered the silent cuddy. The Hawaiian had followed her. Grasping the iron posts in the cuddy to save herself from falling, for the schooner was still rolling very heavily, she opened the small lockers and brought forth tinned meats, tinned fruits, bread, jam, and all the table delicacies she could lay her hands on. She looked up, sorrow and surprise in her eyes as the Hawaiian stood devouring a lump of the bread. Yes, so great was his hunger.

" Come on ! " she said.

Then she ran out on deck. Seeing the lepers huddled by the starboard scupper, all clinging to the bolts and ropes as they swayed on their knees in their helplessness, she held the food up and beckoned the tall Hawaiian to take it to them. In a moment Hawahee, for such was the tall Hawaiian's name, approached his stricken comrades and gave them bread.

" Here, quick ! " said Sestrina, as she saw him trying to burst the lid of one of the tins of meat open. She had handed him a strong ship's clasp-knife. In a second he had wrenched the lid off. As the lepers crawled about the deck, picking up the scattered crumbs and bits, Sestrina could hear them murmuring, " O Jesu, Maki, kola, se moaa Langi." She knew that they were thanking her and the gods of their own creed and her own Saviour.

Such was Sestrina's experience on the *Belle Isle* when the crew were washed overboard. Daylight and the bright tropic sun shining over the ocean eased her first terrors. Strange as it may seem, the sight of the stricken lepers, and her knowledge that she could help them, made her accept the tragical position with a strange feeling of calmful fear and happiness. The Hawaiian, Hawahee, had an intellectual countenance, and his manner was reserved and gentle. Sestrina thanked God on her knees when she discovered that he had the scourge only in its first stage, and very slight. She trembled when she thought of what her position would have been had she found herself alone on those tropic seas with stricken lepers who were nearly all in an advanced stage. Four of them were quite blind, the rest were able to walk about and help Hawahee put things ship-shape on board as the days went by. Hawahee spoke little to her, but his sad demeanour, and the little he did say when he spoke to her, convinced Sestrina that he was a true friend.

Two or three days after she had rescued the lepers

from the fetid hold, they nearly all showed signs of improvement. Even the four blind men would stand out on deck and bathe in the hot sunlight. It was a terrible sight, though. Sestrina would turn her eyes away as they put forth their withered, almost fleshless hands and chanted strange prayers to the skies. On the fourth night after the typhoon, one of the blind lepers rushed out of the forecastle and jumped overboard. Sestrina and Hawahee, who were standing aft by the cuddy with an oil-lamp, sorting out tinned fruits that they had found in the lazaretto, heard a cry and at once rushed forward. The swell was still heavy, causing the schooner to roll at times in an alarming way. As Hawahee and Sestrina stared over the side they heard the cry again, a faint cry like the wail of a child, but they could see nothing. Then the moon, which had been concealed by a wrack of cloud, seemingly floated into the blue space and sent a great silver radiance over the waters.

"Look! there he is!" cried Sestrina, as she pointed away towards the rolling, glassy waters.

True enough, as Hawahee and the three stronger lepers, Lupo, Rohana, and Steno, stared over the side they could see their comrade's struggling form. For a moment the moon once more disappeared behind a dark cloud, and the sad watchers on the wrecked *Belle Isle* only heard a faint cry as they stared into the darkness. Then a long shaft of moonlight fell slantwise, down to where they had seen the struggling form, and touched the waters. And as Sestrina watched, it seemed to her that a door in Heaven had suddenly been opened by the Hand of divine sympathy. They saw the dying man's hands toss for the last time from his watery grave, as though in some pathetic appeal to the heavens. Though the seas still rolled on and the tangled ropes and torn sails flapped aloft and the schooner's deck creaked and moaned to the eternal roll, it seemed that a great silence followed that last sad moment. Hawahee

sighed and Sestrina's form trembled as she stood there, her hair outstreaming to the wind. Yet they both knew that their dead comrade had at last found rest and peace.

Sestrina's brain became strangely etherealised through sorrow. Grief had the effect of strengthening her mind. Even Hawahee gazed on the lonely girl in calm admiration as she ran about attending his stricken comrades with unremitting solicitude.

"Here are pillows and blankets," she said, as she handed Hawahee all the bedclothes she had found in the cuddy's cabins.

"Aloah, Wahine," murmured the Hawaiian, as he bowed and took them from the girl's arms and at once went forward to make comfortable beds for his leper fellows. For the Hawaiian also was a good man, his heart full of tenderness and religious sorrow for those who suffered around him. Sestrina would sit in the cuddy alone by night, unable to sleep as the schooner rolled helpless on the tropic seas. A dim, dream-like kaleidoscopic glimpse of Royal Clensy sitting in some room in far-away Honolulu, awaiting her presence, would flash through her brain. Her feelings at such moments were wonderfully intense; her past, her life itself and future hopes seemed to be suddenly crystallised into one magic diamond-flash of the mind as she saw the shadowy form and face of her awaiting lover. Her soul, winged by the mystery of the unexplainable, crossed those tropic seas and went wandering amongst strange people in strange places, searching to find the one who would think she had forgotten him. Then the boundless reality of the surrounding ocean would return and bring the darkest despair to her heart.

In a few days the swell of the ocean had subsided enough to make it possible to walk about the *Belle Isle* without holding on to the fixtures. It was then that Hawahee set about clearing the deck of the wreckage, fallen spars and tackle, etc. The Hawaiian had been a

sailor, and so he knew that it would be wise to get the fallen spars of the mainmast and the débris of the foremast overboard so as to ease the schooner's list. The clearance, by the help of Rohana and Lupo and Steno, was accomplished in one day. Then Hawahee made Lupo take the helm, so that he could attempt to keep the vessel's head before the swell; but the way of the schooner was not sufficient, and so she drifted broadside. A few nights after that it came on to blow again. Things began to look serious. Sestrina asked the Hawaiian to stay aft with her in the cuddy. The thundering seas had once more begun to lift the schooner as though it were a tiny boat. The seas swept right over her deck as she drifted away, away into the vast unknown regions of the Pacific Ocean.

Seeing that nothing could be done to bring the *Belle Isle* under control, Hawahee told the lepers to keep in the forecastle. Then he looked kindly at Sestrina, and said, "Wahine, for your sake I will stay aft."

"Yes, do stay here with me!" cried Sestrina in dread as the darkness came over the seas and the thundering seas crashed intermittently against the schooner. It was a terrible night. The cargo shifted in the hold, making the *Belle Isle* take a worse list than ever. It was almost impossible to keep a footing on deck without holding on to something. Hawahee fell on his knees in the cuddy and prayed first to the great White God, and then to his own gods. It all seemed like some terrible nightmare to Sestrina as she lay in an exhausted state on the cuddy's settee, her sleepless eyes watching the Hawaiian on his knees appealing to his gods with deep religious fervour. So often did Sestrina feel the mountainous waters bear down on the wreck and lift it up on the travelling hills, that she knew exactly when to expect the crash and shiver of the schooner as the seas struck her.

"Where are we going to, where?" moaned Sestrina.

The Hawaiian, who had risen to his feet, gazed on

the girl with melancholy eyes, and then shook his head. He well knew that the *Belle Isle* was drifting far away from the track of the trading vessels, away into the unknown seas.

Daylight came. Sestrina had lashed herself to the cuddy's table and, with her head on it, had fallen into a subconscious state. She thanked her Maker on her knees when she woke and peered through the porthole. She saw the dim eastern horizon slowly brighten from grey to saffron and deep orange. Then she watched the crimson streaks burst out of the glowing dawn's first magnificent thrill, dawn's first splendid pang as the birth of the sunrise flooded the eastern skyline with a wealth of golden and crimson splendour.

"O Langi, O le sao va moana," said Hawahee, as he gazed on the rosy eternity of the east. Then, folding his hands across his breast, he prayed in his native tongue. And still the *Belle Isle* drifted on, drifting like some frightened conscious thing as the everlasting seas charged her helplessness. She was loaded with timber, and so, as far as sinking was concerned, they were safe.

"We shall not sink; Langi (heaven) is good to us," murmured Hawahee as he walked softly into the cuddy after examining the *Belle Isle's* cargo.

When the seas had calmed down, Sestrina and Hawahee stood on deck and scanned the horizon to see if land or a sail was in sight.

"Fear not, Wahine, Langi and your great White God are with us." So spake Hawahee as, with his hand arched over his eyes, he carefully scanned the boundless skylines. Sestrina did not gaze across the seas, but she scanned Hawahee's face, and knew by its expression and by his eyes that no sail was in sight. And still Sestrina hoped on. And did Hawahee hope on? No! It was only for the girl's sake that he would wish to sight a sail on those solitary tropic seas. He well knew that should a passing vessel come to rescue him and his

comrades, the crew would, on discovering that they were lepers, flee from the *Belle Isle* in terror. And so it was for Sestrina's sake only that he watched the sky-lines with hope.

The *Belle Isle* had been drifting exactly twelve days when something happened that lessened the terror of their position. Hawahee was staring seaward. The wild splendour of sunset's burnished light along the western horizon had subdued the brilliance of the tropic day, so that the skyline to the south-west was visible to the ocean's apparent remotest rim. Hawahee suddenly startled Sestrina by shouting, "Look, Wahine!"

Sestrina stared over the side, her hair blowing wildly about her shoulders as the steady breeze slashed her form.

"What is it? quick, tell me," she said as she still gazed eagerly, her hand arched over her eyes as she stared and stared. Again Hawahee pointed to the south-west. It was then that Sestrina caught the first glimpse of a bluish blotch that looked like a tiny cloud on the remote skyline. It was land! The Haytian girl's pulses leapt with joy. She burst into tears, so intense was her delight in the thought that she would see the solid earth again and the faces of men and women, with happy eyes, beings who enjoyed the air they breathed in the glorious thrill of healthy life. Such were the half-formed thoughts that swept through Sestrina's excited mind. But why did a shadow creep over Hawahee's face? Why did he fear the sight of strong, health-loving men who thanked God for the health and liberty which they shared in common with the insects of the air. Ah, why? Hawahee and his comrades well knew that they were loathsome outcasts of creation. He knew that, were there civilised men on the isle (for such was the land towards which the schooner was fast drifting), he and his comrades would be captured and chained like felons so that they could be safely re-shipped and sent away to the terrible lazaretto, the dread Leper Isle—Molokai.

As Hawahee watched, the shadow passed from his face; his eyes re-brightened. There was yet hope for him and his comrades. It was quite possible that the isle they saw was one of the hundreds of uninhabited isles of the South Pacific Ocean. Hawahee did not fear the savages who might inhabit such an isle. He knew that they would be quite ignorant of the contagious nature of the scourge from which he and his companions suffered. Sestrina heard him give a sigh of relief as he stood there and watched. She guessed not why he sighed so. Sestrina was only an inexperienced girl after all. In the first thrill of excitement and hope over sighting that little blue blotch on the skyline, she had wondered if it might not be the shores of Hawaii—Honolulu! Poor Sestrina!

Ere the eastern stars had begun to bespangle the heavens, Hawahee lifted his hands and murmured a hasty prayer to Kuahilo and the great Hawaiian goddess Pelé. For he had distinctly made out a lonely isle. There it was, far away to the south-west, the foams of the beating seas that swept over its coral reefs distinctly visible. He was saved! The hands of wrathful men would not grip him and his comrades and place gyves on their limbs. He would yet enjoy the freedom of the hills before the pollution of his mortal tenement made him cry to God out of the greatest sorrow that can well come to men in this world. And, as the Hawaiian reflected, he beckoned to Sestrina.

"Yes, Hawahee?" she said timidly, as she gazed up into his handsome face in wonder, watching his eyes from some dread of her own mind. The fact is, that she knew not whether the proximity of the isle was a blessing to Hawahee, or whether he would attempt to alter the course of the schooner so that he and his comrades could risk the horrors of the ocean rather than fall into the hands of their fellow-men again.

To the girl's delight, he looked kindly upon her, and said, "Go thou, my child, into the cuddy, and bring

unto me all those old ropes that we have stored in readiness for such a pass as this."

The ocean swell was still heavy, so heavy that it often lifted the schooner up on her beam ends. Hawahee knew that if the *Belle Isle* struck the reefs of that far-away isle's shore and so became solid with the land, the seas would dash over her and sweep them all away.

"Wahine, keep near me," he said, as he ran about, making hasty preparations for the coming shock. All the while Hawahee was making these preparations, the stricken lepers were standing by the bulwark side, beating their hands and chanting in a strange way. Two of the blind men seemed to be demented, for they began to jump about and dance in a grotesque manner on the deck.

"Rohana, Steno and Lupo!" called Hawahee.

In a moment the three men stood by his side.

"Go thou to the helm and do your best to keep the ship's course so that she might run ashore on the low sands of the isle, where the waters do not send up such cataracts of spray, see?"

Saying this, he pointed to the far-away isle. And there, true enough, Rohana and Sestrina stared and saw that one part of the shore was quite visible, even the palms just inland in clear relief, because no showers of flying spray dimmed the atmosphere. The *Belle Isle* was so near the land that they could plainly see the white lines of the rolling surfs as the big ocean swell rolled up the shores, caught the barrier reefs, and rebounded in mighty showers that glittered in the dusk. Then a pale radiance swept right across the Pacific Ocean and dispelled the deeper night shadows.

"'Tis good; the moon is up. Langi has sent light for us," murmured Hawahee, as he stared seaward, where the swollen moonrise looked like a big haggard face peering in some anxiety over the horizon of the hot tropic night sea. The lepers had already constructed a large raft, making it out of the wooden gratings and

the doors of the galley and the cuddy. By the side of this raft stood the more helpless lepers waiting to be lashed on to it so that they would not be washed away when the final crash came. It was strange how those afflicted men clung to each other and went to an infinite amount of trouble to help their more helpless fellows. But still, they did go to the trouble, and it must be supposed that the love of men for one another is a greater virtue in sorrow than in the flush of perfect joy and health.

"All is ready, Wahine; do not fear," whispered Hawahee as he approached Sestrina, and then crept back into the shadows to watch. The wonder and mystery of it all almost drowned Sestrina's fears as she stared over the bulwark. She saw the lonely isle, distant palm-clad hills, and all the silvered waves tumbling, as though silently, in the moonlight as they broke over the shore reefs and sent up glimmering fountains of spray. Rohana, who had black shaggy hair, and looked like some handsome wild man, crept near the girl and stared over the side as Hawahee stood in prayer in the shadows.

"Listen, Wahine!" he said. And as Rohana inclined his head, Sestrina inclined her head also. They could both distinctly hear the far-off boom and low monotone made by the big white-ridged combers as they met the shore of the isle and rebounded on the outer reefs. It was then that Hawahee approached Sestrina again.

"Keep near me, Wahine," he said, as he put on an old glove (he had found it in the cuddy), so that he might grip hold of Sestrina without fear of the contagion of the leprosy reaching her. Hawahee's eyes were full of tenderness as he gazed on the lonely girl as she stood there, hope shining in her eyes, her unkempt mass of hair streaming out to the wind. Hawahee saw that she did not realise the approaching danger. It was a picture full of beauty and tragedy as she stood there. The fluttering dishevelment of her torn dress and the

dark rings formed by worry round her eyes, the lines of sorrow on her brow, intensified the girl's beauty, and touched the Hawaiian's heart. Sestrina heard him sigh.

"Don't move," said Hawahee; "keep quite near me, Sestra," for so he had called her since she had told him her name that day.

As they stood on deck, the moon, low on the horizon, was just behind them. They could distinctly see the shore's outline and the showers of foam rise and curl, and disappear in the gloom.

"Hark!" said Sestrina; and as she and Hawahee listened they distinctly heard the sea-winds moan as they swept through the rows of shore palms.

"*Aue! Lo mao sapola!*" said Hawahee, as he beckoned to Rohana and Lupo.

The next moment the lepers had rushed to the raft. Then the crash came. The *Belle Isle* had struck broadside on the reefs in rather deep water. In a second the great seas came ramping over the side like huge monsters with slashing mains, crashed on deck and then leapt right over to the port side. The lepers had just managed to cling on to the raft when it was washed away over the side, going with ease over the rail, which was level with the seas. Sestrina, who had expected the schooner to run softly on the beach and so allow them all to paddle safely ashore, or at least go in the schooner's broken boat, gave a scream in her fright as the seas crashed on board. The terrific tumult, the swaying and moaning and snapping of the spars, and the chaotic ramping of the foaming waters around her, made Sestrina think that a typhoon had struck the *Belle Isle* without the slightest warning. The next minute Hawahee had clutched the frightened girl in his arms. A tremendous swell wave struck the *Belle Isle*—they were both washed away.

"Have no fear, Wahine," said Hawahee, as he recovered his breath, and held the girl's head above the water, placing one arm under her body. "Let go,

quick, Wahine!" he gasped, as Sestrina in her terror gripped his swimming arm. Again they were engulfed, a sea passing right over their heads. Sestrina thought her last moment had come. She gave a despairing cry as she came to the surface, and then prepared to go under again. It seemed to her that Hawahee had let go his hold as a great wave engulfed them, and she fell down, down, into the blackness of the ocean. Her consciousness began to fade. She felt herself being slowly dragged along. She imagined that she was at the bottom of the Pacific and that some dark, terrible, silent form was dragging her along, and at the same time placing soft arms round her throat in an attempt to strangle her. Sestrina's delight can be imagined when she opened her eyes and discovered Hawahee frantically pulling her up the wave-ridden beach. She was saved! Sestrina, who had swallowed a deal of sea-water, immediately lost consciousness. Hawahee lifted her in his arms and carried her up the beach. In a few moments he had gathered a heap of the dry, soft, drift seaweed scattered about the higher shore, and had placed her on a soft couch under the palms. For a long time he rubbed her hands and did all he could to revive the insensible girl.

"O Kuahilo! O Pelé!" he cried as he appealed to his old gods, and then stared again on the girl's pallid face that looked pathetically beautiful lying there upturned, just visible in the moonlight which streamed through the palms.

In his despair he unloosed her bodice. "Ora li Jesu!" he cried, as he appealed to the new God of the mission-rooms, and softly rubbed away at the girl's bosom, just above the heart. Just as he was thinking that Sestrina had succumbed to her long submersion in the water, she opened her eyes. In his delight, Hawahee rose from his knees, and lifting his hands towards the sky, mumbled some strange chant-like prayer to his heathen deities. For, as is often the case with the

Hawaiians who have been converted to Christianity, Hawahee in his sorrow and great joy had instinctively fallen back to the older faith, had appealed to the gods of his childhood. With infinite care and tenderness Hawahee pulled the folds of the girl's bodice together again and arranged her clothing. Sestrina's wakeful brain noticed these things, and she looked into Hawahee's face and smiled.

"All is well; you are safe, Wahine," he muttered. Then he left her and hurried down to the beach to see how it fared with his comrades. No sooner was he out of sight than Sestrina sat up and stared around her. Her brain was the swift-seeing, imaginative kind. As she looked towards the distant moonlit seas and heard the palms sighing over her head, a cruel flash of intense realisation came to her.

"'Tis an isle where no one lives. I am cast away, lost for ever. I will never see him or those I love again. Royal! come to me! Claircine, dear old Claircine, where are you?" In the bitterness of her thoughts her mind reverted to Père Chaco. "O Père Chaco, what have I done that this should happen to me? 'As we sow, so shall we reap,' you said to me. O Père Chaco, have mercy on me! What have I sown?" And as the miserable girl wailed and reflected, she stared over her shoulder in fright at the seas as they rushed up the beach. Then a great weariness came to her brain. In the misery and confusion of her senses she began to think that she was haunting the realms of some nightmare from which she must soon awaken. But the terrors of reality soon presented themselves to her. For she looked along the shore and saw a tall figure dragging helpless bodies out of reach of the waves. It was Hawahee doing his best to save his comrades from the ocean. Out of the nine lepers only five were saved—Rohana, Lupo, Steno, and two blind men. Hawahee had found them huddled on the shore, quite exhausted. He had swiftly dragged them higher up the beach and

placed them in a comfortable spot in the thick grass and fern by the shore's sheltering palms. The bodies which Sestrina had seen Hawahee dragging from the sea were dead. In a few moments the Hawaiian had placed them in a silent spot by the high reefs ready for burial. Then he came back to Sestrina's side.

"Wahine, you have sorrow on your face, and there is nothing to grieve over now if you have true faith in your White God, the same as I have in my country's gods." So spoke Hawahee, but for all his kind words and great mental effort to cheer Sestrina, he was weak and ill and, giving way to his sorrow, prostrated himself on the shore and wept.

"I will be brave since you have been so good and brave yourself," whispered Sestrina, as she gazed on the bowed head of the strange semi-savage man beside her. Hawahee at once recovered his composure. He hung his head like a big child for a moment as though he felt shame that Sestrina should have seen his tears.

"See, I do not worry, Hawahee," said Sestrina, as she smiled, and then, taking a comb from her pocket, she began to comb the tangled folds of her damp tresses.

"Ah, wahine, thou art brave and deserve a better fate than this," murmured Hawahee as, with his chin resting on his hand, he watched the girl. And still Sestrina combed away at her shining tresses, as they fell like a magical glossy tent over her shoulders, while she sang an old Haytian melody.

Neither Hawahee or Sestrina remembered the moment when sleep lulled their exhausted mind and body to rest. They must have slept two or three hours, for when Sestrina opened her eyes the stars had begun to take flight. The terrors of the night had been too cruel to make her think she had awakened from a dream. In a moment she had realised everything. She even gazed calmly upward and tried to see the birds that sang so weirdly sweet in the palms overhead. Dawn was stealing over the ocean. For a moment she stared at

the ocean skyline. Out beyond the just visible reefs lay the wreck of the *Belle Isle.* The hull lay right over, the broken masts and spars pointed or leaning shoreward. In the calm waters that were surrounded by reefs, she saw two floating dark forms. She saw the ghastly death-stricken face of one of the forms as the head bobbed about, the body turning round and round to the slight swell of the water that heaved against the barrier reef beyond.

"Come away, wahine. I will place the dead to rest."

It was Hawahee who spoke. He had suddenly awakened and found Sestrina standing beside him, staring at the dead bodies of the lepers. They had drifted in during the night.

"Come on, Sestra," said the man. His voice was full of tenderness. The weeping girl followed him up the beach. In a few minutes they found a comfortable spot under the shades of the thick groves of bread-fruit trees. "Here will do, wahine," said Hawahee, as he looked up at the beautiful trees that spread their wealth of yellowing fruit amongst the rich glossy leaves. It was a beautiful spot. Even the bright-plumaged birds that haunted them seemed to welcome those sad strangers from the seas. "Chir-rip! cheer-up!" they seemed to say, as Hawahee and Sestrina gazed up at the fruit-loaded boughs that hung over them, so green and bright in the infinite loveliness of Dame Nature's unostentatious hospitality.

"Here is food, wahine, and there is drink," said Hawahee, as he gazed first on the yellowing bread-fruit and then at the tall palms, on which hung tawny clusters of ripening coco-nuts.

"Wait, wahine, till I return," said the Hawaiian. In a few moments he returned with a great armful of soft seaweed and moss. "Lie there and rest," he said to Sestrina. Then the Hawaiian went down to the beach and, wading out to the deep water, dragged the

bodies of the two dead lepers ashore. In a few moments he had dug a deep hole in the soft sand where the waters rolled up the beach by the promontory. When he had placed the bodies in the hollow he got several large lumps of coral rock and dropped them over the spot, so that when the tides were high the waters would not wash the sands away. Then he bathed himself in the cool sea water. After that he gathered fruits and coco-nut and took them to the lepers, but they took no notice of him, being fast asleep, exhausted. Hawahee was delighted when he found a large slope whereon grew wild *feis* (bananas). Gathering the luscious fruit, he hastened back to Sestrina, and told her to eat and drink. The shipwrecked girl felt greatly revived when she had eaten the wild *feis* and had drunk refreshing coco-nut milk. As the sun climbed high in the heaven and blazed over the tropic seas and the innumerable birds of the isle shrieked and sang, Sestrina felt less depressed. It was only when she followed Hawahee across the valley and caught sight of the huddled forms of the poor lepers, that her mind became darkened again. Lupo and Rohana stirred in their slumber, and then suddenly sat up.

"Aloah, wahine," they murmured, as they caught sight of the girl, and smiled.

Sestrina nodded, and wondered why the stricken men should look so cheerful in such a pass. She could not realise how thankful the lepers felt to their gods in having the freedom of that little island world before them.

"Come away," said Hawahee. Then he led Sestrina back to the shelter beneath the bread-fruits. "You lie down here and rest, Sestra, and I will watch over you," he said, as he gazed sorrowfully on the girl's haggard face. Though Sestrina did not feel like sleeping, she did as the man bade her. Lying down on the soft moss couch that he had prepared, she soon fell asleep. While she lay there Hawahee sat by her side in deep meditation, making plans as to the best thing to do.

"If there is no one on this isle to interfere with us, we can easily build a dwelling-place under these trees," he thought. Then he too fell asleep. The sun was sinking when Sestrina awoke. The dismal mutterings of the cockatoos in the boughs around swiftly called her to her senses. She felt so wretched and lonely that she touched Hawahee, who still lay fast asleep beside her, on the arm. In a moment he sat up, and, rubbing his eyes, stared in sorrow on the girl.

"Let us go and see how big this isle is, and find out if we are quite alone here, wahine," he said. Hawahee's suggestion that they should explore the isle together pleased Sestrina.

"Perhaps, after all, there are other human beings here," she thought.

When they had reached the top of the hill, which was the highest elevation of the isle, they scanned the shore lines and saw that they were indeed alone, no sign of human habitation anywhere. It was a small isle, not more than a mile across, and two miles in length. Sestrina could not help but gaze in admiration on the loveliness of the scene around her. All along the shores stood clusters of feathery-leafed palms that leaned over small lagoons that shone like mirrors in the shadowy distances. Tiny waves, creeping in from the ocean's calm expanse, ran up the silvery sands, tossed their snowy arms and faded. On all the higher slopes, about fifty yards inland, stood the picturesque breadfruit trees. And when the hot, soft sea wind drifted inland and touched their heights, the rich, dark green leaves stirred and revealed the paler hues underneath as they were softly blown aside. As Sestrina and Hawahee stood up there and scanned the dim blue horizons, they felt the vast loneliness of the Pacific enter their hearts. To the left, far beyond the promontory, north of the island, lay the wreck of the *Belle Isle*. The sight of the torn sails and rigging, which was still flapping softly in the breeze, intensified the loneliness of the surroundings.

"Wait, Sestra, let us be sure," said Hawahee, then he climbed the nearest breadfruit tree.

For a long time he stood up in the leafy heights clinging to the boughs, scanning the isle, and staring out to sea. Then he climbed down, and standing by Sestrina, said: "We are safe, and there is no other land in sight."

In one sad mental flash Sestrina realised her terrible position to the full. She realised that the greater the solitude of the isle the greater security it afforded the hunted lepers.

Hawahee noticed the despairing look on Sestrina's face; and swiftly divining her thoughts, said: "Wahine, a ship may pass some day, and then, believe me, 'tis we can hide, my comrades and I. And those who come and rescue you will not know that we are here, savvy, wahine?"

"Yes, I understand what you mean," murmured Sestrina as she stared out to sea, and let her eyes roam over the vast solitude of waters. Tears dimmed her yearning gaze. She instinctively knew that it might be months, even years before a ship sighted the isle and sent men ashore to search.

Seeing the girl's grief, Hawahee gazed mournfully upon her and said: "Have no fear, Sestra, I will be a friend to thee."

Then they both walked back to the sheltered spot which Hawahee had chosen by the shore.

The next day, Hawahee and his comrades, Rohana, Lupo, and Steno, made many journeys over the reefs, and then swam out to the wreck of the *Belle Isle*.

The sea had calmed down, and only a few waves dashed against the seaward hulk as the swell came in. In a very little while they had fashioned a substantial raft from the wreckage on the shore. And all day long they worked feverishly as they salvaged cases of tin meats, fruits and biscuits, and all the useful commodities that they could get hold of before the *Belle Isle*

broke up. Two or three hours before the tropic sun dropped, Hawahee and his comrades searched the shore for a suitable spot, and then decided to build a dwelling by the caves, not far from the place where they had been washed ashore. And so they at once extemporised a rough dwelling for themselves. And while the stronger lepers were busy, Hawahee walked inland, and chose a shady place, about one hundred yards inland, for Sestrina's home.

"'Tis a lovely spot, Sestra," said Hawahee as he put in the first posts, and gazed on the sheltering palms and the sylvan beauty of the valley which ran half way down the centre of the isle. This valley had rugged sides and caves which showed that the isle was of volcanic formation. Between the spot which Hawahee had chosen for Sestrina's home, and the dwelling place of the lepers was a wide hollow in which grew huge cacti and prickly pear. Hawahee had carefully chosen this spot so that the girl should be quite apart from the lepers. "Is it not a lovely spot, wahine?" said he.

"Yes, it is," murmured Sestrina as she sighed, yet trying hard to appear enthusiastic over the rich loveliness of the tropical flowers, and palms and breadfruits that surrounded her new home.

In about a week, they were all settled in their rough habitations, and as comfortable as could be under the circumstances, Sestrina's abode was all which could be desired, for Hawahee had fashioned a soft bed of fern, seaweed and scented moss. He had fashioned a door to her habitation out of the cuddy's door of the *Belle Isle*. He had made strong hinges out of the twisted sennet so that the door could swing and be closed just as Sestrina desired. A few yards from the Haytian girl's homestead stood Hawahee's dwelling.

"'Tis best, Sestra, that I should dwell near to you," said he, as Sestrina became quite industrious, and kept arriving by the busy Hawaiian, her arms full of stiff grass and weed that he was thatching his roof with. He

had thatched her dwelling very carefully. Hawahee knew that a strong thatch was necessary, for typhoons and heavy rains often swept those sailless seas.

Sestrina would often lie sleepless by night in her primitive chamber and weep. She would listen to the voices of the night, the winds sighing in the palms, and in strange fancies imagine that Royal Clensy's spirit called to her. Sometimes the rustling of the leaves would bring back memories of the grape-vine that grew below her chamber's window at Port-au-Prince. The haunting idea that her English lover might think that she had made no attempt to get to Honolulu brought great distress to her.

"Ah, if he only knew the truth, I could bear all this," she moaned as the great tropic starry nights of sleepless memory divided the hot, blue tropic days, and brought intense loneliness to her heart. In her sorrow she reverted to the pure religion of her childhood, and reaped much consolation therefrom. It was quite possible that the Hawaiian, Hawahee, had inspired her to seek comfort in prayer. For Hawahee was a fanatic in his devotion to his heathen gods. For though he had been converted to the Christian faith, he had greater faith in the deities of the olden times. Like many of the native lepers, he had become very devout through the sure knowledge that his days were numbered. He would kneel under the palms and sometimes pray to the sunset, singing weird, sweet melodies as he still remained on his knees. Sestrina would sit by him on these occasions, her hand under her chin, watching him like some wondering, wide-eyed child.

One evening as the sunset swept ineffable hues across the great storied remote window of Hawahee's vast heathen cathedral—the western sea sky line—Sestrina opened her eyes in unbounded astonishment. "What's that!" she cried as he put his arm forth, and muttered weird words to an image which he held in his hand.

"'Tis a vassal of the great goddess, Pelé!" replied

Hawahee, as he held the image close to Sestrina's horrified looking eyes—she was staring on the ivory idol which the aged, dying Chinaman on the *Belle Isle* had worshipped so fervently!

The sight of that heathenish relic, and of Hawahee's reverent attitude before its wonderfully carved little face, strangely impressed the Haytian girl's mind. A weird, uncanny kind of atmosphere seemed to fall over her life, filling her mind with superstitious thoughts. The strange, long-necked birds that perched at dawn on the palms by her little homestead, no longer sang cheerful notes, but muttered dismal chants that made her frightened—of she knew not what! But in a day or two she regained the cheerful confidence that had so helped her in her castaway loneliness, and once more sang as she toiled over her primitive domestic duties.

One day, Hawahee suddenly approached Sestrina, and said, "Wahine, do not roam about the isle unless I am near you." He looked troubled as he placed his hand to his brow, undecided as to how to continue.

Sestrina wondered why he should fear for her since they were castaways on an uninhabited isle. "Is there a sail in sight?" she said, a great hope springing into her heart.

"No, wahine," murmured Hawahee, still gazing intently at the girl's face, an expression in his eyes as though his heart wished to say something which his lips dare not express.

Then he said: "My comrades are not as I am; they have forgotten the virtues of the great goddess Pelé, and of Kauhilo, and Atua of Langi, and so, 'tis best that you should keep from their path."

Sestrina, who had seldom seen the lepers, because the sight of their afflicted forms made her feel miserable, gazed in wonder up at Hawahee's face. The five lepers were, to her, poor helpless, cursed, pathetic beings, who calmly awaited the second death of their mortal existence. Though they dwelt within five hundred yards

of her homestead, she had spoken only twice to them as they sat in the wattled shelter, and as the two blind lepers gazed with pathetic indecision towards her, a great wave of pain and sympathy had come to her heart.

Then Lupo, Rohana, and Steno had fallen on their knees, and, with their hands lifted, had gazed upon her as though she were some goddess. And as they wailed and wailed in their strange but musical tongue she imagined they were thanking her for her timely rescue of them all from the *Belle Isle's* stifling hold.

"They look upon me as their benefactress; perhaps in the delirium of their fevered illness, they really think I am some heathen goddess?" she thought as Rohana and Lupo continued to wail, and crawling a little nearer, pointed to her shining tresses, murmured, "Aloah! wahine, makoa, maikai!" Then the lepers had placed their hands to their swollen mouths, making signs as they blew kisses to her, and cried "Maika! maikai!" (thank you). For she had taken a flower from the folds of her hair, and had thrown it towards them. Seeing the flower lying on the silver sands, Lupo, Rohana and Steno had rushed forward, had started struggling in a frantic way to secure the fading blossom. When Lupo placed the blossom to his lips, the others had crowded round him, had sought to place their lips against the faded petals. Such had been Sestrina's experiences with the lepers during three months of isolation on that Pacific isle. When Hawahee stood before Sestrina and gave her the second warning, she still remained ignorant of the meaning of it all.

Three nights after, Sestrina was suddenly awakened by hearing a distant hubbub that sounded as though men were singing rollicking songs. "What can it mean?" she thought as she leaped from her couch. Her heart thumped as she listened and wondered. "'Tis a ship arrived off the isle, and the sailors are ashore, singing!"

"Keep near me," said a stern voice, as she rushed

from her dwelling to ascertain if her surmises were true. It was Hawahee who had spoken.

Sestrina gazed at him, and was alarmed at the expression of his eyes.

"'Tis Lupo, Rohana and the rest, they have been out to the wreck, and found barrels of devil-water (rum); they are demented, wahine."

"Rum! demented!" replied Sestrina as her heart sank within her. No ship at all, but rum and demented! What did Hawahee mean? The girl did not realise the serious import of the Hawaian's remarks. She had no familiar knowledge of men, and the demoralising influence of drink on their natures. And so she dreamed not of her danger, she, a lonely woman, on that solitary isle.

During the lepers stay on the isle their health had improved. The abundance of shell fish, the fruit and tinned meats, saved from the wreck, had renovated their wasted frames. Lupo and Rohana had even made flesh, and so their smouldering passions had burst into flame again! Indeed, but a day or two before, Rohana and Lupo had crept round the shore, and spied Sestrina bathing in a lagoon.

They had watched, and then hastened back to their comrades and cried in this wise: "Oh makaia, le sola!" and then the three stronger men had crept back into the jungle on the shore, and had watched. That same night they had talked about what they had seen, till even the blind lepers had listened in ecstasy as their comrades spoke of the girl's beauty, the glory of her wet tresses as they sparkled in the warm sunlight.

Hawahee, who knew these things, attempted to calm Sestrina's fears by saying, "Do not be alarmed by the singing of my brothers, I will protect you."

And then she had gone back into her hut, and had lain sleepless, weeping bitterly, for her hopes had been cruelly dispelled. The next night she was awakened again by hearing a wild song. Again she jumped from

her bed, and went outside, but this time she trembled in the thought of some nameless fear. As she stood under the palms by her lonely homestead doorway, she saw a great red glow on the sky over the sea.

"'Tis the wreck on fire," said Hawahee as he stood beside her. For he was ever wakeful.

"Why have they set the ship on fire?" said Sestrina as she stood watching the sparks and the lurid smoke go skyward.

"They are mad with drink, and care only for themselves while the devil-gods and te rom (rum) revel in their souls," said Hawahee in a bitter voice. Then he told Sestrina that they had fired the wreck so that no passing vessel could sight it, and wonder if any of its late crew were castaways on the isle.

Next day, Sestrina, thinking that all was well since the lepers had burnt the wreck, and so destroyed the rum, crept down to the lagoon by her homestead, wherein she bathed every morning. This lagoon was far away from that part of the isle where Lupo and the rest dwelt. Letting her hair down, she walked into the cool, shallow depths, and paddled about. She behaved like a child. Lifting her torn skirt, which she had patched up with pieces of the red table-cloth of the *Belle Isle* cuddy, she splashed about in the sparkling water and threw pebbles at the green-winged parrots that perched on the palms that leaned over the lagoon. Suddenly she stood perfectly still; she had observed a movement in the thick jungle fern which grew a little way up the shore. She stared again, and saw two burning eyes staring between the dark green leaves. She gave a startled cry and let her dress drop—it was Lupo who had spied upon her. Seeing her terror he stepped out of the jungle, lifting his hands in an appealing manner.

Sestrina immediately felt ashamed of her fright. Noticing that he had calmed the girl's evident fear of him, Lupo moved towards her. As he approached her she fancied she saw a terrible look in his eyes. The

instinct of womanhood made her realise—she knew not what. In a flash she recalled all that Hawahee had said.

The next second Lupo had fallen on his knees, and with his hands lifted in some appeal, said: "Aloah, wero, kawa, ma Pele," as he greedily drank in the beauty of her face and form. He plucked a flower from the bush, and held it towards the girl.

"No! no!" said Sestrina as she shook her head to intimate that neither his gift nor his presence was required. In a moment Lupo's manner had changed. He glanced hastily around, then rose and staggered towards her. Sestrina, on seeing the wild look in the leper's eyes, fled.

Returning to her primitive homestead with a flushed face, and the sea-water still sparkling on her tresses, she arrived before Hawahee in a breathless state.

"Wahine, what is the matter?" he said as he stared at her.

"Nothing, only I felt frightened at seeing Lupo come out of the jungle whilst I bathed."

"Have I not warned thee to keep near to me, and not wander about the isle, wahine?"

"Yes, I know," gasped Sestrina, her breath still laboured through running so fast.

"Hawahee, what do the lepers want with me?" she said quietly in sudden wonder over all she had experienced.

The tall, handsome Hawaiian gazed steadily into the child-like, wide-open eyes, and seeing that the girl was innocent in heart and soul, made no reply to her query, but said: "Wahine, I shall be angry if you stray from here again. Mind that you keep on this side of the valley, and bathe no more at present."

"I will do as you wish," replied Sestrina, who put Hawahee's fears down to some dread in his mind that she might be contaminated by the terrible scourge.

That same night Hawahee came across the slope and sat by Sestrina's homestead, telling her many of his own

sorrows, and how it was he had become incarcerated down in the hold of the *Belle Isle*. It was a sad story that Sestrina listened to as the Hawaiian spoke on, telling her many things about the horrors of leprosy on his native isles. Maybe he did not wish Sestrina to think too ill of his comrades, the lepers on the isle, whose sad lot was cast on the unknown waters with his own. And be it known that of all the races of mankind, the Hawaiians are the most sympathetic and lovable towards each other in sorrow or illness, their hearts being endowed with a love passing the love of woman. Indeed, many Hawaiians have been known to risk the contagion of leprosy in their efforts to hide their relatives, wives, children, lovers and comrades, from the relentless hands of the leper-hunters, who were ever on the look-out for the victims of the hideous scourge.

Sestrina's eyes filled with tears as the sad man sat before her and told her of the terrors of Molokai, the leper isle, the sufferings of the banished victims and of the heroic priest and martyr, Damien, and the few Catholic missionaries who devoted their days and sacrificed their lives for the sake of the stricken lepers.

"And how did you know all these things about the terrible isle where poor lepers are banished to, since you yourself escaped and fled successfully from the leper hunters?"

Then Hawahee told Sestrina that he had once been a resident on Molokai in the capacity of a missionary at Kalawao, and it was there that he had contracted the complaint, as well as becoming only too familiar with the horror of the dreadful lazaretto. Sitting there smoking by the lonely girl, he continued his story, and told how the Hawaiian officials hired brutal men to hunt and deliver up all men who showed the least sign of the dreaded plague, so that they could be banished to the lazaretto on Molokai.

From all that Hawahee said, it appeared that even

the unafflicted were in danger of being captured by the merciless hunters and sent away to the dreaded isle. For leprosy develops slowly, the first symptoms being extremely faint, taking months, and even years, before becoming externally evident. Consequently the brutal hunters, who sought to secure the reward offered by the authorities, were only too eager to pronounce the slightest bruise as evidence of incipient leprosy.

"Since your leprosy is hardly to be seen now, how is it that the authorities knew anything about it, Hawahee?" said Sestrina.

"Ah, wahine, it must have been noticed when I was bathing in the lagoons by my home. You must know, wahine, that there are always half-caste men on my isle willing to sacrifice the lives of others for the sake of getting the reward which is paid by the great council chiefs, and so I too was betrayed. And when the leper-hunters did come one night through the forest with masks over their faces, for they do not wish their faces seen since my people would kill such perfidious betrayers were they to recognise them, I did escape into the mountains by Kaulea. For a long, long time I did roam homeless alone, then I met more lepers who were hiding from the hunters in the mountains. We were all near to dying of hunger when we at last sighted a schooner lying just off the shore by the feet of the mountains near Sakaboa. With much stealth we did manage to secure a large canoe so that we could paddle by night out to the ship. It was by the mercy of Atua and Kuahilo that the night was dark and hid our forms as we stole on board and crept down into the ship's hold. Next day the ship sailed. We were near to death when we did find ourselves anchored off the South American coast, where we were discovered by the crew and recaptured. Then the white papalagis tied our legs and hands in thongs and placed us on a ship's hulk off the coast, as men unclean. For many weeks we were prisoners, awaiting to be retransported back to Hawaii

so that we might be sent to Molokai. Then one night some men did come and place our limbs in chains. And when we were helpless and could not move more than enough for our feet to move slowly one before the other, we were taken round the coast to Acapulco. There we found a boat awaiting our arrival, and we were at once taken out to a schooner, which we knew was to take us back to Hawaii, and to Molokai and death." Saying the foregoing, the Hawaian sighed, then, looking sorrowfully into Sestrina's face, he added: "It was the *Belle Isle*, wahine, which we were taken to and imprisoned down in the hold; and, to thy great sorrow, thou knowest the rest." Relighting his cigarette by the embers of the small cooking fire, Hawahee placed his hand meditatively to his chin and continued: "I tell thee, wahine, I would sooner meet the gods in death than risk capture by the merciless papalagi or my own countryman and be banished to the lazaretto. True enough, the 'kaukas' (doctors) are good to the stricken, and kind men make coffins by night for the dying, but still, 'tis more than a living death. Still, in my dreams, I do often see the skeletons of the dead lepers walking and crawling by night along the craggy beach and under the dark pandanus and palms by Kalawao."

As Hawahee spoke on and Sestrina listened, the ocean's monotone, resounding on the reefs below, seemed to moan in sympathy with all he told her.

"Ah, wahine, thou knowest not the sorrows of my people," he murmured; then he once more lapsed into pidgin English, which he usually did when speaking under the stress of deep emotion. "Sestra, when I was once a helper of the afflicted on Molokai, I did often see some beautiful wahine with flying hair and starry eyes, running along the beach by moonlight, wringing her hands, as she cried and answered the moaning voice of the winds in the palms that sighed to her dying ears, like to the dead laughter and the memories of lost

children, lovers and husband; I know not which. Then she would jump into the sea. And the waves, closing over her head, did bring the peace of Atua, Pelé, and the great White God, whichever may be the most merciful."

Such were the incidents connected with Hawahee's history, and which he deigned to tell Sestrina that night and the next night as she sat by the kitchen cooking-fire of her solitary home on their lone isle of the vast Pacific. And often, when Hawahee had crossed the hollow and entered his hut for sleep, the imaginative castaway girl would lie in her own chamber and fancy she could hear the dead laughter of children and the calling voices of the dying lepers, shrieking and calling somewhere out in the wind-swept palms, that sighed fitfully on the valley's ridge by her homestead. In these dreams Sestrina fully realised that, to the lepers at least, her lonely desert isle was a haven of refuge, an oasis in the desert of their life's misery. For not in all the world was sorrow so heartrending, so hideous and intense as on Molokai. Yes, notwithstanding that missionaries devoted their days as ministering angels to the stricken exiles, and that the heroic martyr-priest Damien, the lepers' Christ, and Father Albert the good dwelt in their midst. For who can stay the dead from dreaming in their living tombs, or from leaping from the grave to run along the dark, beetling crags of the moonlit beach, listening to the memories of the wind-swept palms and calling to the skies for mercy?

CHAPTER II

AFTER Sestrina's experience with Lupo by the lagoon, everything went along quietly for a week, during which time she and Hawahee busied themselves by making their dwellings as comfortable

as possible. Sestrina gathered stiff grasses for the thatching of their kitchen roof, which Hawahee was building so that they could have their meals in each other's company. It was only through Sestrina's insistent appeals that Hawahee agreed to this arrangement. Though Hawahee had discovered, to his great joy, that the small leper patch on his arm had dried and seemed to be healing, he still feared the girl's close presence, and demanded her not to touch him. Sestrina, happy in his society, worked feverishly to help him improve their rough homes. She found that the work distracted her thoughts from those longings and memories which often came and filled her heart with anguish when she dwelt upon them. Hawahee, too, did his best to comfort her. He often sang weird, beautiful Hawaiian melodies to her and played on a bamboo flute which he had fashioned as they sat in the shade of the lovely bread-fruit that grew on the valley's side, just by their dwelling. Sestrina's heart went out to him as he piped away or sang in the shadows. At other times he would tell her wonderful legends connected with the lore of his native isle. Sestrina's eyes would open wide, as, with his eyes bright with the light of belief, he told her of the splendour and wonders of Atua, Kuahilo, Tangalora, and Pelé, the gods and goddesses of his childhood's creed. Sestrina discovered that he was a native of Lahaina, and had been a chief of the village where he dwelt till he had become converted to Christianity.

"And do you not believe in the God of my creed?" said Sestrina, as she thought of his devotion to the little ivory idol and his continuous prayers to his heathen deities.

"I believe in all the gods of the heavens, wahine," he had replied. And then he had told the Haytian girl how he had once been a teacher in the mission-rooms at Kailo, a fact which explained why Hawahee spoke a mixture of pidgin and biblical English. "I

play on flute, nice hymns once," he said; then he took his cleverly improvised flute from the folds of his tappa robe and played many melodies that were familiar to Sestrina. He had already constructed a flute for Sestrina, making it out of a slender bamboo stem, placing a broad blade of stiff grass in the mouthpiece for a reed. "Thou hast a perfect ear, wahine," he had said when Sestrina astonished him by her perfect rendering of one of his pagan melodies. Indeed, it was wonderful the headway Sestrina made with her flute-playing as she sat alone under the breadfruits and practised so as to distract her thoughts. Hawahee's delight was unbounded to find that Sestrina liked his heathen melodies. He had looked sideways at the girl with a kind, yet artful, glance, and had said: "Thou playest well, and 'tis well for thee to pray to the great White God, but better still to turn thy head away and give praise unto the glory of Atua, Pelé and Kuahilo—eh?"

Withal, Hawahee was a noble-souled, clean-minded man, and, like many of his type, possessed the great virtue of truly believing all that he professed to believe. Hawahee possessed the deep instincts of a pagan fanatic combined with the pagan's poetic sympathy with the beauties of nature. No leaf dropped, no flower danced in the sunlight, no bird sang, but Hawahee's visualising imagination saw or heard it as some symbol of human joy or sorrow, some natural living representation of the thousand and one fancies that haunted his mind. Consequently nature was, to him, some mysterious pageant of the deep thoughts of his gods blossoming in multitudinous hues, or winging the sky as birds, or singing happily and sometimes moaning angrily in the starlit, solemn big-trunked breadfruit trees.

As Sestrina sat listening by night to his fascinating, poetic speech that sparkled with spontaneous similes, she came under the influence of his poetic, deeply-religious personality. This influence was a blessing in disguise, for that too helped her forget the anguish and

despair that came when she thought of Royal Clensy of the great world, of her father, Claircine and all she had left behind in the world that was fast becoming a misty past to her sorrowing mind.

As the days passed Hawahee would sit by Sestrina with a troubled expression on his face. "Like me, he sorrows over the memories of the past," thought Sestrina as she sat opposite him, watching him moodily toil over the beautiful basket-weaving which he was so proficient in. Then the castaway girl's handsome comrade would rise, and saying, "Wahine, I will go and scan the seas for a sail," would walk across the valley to see his leper comrades.

And why did Hawahee seek his stricken brothers? It was for the special purpose of remonstrating with them, chiding them for their evil desires.

"Thou hast deserted thy goddess Pelé, and Atua of Langi," he would say as he stood before the stricken men while they sat huddled by their wattle hut by the moaning, everlasting seas.

Lupo, Rohana, Steno and the two blind men would hang their heads in shame and ask forgiveness.

"Ora loa Jesu," sighed Rohana as he knelt in prayer before Hawahee, asking the Christian God to help him fight against his sinful desires.

"'Tis well that you pray," said Hawahee sternly, as he reminded them how they had broken their sacred oaths. For they, too, had embraced Christianity when first afflicted with the scourge, and at the same time had secretly sworn to be faithful to the goddess Pelé and the god Kuahilo, and so banish all desires of the flesh.

"'Tis te rom (rum) that did fire our bodies and the meats from the wreck," murmured Lupo.

Then Steno had sighed in a melancholy voice in this wise:

"But beautiful is she who dwelleth near our sorrow, she hath eyes and beauty that must have been made

by the great White God when He first sighed the stars and made the soft whiteness of the sea-dawns."

"Surely her mouth was made from the rosy flush of the first sunrise that startled the great dark on the deep seas," murmured Rohana as Steno's words fired his soul with bright thoughts over Sestrina's beauty.

"And when she passed by us, O Hawahee, chief of Lahaina, we could scent the odours of the first flowers on the mountain-side, made when the White God said, 'Let there be light,' and formed trees, and birds to wing the blue Langi," said the two blind lepers as they mumbled and sighed and moved their sightless heads thither and thither as they imagined Sestrina's loveliness and longed for sight.

Then Lupo, who had nursed jealousy in his breast that Hawahee should claim the girl's companionship, hung his head and promised Hawahee never to attempt to approach Sestrina again. And Lupo meant what he said. But, alas!. for the weakness of mortals, once more the lepers fell before the compelling strength of their desires. Hawahee did not know they still possessed two barrels of rum, which they had hidden in the caves just by their dwelling.

And so Sestrina, two nights after the lepers had given their promise not to approach her, was suddenly awakened again. Some one had thrown a stone; she sat up and trembled in her fright; then some more pebbles were thrown. She heard them go "tap, tap!" on the wooden walls of her homestead.

"What can it be? Surely not Hawahee?" she thought, as she sprang from her couch and ran towards the door. Pushing the old sail-cloth curtain aside, she peered out into the night. The moon was high over the sea, sending its silver radiance on the shore palms as the dark-fingered leaves softly stirred to the warm breeze. "It must have been the fall of a coconut," she thought as she turned round and gazed up at the tall coco-palm that sheltered her humble roof.

Then she stared into the shadows, and again looked seaward, where the tumbling silvered waves seemed beating silently as they curled over the shore reefs. "Aue! Aue!" she cried, as in her fright she dodged back—"pat, pat!" two more pebbles had been thrown! With difficulty she suppressed the instinctive feminine desire to scream for help—three figures had crept out of the bamboo thicket, across the hollow, right opposite her door! Sestrina stood like some beautiful chiselled statue with flying hair as she saw the dark figures commence to crawl down the small slope, making straight for her dwelling. For a moment the girl felt strangely calm. "It is the lepers—and they want me!" she murmured, as in a flash she realised the truth. As the figures passed by the huge prickly-backed cacti—that resembled sleeping monsters breathing in moonlight—she distinctly recognised Rohana, Steno and Lupo, and knew that the two hesitating forms that crept behind were the blind lepers. Lupo was the foremost; she saw his burning eyes stare at her through the moonlit gloom. Just behind Rohana crawled Steno, and he, with the two blind lepers, was lifting skeleton-like arms as though in terrible appeal as they each stayed a moment on the slope. Sestrina stood perfectly still by her door as the soft night wind touched her hair and sent it in ripples over her face and shoulders. As Rohana lifted his head up to stare over Lupo's shoulder, he rolled his bulging, nearly blind eyes to locate Sestrina. He could hear his comrades whispering about the girl's loveliness. The sounds of their whispering voices brought Sestrina to her senses. Running a few steps forward, she cried:

"Stop!"

On seeing the girl's determined attitude, as she stood with one hand uplifted, Lupo, Rohana and Steno ceased to move. Then they lifted their hands in appeal and at the same time whispered as loud as they dared—

for they knew that Hawahee slept near—impassioned words over her beauty,

"Are you hungry, brothers?" whispered Sestrina, as she leaned forward, caught a few words and fancied the lepers appealed for food.

The lepers made no reply. Then Rohana rose to his feet, and, looking over Lupo's shoulder, said, in his own tongue, words which, translated, would be as follows:

"O wahine, give us but one touch from thy lips, one embrace, and we will never come again, but will take our sorrowing hearts in prayer to the great White God of yours, and thank Him and thee also for thy divine mercy towards hungry, sorrowing, yet sinful men."

Though Sestrina did not understand, there was that light in their eyes which spoke louder than words. A great fear clutched at her heart. She turned to rush back into her homestead. In one bound Lupo had reached her side, his comrades just behind him. The leper had clasped her in his arms and was endeavouring to press hot kisses on her shoulders and face. Rohana, who stood just by and had noticed the soft whiteness of her arms, fell down on his knees, and in the delirium of the terrible passion that maddened his better self, began to wail out words of appeal and love for her ears.

Sestrina's frightened scream echoed over the silent hills of the isle. Even the roosting parrots rose in a fluttering, shrieking shower and flapped and muttered in the moonlit sky at being disturbed by humanity in the sylvan peace of their tropic world.

Hawahee, who had awakened with a start at hearing the girl's cry, jumped from his bed-mat. Rushing towards Sestrina's hut, he found her struggling in Lupo's grasp as Rohana stood by and Steno and the two blind lepers groped in their madness to touch the girl's flesh. In a moment Hawahee had knocked Lupo and Rohana down. Then he seized hold of Sestrina and carried her fainting form into her chamber.

"Thank Pelé, Kuahilo, and the great White God

that I was in time," he murmured, as Sestrina opened her eyes and said :

" Do not hurt them. They tried to kiss me ; they have gone mad ! "

Next day Hawahee went over to the lepers' dwelling. Gazing upon the stricken men with flashing eyes, he said, " Betrayers of innocence ! Faithless to the gods and to thine own souls, Pelé, Kuahilo and Atua of Langi will leave your bodies everlastingly in the dust."

Saying such things as these to the lepers, they hung their heads in shame. And though Hawahee's wrath was righteous and came from the depths of his noble soul, he, too, was a man and so secretly felt a deep compassion for his weaker fellows. But still keeping up an appearance of anger, he ordered the lepers to pack up at once and go away, and make another dwelling for themselves on the other side of the isle. Then he straightway went into the hollows next to where they slept, and seeing the half-empty barrel of rum, turned it upside down and let the hot fluid run away into the sands.

" Loa, va naki " (go at once from here), he said.

The stricken men at once began to pack their belongings—a few old clothes and trinkets saved from the wreck—and were soon prepared to depart.

" Wahine, Sestra ! " called Hawahee. As Sestrina, who had stood close by in the shade of the bamboos, appeared, the erring men dropped their eyes, and the blind ones wailed.

" Come thou too," said Hawahee as he looked at the girl.

In a moment Sestrina followed the men as they started off with their belongings. When they all arrived at the other side of the isle, they found a large hollow by the shore, close to the palm-sheltered lagoons.

" This spot is even better than the place which you have left," said Hawahee.

On the slopes around stood coco-palms and flam-

boyant trees, the ground being exquisitely carpeted with clusters of hibiscus and other rich patterns of tropical flowers that were shaded by the beautiful pulus (tree ferns).

When the banished lepers had placed their humble chattels in the large cavern, Hawahee and Sestrina did their best to make them as comfortable as possible. Then the handsome Hawaiian looked sternly upon the abject men, and warned them never to come to the other side of the isle. "Should you do so, you come to die," he said, and the note in his voice sounded ominous. Then he promised to come on the morrow and bring the few chattels which they had been obliged to leave behind. "Brothers, my love, notwithstanding your sins, is true and deep for you," he said, and saying this, he put forth his hand and muttered: "Ora loi Jesu, aloah, O gods of Langi!" and on hearing these words, the lepers, like obedient children, followed him down to the shore. Falling on their trembling knees in the soft sands, they did as Hawahee bade—fervently prayed to Kuahilo, Atua and the goddess Pelé, their faces turned towards the sunset, which was the fiery portal of Pelé's dwelling.

Sestrina, who stood a little way off, under the palms up the shore, heard the pathetic mumblings as they prayed in their native language, appealing to the gods, asking help so that they might conquer their sinful desires. She saw them lift their fleshless hands and stricken faces as they helped guide the hands of their blind comrades, as each turned towards the light of the seaward sunset.

Sestrina felt sorry as she saw that sight; she turned her eyes away from the shore and wept.

PART III

CHAPTER I

What greater wonder can the fates have planned
Than this lone isle's green palms and coral bars?
That I—lost on a vast untravelled sea—
Might stand astonished staring at the stars!

EIGHT years had passed since the winds had drifted Sestrina and the lepers into the vast solitude of that isle in the Pacific Ocean. Even on that lonely island world, Time's flight had wrought wondrous changes.

On the elevation, just above the shore reefs by the lagoons, stood five lumps of coral stone which had been fashioned so as to resemble crosses. It was the tiny necropolis where the lepers, Lupo, Rohana, Steno and their two blind comrades lay asleep with all their mortal desires and sins in the dust under the waving palms.

The years had changed Sestrina from a slim maid into the fully developed beauty of womanhood. The hot tropical suns had tanned her body into a deeper olive hue. Clad in the carefully woven raiment of tropical tappa and silky fibres, she looked as wildly beautiful as the rich tropical loveliness of the isle itself. Deferred hope and the agony of years, all that she had suffered during her castaway life on the isle, had written the poetry of sorrow on her brow. Her full dark eyes had become mournful-looking, but shone with a deeper light than they had done in her girlhood. In all the time that had passed since she had first set foot on that desert isle, only one schooner had appeared on the

horizon, bringing a great hope to her heart. The cleverly weaved red and green tappa-cloth signal-flag, made by Hawahee's hands, and which still flew on top of the dead palm that stood out on the promontory's edge, had streamed to the breezes, calling to the sky-lines—in vain! The schooner's sails had faded away, leaving a deeper loneliness in Sestrina's heart. She had watched it tacking, creeping along the dim blue sky-line till the sails faded into the sunset's glow, taking her dreams and passionate yearnings out to the great world that she but dimly remembered.

Time had completely metamorphosed her memory of the past. Her childhood's knowledge of the great world of men and women had been slowly transmuted into a tiny isle set in surrounding, infinite seas, a universe of stars, a lonely tropic sun, dim horizons, and Hawahee's melancholy eyes. Her Bible, and the books of life that she read, were the moods of the winds, the seas and changing seasons. She saw her passions blossom in the fiery crimson of the flamboyant trees, her purest thoughts in the delicate spiritual flowers of gossamer whiteness; her soul's longing shone in the earnest stars, and her vanity in the mirroring blue lagoons. All the great wonder, terror and mystery of the unknown came to her on the voice of the winds when the ramping storms and typhoons swept those sailless seas. Nature's multitudinous twinings, leafy arms of green and dark-branched broodings, made the grand æolian harp that played to the wind's shifting fingers, filling her soul with religious fervour. The stars shining by night through those sombre boughs were, to her, the glittering thoughts of the mighty dark-branched brain of some heathen god. But dawn brought the eternal rose of beauty in the radiant birth of the sunrise as she sat on the shore reefs, piping on her flute while the flowers danced and the birds sang those long, long thoughts that floated in the haunting mists of her mind. Her sorrow, all the anguish and tears of years, had imparadised the sky-line

of her memory, shining like an everlasting rainbow by virtue of the sunlight of her days of pale resignation.

Sestrina had become a pagan! Yet—though her life had been slowly transmuted into a conscious dreaming of the vast mystery of the universe—she was still full of sweetness and light as she went about her domestic duties. As she stood by the shore palms, she glanced with satisfaction down at the heap of shellfish in her hand-woven basket. Then she walked up the soft silvery sands till she came to her homestead, a thatched hut which stood in the shades of the valley's high breadfruit trees and palms.

"Sestra!" said a man's voice as she lifted a calabash and poured water into the big shell-pot wherein she had placed the fish, and which was hanging over the small domestic hearth-fire.

It was Hawahee who spoke. The hand of time had also toiled on his brow, leaving faint lines and all the poetry of grief which ennobles the human countenance. Through living on fresh shellfish, and through constant bathings in the ocean that encircled his home, he had stayed the ravages of the terrible scourge with which he was afflicted. He was still young and handsome.

"Is the fish cooked, Sestra?"

"Yes, and I have cooked the yams and taro," replied Sestrina.

She brushed her mass of shining tresses aside, and gazing in the Hawaiian's face, swiftly dropped her eyes again.

For years they had dwelt in the solitude of that place as comrades, and only yesterday, for the first time, Hawahee had looked steadily at her and said: "Sestra, you are beautiful to gaze upon, the light of the stars still lingers in your eyes long after the dawn has come."

He had often spoken to Sestrina in the semi-poetic style which is the fascinating characteristic of Hawaiian speech, but never before had Sestrina seen him look at

her so. Her heart did not resent the tender meaning of that look. She, too, had felt the great heart-loneliness and the desire which comes to women when they feel the tiny fingers of unborn children twining about the bosom of their dreams.

"The gods and goddesses have been good to us, Sestra."

"Indeed they have, O Hawahee," replied Sestrina in those sweet sombre tones that had become habitual to her through years of isolated companionship with the Hawaiian chief.

Throwing a small piece of wood on the kitchen fire, where the cooking fish fizzled and spluttered, Hawahee continued: "Ah, wahine, though you so often dream of one you love, and have brought tears to my eyes over your sorrow, remember that I am a lonely man, dwelling in lonelier sorrow. And, I say, that though I have promised the gods to quench the fire of mortal desire, I know 'tis no wish of the gods Kauhilo, Atua or merciful Pelé, that I should not gaze on the loveliness of woman."

"How know you that I dream of others than Pelé, Kauhilo and Atua?" said Sestrina, as she gazed in wonder on the man who could read her secret dreams.

"Can I help the magic light that brightens my soul, this gift of the gods which enables me to see your innermost dreams? Can I stay the reflected light of thy beauty from stealing over my soul, or the pain and anguish of my quenched desires, O wahine?"

Sestrina listened with bowed head, and blushed deeply. She well knew the sorrow of the man's thoughts; and was not vanity a part of her birthright? Only that morning had she stared on her image in the lagoon and sighed as her wind-blown tresses rippled over the graceful beauty of her form and about her faultless face.

Seeing Sestrina's downcast eyes the Hawaiian sighed and said: "Wahine, sister mine, feel not unkindly

towards me; I am thy friend. Long ago I would have died, but for the thought of your loneliness should I, too, sleep on in the grave under the palms."

Sestrina heard the deep note of sorrow in Hawahee's voice, and wiped her eyes, for up to that day he had always spoken as a dear brother to her.

And a strange thing had happened the night before as she dreamed in her chamber and heard the starlit waves wailing on the beach below. For, had she not leapt from her couch in wonder when she saw Hawahee asleep and dreaming as he held her shadowy form in his arms—though he was in his own hut under the breadfruits by the slopes of the valley, two hundred yards away!

Hawahee was unaware that Sestrina also had suddenly become endowed with the magic-flash which enabled him to read the deep dreams of the solitary woman who stood before him.

Taking a crumpled flower from the folds of her hair, Sestrina placed it tenderly against her lips and then handed it to Hawahee.

"Aloah, beloved, Mikai!" had replied the Hawaiian castaway as he took the gift and sadly smiled. For he had spent many long twilight hours in the island's solitude telling Sestrina the poetic customs of his people. And one custom was, that the Hawaiian maids gave crumpled flowers that had adorned their hair in sleep to the one whom their hearts secretly sorrowed over.

"'Tis sweet to feel the light and warmth of the living day, therefore I am thankful for the gifts of the gods of the heiaus (sacred temples)."

Then they sat down opposite each other and ate their breakfast in silence. The blue tropic day had risen in all the virgin splendour of its new birth, and was scattering golden sunlight through the sheltering palms as they sat there.

"Sestra! Sestra!" chuckled old Rohana. Then the aged, grey-striped, blue-winged cockatoo stared sideways

from its perch at Hawahee, who was solemnly munching away, and croaked, "O Atua! O Pelé!"

"Be quiet, Rohana!" said Sestrina as she gazed fondly at the wise-looking cockatoo which they had tamed and made their close companion, calling it Rohana since its eyes so strangely reminded them of the dead leper.

"The winds blow steadily from the sunrise, wahine, and so the heiaus (temples) music moans for us," said Hawahee in a solemn voice. As he rose from his squatting mat, Sestrina also rose, and, inclining her form, she listened to the musical murmurs that floated from the temple.

"Let us go and give thanks to the gods ere the sun is high," said Hawahee as he brushed the crumbs from his tappa-robe that so admirably suited his tall, handsome figure. Then they both went away down the slope that led into the lovely valley of breadfruits. Sestrina, with bowed head, followed close behind her masterful, but kind, companion.

In a few moments they stood before the wonderful temple which Hawahee had fashioned after infinite toil during the long lonely years. The temple had been made out of the natural structure of the big cavern and its high rocky walls in the valley's side. The dimly lit, hollow chamber was about fifteen feet high, and the altar side was composed of wonderfully arranged shells of multitudinous shapes and sizes, all having been placed in rows and spiral columns that rose to the roofless edifice, for the sun by day and the stars at night were the sacred lights that shone through the branched heights of that temple's roof. These shells, many of enormous dimensions, had been arranged with delicate care in such a way, that when the winds blew from the south-east, and came sweeping down the valley, they blew into the pearly convolutions of each shell, which responded with a musical murmur. It was not a disordered, unharmonious sound which the

shells gave forth when the sea winds blew, but a perfect, harmonious, plaintive chant-like chime. And it was this weird, mournful chime which came to Hawahee's and Sestrina's ears as they crept under the tall bread-fruit trees, so that they might kneel in prayer before the altar of the shell-gods!

It was a grand, masterly fashioned work, a temple of the highest art attainable by mortal man. With the infinite patience of religious fervour, and a deep insight and belief in the divine omnipotence of his pagan gods, Hawahee had scraped and cut, through years of toil, three of the larger shells till they resembled the faces of the goddess Pelé and the gods Kauhilo and Atua. With no other tool than a broken ship's claspknife, which he had found on the *Belle Isle*, Hawahee had slowly cut holes and chiselled perfect brows, leaving the wide pearly convolution of each shell's entrance for a mouth. The broad shoulders, bust and limbs of giant proportions had been cut from boulders of coral stone, each limb being fixed by indistinguishable joints of red clay. The whole was a wondrous work of art. Each shell-face and boulder had been exalted from insensate stone into an object of marvellous allegorical, sombre, awesome beauty. The pearl flush of the lips and the wrinkled brows expressed, in sculptural silence, something of the terror and majesty of the unknown powers of the universe! For, Hawahee had achieved the highest artistic result: through infinite toil he had managed to imbue, endow each form with god-like attributes. And lo, each face was an exact representation of the wonderful picture which his poetic imagination, his inward vision shaped when he knelt in religious fervour to the starlit dark and his pagan gods. But, withal, there was something more than chiselled, symbolical beauty in Hawahee's sculptural work. This humble castaway child of Art who created his own deities, had endowed their lips with the grand orchestral harmony of the ocean's cry in a thousand thousand caverns: for

when the winds blew, each wonderful shell-mouth of the gods and goddess moaned a deep bass note which was in perfect harmony with the shrill murmurings and musical clamour of the wonderful altar's smaller shells!

The goddess Pelé, who stood in the centre—Kauhilo on the right and Atua on the left side—was seven feet in height and possessed four arms, the extreme right arm being outstretched, the perfect tapering fingers gripping the yellowish, ivory idol that had been the symbol of the dead Chinaman's religion. Kauhilo, who gazed with an eternal sidelong glance from his brilliant stone eyes at Pelé, had a human skull poised on his right shoulder. Atua had four arms, three outstretched and one inclined in marvellous sculptural beauty as it rested on Pelé's shoulder, while the pearl-white eyes gazed with immutable grief into the leafy shadows of the banyan beyond the altar's portals. Incredible as it may seem, Hawahee had with infinite patience and genius constructed a marvellous æolian organ of shells, whereon the winds not only played a cunning, sweet-murmuring cadence, but rendered a sombre, beautiful Hawaiian hymn. Some of the shells weighed a hundred-weight; and glittering in the sunlight that shone down through the palms over the temple, they looked like mysterious pipes of some cathedral organ of nature's construction, rows upon rows of small shells gradually increasing to larger rosy shells, each row arranged so that it gave forth the required note when the winds swept down the valley.

The first idea that had inspired Hawahee to make this wonderful instrument, came from his memory of the great Atua priests of his native isles. These priests would artfully place large empty shells on the shores by the tribal villages so that when the storms blew, the shells moaned to the listening, superstitious chiefs hidden up the shores. So did the priests invest their persons with a mighty significance and prove to the chiefs that

they were the chosen of Atua, Tangalora, Pelé and Kauhilo.

It had taken years to select the one shell from thousands that would, when placed just so, give forth the exact note required. Sestrina had helped Hawahee in the building of this wonderful temple and altar. She, too, had roamed round the shores of that lonely Pacific isle gathering thousands and thousands of seashells, and had shared Hawahee's enthusiasm as one by one the perfect shell was discovered. Under the influence of the Hawaiian's fanaticism, Sestrina had developed deep faith in the virtue of the shell's Lydian strains. "The great White God, and the older gods, will know the love I have given to this work, and will hear the winds of heaven singing sweetly to their ears," said Hawahee.

Sestrina had gazed in wonder as the handsome, dignified fanatic toiled through the years over his marvellous work of love. And so, she too had developed a reverence for the stars and the voice of that mighty lyrist—the wind of heaven—and had felt the deep soul-thrilling thoughts that come to those who kneel before the materialised shapes of their imagination, those objects which faintly represent the solemnity of their innermost faith.

When Hawahee and Sestrina entered the temple, they at once knelt before Atua, Pelé and Kauhilo. Then, as the winds swept along the valley and the goddess Pelé's tongueless shell-lips moaned a rich Lydian note to the deeper mouths of the gods, they too lifted their voices and took part in that wondrous choir.

Sestrina trembled. For the first time for years she found her thoughts straying from the solemnity of the occasion. And why? She distinctly heard Hawahee extemporising unusual words—words of his own language, words that appealed with fervour to the gods to help him stay the desire of the body.

When they once more rose to their feet and stole forth

into the broad light of the tropic day, Sestrina's head was bowed, and many conflicting thoughts haunted her mind. As they left those sacred portals, the whole isle, the seas, the universe itself, hymned forth an echo of the deep-voiced anthem which they had just heard. The choruses of the feathered lyrists of the trees were pregnant with meaning. As Hawahee's majestic form stalked along, Sestrina stayed her running feet. With finger to her lips she stood listening to the music of the palm groves: for, as they moaned to her ears, she half fancied that phantom sea-caves existed somewhere up in their green, foamy heights. Crimson-winged lories and sulphur-crested cockatoos wheeled over her head as she once more hurried after Hawahee. She stared up at the sky, and as the flocks of birds whirled away, they looked like clusters of wind-blown leaves of many hues glittering in the sunlight—as though the tropical flowers of that island world had taken wing!

"The gods are happy this day," said Hawahee as he, too, loitered, and Sestrina gazed shoreward with enraptured eyes. She had come to love the poetry of the distant seas and all the brooding loveliness of nature's handiwork around her. Day by day she had stood upon those little shores watching the infinite expanse of ocean as the tiny waves of the calm seas crept up to her feet. Those waves seemed her children: with strange delight she watched them run up the shore to her feet, and with sorrow saw them toss their foamy heads, as though in despair, ere they crept back to the homeless deep again. And again, at night she would stand on the shore by the dark ocean and the imaged stars, staring with such reverence as one might feel when kneeling in prayer in some mighty cathedral. She had inherited the imagination and superstition of her fanatic father in diviner tone. Consequently she had been easily influenced by the grandeur of Hawahee's solemn faith.

Even as they reached the heights by the valley she bowed her head in reverence as the winds swept inland

and the murmuring music of the shells was wafted to her ears.

"Sestra, the music is deep-voiced to-day, and so 'twill be well to visit our brothers," said Hawahee.

Saying this, he and Sestrina turned their footsteps and walked up to the palm-sheltered spot where Lupo, Steno, Rohana and the rest lay buried.

Each one of the lepers had died with Hawahee's blessing to soothe their souls. For when they were at last stricken deep by the ravages of the terrible scourge, they had crept up to Hawahee's and Sestrina's dwellings and begged forgiveness—forgiveness which had at once been given. Lupo had been the first to go. He had stood on the shore wringing his hands as the clear light of death and the infinite came to his soul in place of the dark of his stricken, blind eyes. Sestrina had at once run down the shore, and had whispered soothing words into his ears, telling him there was nothing to forgive, that she was his dear, erring sister. And when the dying man had turned his face first to the dim horizon and then to the right and left, ere he located Sestrina, he had fallen on his knees and wept like a child. Sestrina's kind words and wishes for his soul had greatly comforted him as he knelt upon the shore wrapped in the shroud of death, ready for his soul's last hurry to the stars. Rohana, the last to go, had shaken his fist at the sky and cursed the gods!—ere he fell a huddled heap on the sands. Steno and his two blind comrades had moaned awhile, and had then fallen asleep like children with tired heads. And so, Hawahee and Sestrina's heart felt sad enough as they knelt by the graves of their dead comrades and prayed. Then they quickly passed back by the reefs on their way home and parted, each going to their self-allotted tasks—Sestrina to her domestic duties and Hawahee to his mat-weaving.

As soon as she had finished her day's toil, she went down to the beach, and jumping in her canoe paddled out beyond the reefs. Hawahee had made that small

craft. His delight had ever been to do all in his power to make the castaway girl as happy as possible.

As Sestrina paddled along, she turned the small prow shoreward again, and hugged the reefs. Then she stopped, and placing her paddle in the canoe took her flute from the folds of her robe and started to play the weird sweet melodies which Hawahee had taught her. Her eyes brightened as she played on, for the winds in the palms that sheltered the blue lagoons sighed a deep effective accompaniment to her sylvan music. The light of reality faded, and her mind became wrapped in a robe of mystery. She became one with the sea, the winds and the tropical loveliness around her. Her unerring clock, the travelling sun, had already stooped to set its golden seal on the brow of the departing day. She ceased to pipe her songs as she looked seaward and watched the melancholy eyes of day on the western sea horizon, touching the ocean with ineffable splendour ere departing into the sleeping lake of all the years since the birth of Time. She came near to tears as she watched the first shadows fall and saw the great flocks of birds come speeding through the distant horizon. On, on they came in their migrating flight, looking like fleets of swiftly paddled sky-canoes. She looked up and saw their curling wings hasten over the isle, and could hear their faint dismal mutterings ere they faded to the southward, leaving a deeper loneliness behind. It was such sights that awakened the pagan mystery of her soul and made her a natural child of the universe. Even as she watched the birds fade away, she recommenced her flute-playing and paddled close to the shores to seek mysterious company. For Hawahee had told her many strange legends, and one said: "The souls of the dead Hawaiian men and women live in the shapes of birds and sing tender melodies for the ears of those they loved when in mortal shape, and wail in bitterness to the ears of those who wronged them when they roamed as mortals on the earth."

And so, as Sestrina laid her paddle in her canoe and piped her flute, and heard the soft, Lydian music of the wind amongst the leaves, and mutterings of cockatoos, she fancied the dead lepers spoke to her. Then, as the shadows deepened to the westward, she saw shadowy tresses toss as the winds stirred the dark-fingered palm leaves, revealing to her watching eyes, visionary faces of beautiful women who gazed in silent sorrow upon her. Where had she seen those faces before ?—dim, remembered faces of those who had watched over her in her childhood. Ere the stars came over the seas, she swiftly paddled to the shore.

"I'm feeling strangely sad to-night. What has happened to me that I should fear the wrath of Atua, Kauhilo and kind Pelé ?" she murmured, as she lay down on her soft couch for the night.

Then she heard Rohana shout, "Atua Hawee! Hawaee! O Pelé!" and knew that Hawahee was placing ripe corn into the cockatoo's cage ere he retired to bed in his homestead just across the slope.

"I am safe, for he sleeps!" she whispered, as though in fright, to herself. Then she crept from her couch, and kneeling by the old photograph of Père Chaco, that hung on the wooden wall, she forgot the shell-gods and prayed feverently to the great, merciful God of her childhood.

CHAPTER II

THE next day Hawahee walked into the space of Sestrina's palm-sheltered kitchen, and said: "Sestra, I have made these things for you." Sestrina gazed in surprise and delight on the delicate articles which the Hawaiian had placed on her wickerwork table. For Hawahee had, with great patience and artistic toil, weaved a beautiful tappa bodice and tasselled rami (native skirt) for her, and had also plaited

pretty sandals for her feet. She examined the primitive, but picturesque, garments with great delight. The old skirt which she had made from the bundle of tablecloths which had been found in the *Belle Isle's* cuddy was very much tattered, and there was no more cloth left.

"Aloah, oh, Hawahee, 'tis good of you," she said, as she stooped forward and picked up a beautifully plaited pair of sandals. "Why, you have made two pairs of sandals!"

Hawahee, who had been standing near with smiling face over the girl's delight, gave a startled jump forward and snatched the second pair of sandals from her hands, as though he had not intended the second pair for her, and had placed them in the parcel by mistake. Sestrina gazed in wonder. Not once in all the years of their castaway life had she seen Hawahee look so worried and confused. "Why had he taken the second pair of sandals from her like that? Why look so shamefaced, so worried, as he stood there with his head bowed as though in guilt, and then slipped the sandals into the folds of his native jerkin? If the sandals were not meant for her feet, who was her rival on that uninhabited isle, where only she and Hawahee dwelt? They could not be meant for Pelé, for the goddess had feet four times the size of her own." And as Sestrina stood wondering, Hawahee stalked away, went across the small slope and entered his vine-covered homestead.

"How foolish of me. He means to present them to me some other day, when these are worn out," Sestrina murmured, as she gazed in delight on the tiny, delicately weaved sandals which she still held in her hand.

Just before sunset on that same day, Sestrina came back from her swim in the lagoon and stood before Hawahee, who at once stopped chopping firewood and gazed upon her. A deep light shone in Sestrina's eyes as she stood before the Hawaiian arrayed in the tappa bodice, rami and sandals.

On seeing the light in the girl's eyes Hawahee's eyes also brightened, the lines of care at once smoothed from his brow. The next moment Sestrina blushed deeply and realised, for the first time, that, however hard a woman strives to conceal the secret thoughts of her heart, her eyes must give her away.

"I have placed the things on, you see, Hawahee," she murmured, as she dropped her glance and gazed down at her sandalled feet.

"Thou hast grown more beautiful than I dreamed, Sestra," said Hawahee, as he gazed on the perfect symmetry of his lone companion's form. True enough the loose picturesque bodice, short-sleeved and low in the shoulders and again below the throat's fullness, and the skirt, also, had been artfully devised so that the beauty of her figure should please Hawahee's eyes. The flush of health, the oval, dimpled face, the coral red lips and lustrous eyes might well have brought the light of admiration to the eyes of men placed in less loneliness than that which passed over the Hawaiian's solitary days. Perhaps it was the glory of Sestrina's mass of hair that made her look like some wonderful picture that represented the zenith of woman's physical loveliness. But the perfect beauty of Sestrina gleamed in the earnest, spiritual light of her eyes, the expression on the tremulous mouth, and the calm pure brow. It was a lovely face. The Fates seemed to have meditated deeply over her soul's welfare when they fashioned that faultless face and remembered all that destiny had planned, and the temptation that would beset her path. As she stood there, the winds tossed her disordered hair till the tresses fell in confusion over her face, hiding her own confusion as they floated out and went rippling down far below her waist. A great fire was burning in the Hawaiian's eyes as he continued to gaze upon her. Sestrina returned the gaze in a steady glance. She began to see how the man felt for her. He put forth his hand, and taking her soft fingers in his own placed

them near his lips, then immediately dropped her hand again. It was a long, long time since he had touched her; for though she had often approached him, he had ever warned her of the danger she ran. For though the leper-spot had almost healed, he knew the dreadful scourge lurked in his body.

"Ah, wahine, I thank the gods for giving such a one as you to dwell here with me in my sorrow," murmured Hawahee as he sighed and stared seaward.

"Then, why have you placed the flag out again? Do you want me to leave you for ever?" queried Sestrina as she hung her head, pleased to say something as the Hawaiian's glowing eyes once more stared upon her. Sestrina had referred to the tappa-cloth signal flag which had flown for years from the dead palm top out on the promontory's edge. For Sestrina, acting on a sudden impulse, had a week before, run out to the promontory's edge and climbing the palm had taken the flag down!

"No, I would not lose thee, beloved Sestra; but still, I feel worried and much sad in the thought of the day which must come—when I am not here!"

"Not here!" said Sestrina, great alarm in her voice.

"The gods may take me, wahine. For thou as well as they know that the palms grow on and the seas roll for ever, but man departs." So saying, Hawahee sighed deeply and broke a piece of firewood on his knee. Then continuing, he said: "Wahine, thou art a woman and I a man, and your beauty sears my heart with thoughts that bring grief to the soul when I hear the mouths of the gods warn me from their temple in the valley as I lie sleepless in the night. And, Sestra, I see that too in your eyes which tells me that I may speak this way to you."

Sestrina listened with bowed head. She knew what the Hawaiian meant. And so, through the innocence and natural modesty of her life and her deep reverence for Atua, Pelé and Kauhilo, she was enabled to calmly

take the Hawaiian's hand and say: "Dear Hawahee, we will kneel together and pray deeply before the shell-altars asking that we may be made strong in the hour of temptation." Then, as she leaned forward and examined a small blue flower that grew by the kitchen door, she said in a tremulous, hesitating voice: "I too, at times, feel that thou art more than a dear brother to me. And I say, O Hawahee, this feeling troubles me, since I know it is the love of the flesh and not of the soul."

"Since 'tis only love of the flesh and not of the soul, I will leave thee and attend to the yam patch," said Hawahee with a catch in his throat. Then he strode away with deep sadness in his heart.

Sestrina gazed tenderly after him. Then she sat down by her kitchen door and wept.

In a little while Sestrina rose and wandered down to the shore. As she stood by the tropic, silent sea, her mind went back, far away into the past. Once more she looked fondly into the memory of eyes that had long years ago fired her girlish mind with romantic dreams and feverish delight. It was a strange, deep, solemn memory that came to the girl. The years of hopeless longing had imparadised her past. It was as though sorrow and remembrance had, through some spiritual alchemy of the mind, transmuted her memory of other days till now her past sparkled as the spiritual light of carbon shines when the forces of nature have changed it to the diamond's light divine. It was the light never seen on sea or land, and as vivid to Sestrina as the imaginative flash of a great poet's mind when he fancies he remembers the old stars that shone over the primeval seas before creation. Sestrina not only possessed this poetic imagination, but she also could hear the whisperings of her own thoughts ere they left her and faded like exiled music into the spaces around her!

Through living for years under the magnetic, spiritual fervour of Hawahee's weird personality, Sestrina's mind had gradually reflected, caught the weird light, the

wonderful spiritual telepathy which enabled the Hawaiian castaway to converse with her in her sleep, as he lay alone in his silent hut beyond the yam patch!

For some time past, Sestrina had awakened and listened in fright and wondered whether she dreamed; for she could hear mysterious, unfathomable, hidden voices, and instinctively seemed to know that they were deep thoughts haunting Hawahee's mind as he dreamed in his silent hut over the slope. From those things which Hawahee said to her at times, she knew he had such power, but it was a revelation to her to find that she too possessed so wonderful a gift. It had worried her mind at first. She put the cause down to her own religious fervour and the long years of listening to the murmuring shells of the ocean and the deep bass voices of Kauhilo, Atua and Pelé. Sometimes she would stand on the shore and dream till a strange feeling seemed to exalt her soul, some ecstasy of melancholy that made her feel a wondrous kinship with the universe around her. At such moments she would gaze seaward and dreaming, fancy that her meditations had strangely taken wing! And, incredible as it may seem, the hovering sea birds, far out over the ocean, would suddenly speed away as though something unseen had suddenly touched their wings! Yes, out there on the vast ocean solitude! It can only be supposed that in some simple, but mysterious, unexplainable way, the girl's yearning, passionate thoughts really *did* take shape, and in spiritual air-waves left her soul and flew away, went roaming the seas and passed through the dim ocean horizons of her solitary isle to seek and speak to those whom she had loved in the half-forgotten past.

And so Sestrina was not greatly surprised when Hawahee came back, after his sudden departure for the yam patch, and said: "Who is this man who haunts your dreams so much by night, Sestra, he whose eyes dwell in the bosom of your imagination, aye, so deeply that the gleam sears my lonely soul like fire?"

Sestrina, who had often lain on her lonely couch and listened with unbounded astonishment to the soft passionate murmurings of Hawahee's sleepless nights, made no reply, but hung her head like a child ashamed.

"Tell me, Sestra. Though I have asked the gods to keep my deeper thoughts from you, they have surely let you hear those voiceless words that tell of my love, all that my sorrowing soul feels for you."

Then Sestrina, gazed down at her new sandals, and said: "Sometimes I have heard strange voices in the night that told me strange things, and these voices frighten me; what does it all mean, Hawahee?"

"What hast thou heard, O Sestra mine?" said Hawahee as he too turned his face away and sighed.

And then Sestrina, seeing the man's sorrowful expression, said with the brevity of a woman's quick wit, "Perhaps 'tis only your prayers which I have heard, for the winds blow soft in the night and could easily drift stray, sad words from your lips to my ears."

"Ah, wahine, Sestra mine," murmured that strange, handsome Hawaiian as he gazed steadily away from the girl as though he dare not trust himself to gaze into the dark, unfathomable lustre of her soulful eyes.

Then once again he spoke: "Tell me, Sestra, who is he that haunts your slumbers when the winds sigh in the palms and Pelé's voice echoes down the valley's hollows?"

"He is one whom I met long years ago, one who said he loved me," and as Sestrina said this, she turned her eyes away, for they were full of mist. But Hawahee had seen.

"I am a leper, the hated of the White God's people." His voice was full of bitterness. Never had Sestrina heard him speak in such a manner before.

"Remember the gods, Pelé and Atua," whispered Sestrina as she gazed tenderly, helplessly on the man. As she stood there and the soft winds caressed her tresses, blowing them about her face and over her shoulders,

the man's eyes burned with the light of a soft, hungry fire.

Sestrina turned away for a moment and stirred the cooking cakes over the galley fire, then she sat down on her stool, and looking straight into Hawahee's face, said in a petulant voice, "So you would like me to be rescued from this isle and taken back to the great world that I have half forgotten, eh?"

"Wahine, why say these things," replied Hawahee, who well knew why Sestrina spoke so. Then he looked intently into the girl's face and said in a mournful voice, "Ah, Sestrina, I would you were as jealous as you imagine you are. You know well enough that I wish thee to remain on this isle."

"Then, why have you gone and placed the flag on the palm top again after I went and took it down? A ship may pass, and were the flag seen, men would surely take me away," said Sestrina, as she dashed her coco-nut goblet at Hawahee's feet.

"Attend to thy dreams, and not to the flag!" said Hawahee, as he kicked the coco-nut goblet, and behaved like an angry schoolboy. Then seeing how foolishly they were behaving, the Hawaiian forced a smile to his lips, and with a bitter note trembling in his voice, said: "Sestrina, should you be taken away on a ship I could easily die. One thrust with this knife into the heart that worries about you, and I would be at rest."

Sestrina gazed in consternation into Hawahee's flashing eyes. A great shadow fell on her heart. She well knew that Hawahee was in earnest when he said such things. "I would sooner dwell on this isle for ever than such an end should come to you after all your kindness to me," she murmured as she gazed up into the man's face, deliberately revealing the tears that came swiftly to her eyes.

Hawahee's heart was thrilled with a sweet yet sad joy as Sestrina spoke. His eyes brightened. And as Sestrina stood up and touched him softly on the shoulder,

her tresses, blown by the wind, touched his face, sending a deep thrill through him. His voice became musical and deep with subdued passion. "Beloved wahine, 'tis strange that I have been blind to your wondrous beauty of the flesh till now."

"It is," murmured Sestrina in her embarrassment, not knowing what she was saying at the moment. Then she smiled, and Hawahee smiled also as the girl glanced down on her pretty sandalled feet.

"The gods will not be angry, Sestrina, if we only speak as lovers. Pelé knoweth my heart well, and no anger would come to her heart if we imagine only our love for one another. For I say unto thee, that the love of the imagination is greater than the reality," so spake Hawahee as in the religious fervour of his soul he tried to seek comfort for his own sad thoughts.

Sestrina, thinking that Hawahee, who spoke so nobly, might see the passionate light that gleamed in her eyes, walked to the shade of the small banyan tree, and said: "Hark, the great strange birds are singing in the bread-fruits, yonder." And as Hawahee and Sestrina gazed over the small slope by the kitchen outhouse, they saw the big crimson winged birds, that had arrived at the isle a week before, and who ever since had settled on the trees by their home at sunset, croaking, chanting weird, sometimes dismal notes.

"Yes, the birds have come," murmured Hawahee. Then he gazed softly into Sestrina's face, and seeing the dark rings beneath her tired eyes, he whispered, "Sestra, sweet sister, you are tired and must go to rest." Then with well simulated calmness he strode slowly across the patch, away from the loveliness that made his heart stray from the gods in the valley. Sestrina, who had always been so neat in her domestic affairs, forgot to wash the wooden platters and coco-nut-shell goblets ere she retired into her primitive chamber. It was a neatly furnished chamber that Hawahee had built and arranged for her. Long ago they had pulled

the first frail shelter down. The couch was made of well dried wood and fastened with strong sennet. The bed mattress was made of tappa-cloth and stuffed with the softest seaweed. On the wall were one or two pictures which had been saved from the wreck. Just over her bed hung the faded photographs of her mother and the Catholic priest, Père Chaco, which she had taken from the palace in her hurried flight from Port-au-Prince ten years before.

For a long time Sestrina could not sleep. Womanhood had given birth to strange thoughts in her worried mind. "Had not Hawahee been a noble friend through the long years of sorrow?" And as she reflected, she felt anger for the gods enter her heart that they should have a deeper place in Hawahee's heart than she appeared to have. Then, again, she remembered, and sighed over her deepest dreams. "Why not give her love to Hawahee and make him happy? What had the gods done for him or for her? What mattered anything in that terrible isolation of an isle set in apparently endless seas?" And as the castaway girl dreamed on, the winds swept up the shore and all the palms resounded as though with one voice. Again she can hear the moaning of the shells in the valley. Once more the terror of superstition seizes her heart. "O Pelé! Atua! Kauhilo! forgive me for such thoughts," she cried.

And as the music of the winds soothed her soul, slumber touched her eyes, and she stole off into those isles of troubled dreams that are washed by the lulling, soundless seas of sleep.

CHAPTER III

Come to me in my dreams, and then I'll hear
The music of your voice steal like a stream
Thro' some old forest where like thirsty deer
My thoughts will haunt the banks—drink deep the dream!
Come when my night full of deep loneliness
Sighs all its stars across the dreaming skies,
Till memory's ocean mirrors happiness—
My heaven with all its half-forgotten eyes.

NEXT morning Hawahee and Sestrina went, as usual, and prayed before the gods of the shell-temple. No sadder sight could be imagined than the sight of the two lonely castaways kneeling there, in the faith born of superstitious fear and misery, before those solemn-faced figures which were sombre manifestations of Hawahee's pagan creed.

Sestrina's small delicate form, her hair rippling down her back, and Hawahee, tall and broad-shouldered, kneeling by her side, like some Phidias before Olympian Zeus and his colossal vassals, made a symbolical picture which might well have appealed to a beneficent Omnipotence. Their statues were dwarfed to pigmy-like proportions as they knelt in humbleness before those herculean, solemn high-domed-headed gods that stood on either side of the divinely majestic solemn-voiced goddess Pelé. How mellow was her voice, for the wind, drifting from the south-west, came sweeping down the leafy valley and entered the convolutions of her pearly lips with æolian cunning and murmuring sweetness.

As soon as they had left the temple Hawahee proposed that they should take a trip together and search for sea-gulls' eggs on the other side of the isle. It was only about half an hour's walk across the island. Sestrina, who was never so happy as when roaming about the tropical loveliness of that solitary world,

clapped her hands with delight. When they arrived on the cooler elevation of the palm-clad hills in the centre of the isle, the sun was high in the sky.

"How sweet is the smell of the scented wind," said Sestrina, as she stood on the height and felt the cool scent-laden breeze as it stirred the leafy boughs of the mango and breadfruit trees. Standing up there they could see the far-off curling waves running up the shores around their solitary isle. To the eastward they could see the two huge rocks that looked like two vast monoliths standing by the sea. Again to the south-west stood the lightning-blasted giant breadfruit trunk; its one shrivelled blackened branch resembled a mighty human arm that ever pointed to the western sky-line, like some weird sign-post pointing the way towards the eternity of the blue days and the sad, hesitating sunsets.

While standing there, on the hills, the wind gently touched Sestrina's tresses, blowing them softly out till they floated against Hawahee's cheek.

"Sestra, the winds are my friends to-day," said Hawahee, as he smiled and then glanced about him in an observant manner, as though he would hide his own thoughts from himself.

Then he pointed to the shore, far behind them, and said: "See, I have taken the signal-flag down."

Sestrina turned her head, also, and noticed that the old tappa flag no longer flew from the top of the palm on the promontory's edge.

"'Tis good of you, Hawahee, to take the flag down. I well know that you have taken it down to please me."

"True enough, wahine," the man replied.

Sestrina gazed into Hawahee's face; the fire of passion was glowing in his eyes. She swiftly turned her head that he might not see the light in her own eyes. In endeavouring to hide her face from her companion she slipped and fell forward, giving a startled cry.

"Aue!" cried Hawahee. He had rushed forward—Sestrina had tumbled into a small hollow by the bamboos.

In a moment he was beside her. She lay in a recumbent position, her dress slightly disarranged as she lifted her knee, which was stained with blood.

"Are you hurt, O Sestra?" he murmured. His voice sounded hoarse and strange to Sestrina as he knelt beside her and gently wiped the blood from the small wound where a thorn had torn the flesh. Then he proceeded to bind the knee with a piece of tappa-cloth which he had hastily torn from the loose sleeve of his jerkin. "Aue! poor wahine," he sighed as he gently twisted the bandage round and round. Hawahee's hand was shaking. A flood of passion nearly overwhelmed his senses. All the noble resolutions which he had made whilst on his knees before his gods were made in vain!

"Sestra!"

"Hawahee!"

The next moment their lips met in a long impassioned kiss! Sestrina made an attempt to rise. The full-blown, richly scented, crimson tropic flowers shed their leaves over her as her head fell back again into the deep fern grasses. Her eyes, half closed, gave a quivering gleam from the pupils, just visible between the dark-lashed eyelids, that were slightly apart, like a sick baby's when it sleeps.

"Hawahee, my knee!" she moaned as their lips met again and yet again.

He still knelt beside her, and lifting her slightly, clasped her to his bosom. She opened her eyes; Hawahee saw a deep, earnest light in their depths. He murmured soft fond words in his musical language. Lifting her tresses, in the throes of some great passion, he buried his face in the folds of her hair, touching the shining skeins with his lips. His arms stole softly about her form. He felt the soft heave of her bosom as she placed one hand over her eyes.

"Sestra, how beautiful you look, the wild scents of the flowers and pulis cling to your tresses," he whispered.

A cockatoo in the palms gave a dismal croak and fluttered away. The winds stirred the bamboo thickets as her hair floated softly against his face.

"Sestra," he murmured. His voice was hoarse and trembled. He touched her hand, caressing her fingers with his own. "Wahine, O laki, aloah!" he whispered. A sigh escaped Sestrina's lips as he knelt there, beside her.

"Hawahee, let me go, my knee stings."

"Sestra, 'tis my heart that stings; let me stay," he replied.

Sestrina's gaze met his own. Again she inclined her head, and placed her hand over her eyes.

"Hawahee, remember I am weak, I am a woman!" she sobbed. Her voice seemed to awaken the Hawaiian fanatic from some lovely impassioned dream. He suddenly stared over his shoulder, a startled look in his eyes. Beads of sweat stood on his brow. He too had something to remember—he was a leper! And as he remembered, he distinctly heard the warning, moaning chimes of the shells and the gods of the temple of the valley. They both knelt there, listening, fright and misery expressed on their brows. Hawahee was convinced, beyond all doubt, that the gods of shadowland had seen his danger, had warned him.

"O god of Langi, O Atua, O Pelé! I thank thee," he cried as he thought how near to sorrow temptation had brought him and the woman he loved beyond all earthly passion.

Sestrina also heard the solemn warning chimes from the valley of the shell altar. She rose to her feet and gazed for a moment in wonder on Hawahee. And as she noticed the reverence for the gods expressed on his face and in his calm clear eyes, she also came under the influence of the pagan superstition which he had instilled into her heart. Then she remembered, and leaning forward in a great pretence, hid her face from the man as she examined her injured knee.

Hawahee gazed on her inclined form for a second, and

then gazed straight up at the sky ; and there was misery in his eyes as he watched the fast-flying flock of migrating black swans as they came over the ocean, passed over the isle, and sped on their trackless flight. Without glancing at Sestrina, he murmured in a low tone, "Beloved sister, 'tis well that I go alone to seek the sea-birds' eggs." Then, fearing his own weakness, he hurried away from Sestrina's presence. As his dignified, handsome form passed between the palm stems, Sestrina gazed after him. Tears were in her eyes as she noticed his bowed head. Then she, too, hastened away and disappeared in the Arcadian shadows of the pulus (dwarf fern trees) and palms.

* * * * *

"They are beautiful eggs," murmured Sestrina. Hawahee had returned from his journey and had laid the full basket of coloured sea-birds' eggs down at her feet.

"Ah, wahine, thank me not, 'tis a pleasure of great love to gather the eggs for thee."

"Is it, Hawahee ?" responded Sestrina as her downcast eyes studied the pretty hand-plaited ribbons of her sandals.

"Sestra, 'tis happy I am, that I can still call thee sweet sister," said Hawahee as Sestrina went on with her work, very busy cooking.

Sestrina made no reply to her companion's remark, but placed the cooked fish in the platters. Then they sat down and ate their meal in silence.

"Why so silent, Sestra ?" said the man as the woman he loved avoided his eyes.

Sestrina made no reply, but simply proceeded to pass the tortoise-shell comb through her shining tresses, combing them forward so that they hid the expression of her face from view.

"Aloah, Sestra, good night," murmured Hawahee. But still the comb moved and moved, as it relentlessly

tugged the tresses till they fell like a tent about the girl's face and shoulders.

"Aloah!" he reiterated. Then he turned away from the veranda and passed back into the shadows. And as the Hawaiian entered his lonely homestead, he heard the shell-gods moaning their murmuring melodies. Thereupon, he at once fell on his knees, and thanked all the gods and the great White God who had helped him in his weaknesses, and so made the day pass without sorrow.

That night Sestrina lay sleepless in bed thinking of many things that troubled her. The moon had risen, and as she looked through the small window-hole above her pillow, she could see the far-off ocean and the tumbling silvered waves that seemed to be beating silently over the shore reefs. One thin shaft of moonlight fell slantwise through the dark-fingered palm leaves by her door, sending a mystic radiance across her form as she lay there.

"I cannot sleep," she murmured as she rose to a sitting attitude and gazed on the faded photographs on the wall. Then she gave a start—a shadow had fallen across the small room, obliterating the moon's flame swiftly, as though a lamp had been blown out. She gave no cry of fear as she turned her head and saw Hawahee standing by her couch. "Why come to me by night?" she asked calmly as she gazed up at the sad face of the tall Hawaiian, who gazed in silence, speaking only by the light of his earnest eyes.

"I also, like the stars, cannot sleep, wahine, dear sister," he said, as the woman turned her head, and once more a slip of moonlight touched the lovely dishevelment of her shining hair. Her eyes were bright. One arm lay across her bosom, the other inclined upward so that her head could rest on it as she gazed in a meditative way at the solemn-faced man.

"Sestra, a great fire burns in my blood, and the gods may forget me," said Hawahee softly, a note of deep sadness in his voice. "Stare not in my face, Sestra."

But Sestrina still gazed, and saw that the sight of her lying there had awakened a deep light in the Hawaiian's eyes. The next moment she had drawn the soft, delicately woven tappa sheet higher, so that her bosom and throat curves were concealed. Hawahee, noticing this act of Sestrina's, gazed with downcast eyes at the floor, as though in shame. Sestrina immediately put forth her arms, and said: "Hawahee, touch my lips again, you are strong, noble and brave."

"Hast thou forgotten the dreadful kilia?" he murmured as he reminded her of the risk she ran through holding his hand.

"I care not for the kilia, or for anything else so long as you remain with me, and keep brave and strong," she sighed, as she too turned her head away as though she dreaded that Hawahee would read her thoughts.

"Ah, wahine, I have come from my couch because I heard the hidden voices whispering echoes of your own dreams into my heart. Be brave and strong, Sestra, and desert not the gods. Pelé's voice was deep with sorrow this night when I knelt before her." Then Hawahee lifted his hand and said: "The shell-altars and the gods are speaking, listen!"

And as they both listened, they heard the night wind drifting the solemn chant-chimes of Atua, Kauhilo, and Pelé across the slopes. The voices sounded deep and solemn, and strangely in harmony with the low monotone of the seas that answered along the shore. Again they kissed, and again they heard the god-voices moan as the wind swept down the breadfruit valley. Hawahee, fanatic as he was, seemed to realise at that moment how he had toiled for years to create gods who would make his heart quake with fear when the fruits of happiness and desire were within his grasp. He turned his head and gazed in bitterness through the doorway. The next moment the light of remorse and fear leapt into his eyes. He had remembered all that the gods were supposed to have done for him, and for Sestrina.

"But for their mercy I might be lying under the palms, hidden from the winds of heaven beside Rohana, Steno, and their comrades in death," he thought.

Sestrina noticed the swift change in the man's manner. Then she too placed her hands to her ears as though she would attempt to shut out the moans of the shell-gods.

"Be faithful to the gods, O wahine."

"I will!" replied Sestrina as the old pagan superstition swept back to her, bringing melancholy to her heart. For she had heard the praise of a strong man's voice. She sat up and stared in an appealing way at Hawahee as she realised what her life had missed through the cruelty of the fates. The presence of the tall, handsome man thrilled her in a strange way, a thrill over which she seemed to have too little self-control. She half hated herself as the winds swept through the open door of her chamber, and disturbed her tresses, making Hawahee turn his eyes from her form as though he dreaded the temptation of her presence.

"'Tis I who am the temptress, he is truly noble—I am weak," she said to herself. "Ah, were it not for my memory of the past, and my thousand prayers to the great White God and the Virgin when Hawahee thinks I am praying to his gods, I would——"

Her reflections were suddenly broken short. Hawahee spoke, his voice sounding almost stern:

"Sestra, a light which does not belong to the olden gods shines in your eyes; why is this?"

"No! No!" said Sestrina as she gazed in fright at the man who could read her thoughts. The next moment, Hawahee's voice had softened.

"Thou knowest not the depth of my love, wahine. Maybe, some day you will be rescued, taken away from this isle, and will go forth into the great world again. 'Tis then you will remember these things, and know how great was my love for thee." So spake the great-souled Hawahee.

The sweet sorrow of that midnight meeting seemed to have brought comfort to Sestrina's heart when Hawahee vanished as though the winds had blown a misty form from her presence. "Now I will sleep well, wahine," he had murmured as he turned to leave her. In a few moments he had stolen along as though in some fear under the palms, and had entered his hut. For a long time he knelt in deep prayer, appealing to his gods for comfort and strength. Then he lay down on his couch, and seemed to pass away into a deep slumber. And as he slept, his life entered the great dream-world of the unseen reality. A wild wind swept through his slumber. Outside his hut the giant bread-fruits waved their tasselled arms and sighed some melody of the ages.

On top of the first shore hill stood Sestrina's hut, deserted! She too had found a second existence, and had risen from her sleep and wandered down to the shore. The ocean stretched away like a tremendous mirror of pale romance as the tossing waves rose from the deep like white-necked children of sorrow's womb, and knocked in vain at the cave doors, or ran along the dream-like beach. And still Sestrina walked up and down the moonlit shore, wringing her hands in some unfathomable despair. Her face was pale, and the gaze in her eyes as far-away looking as the light of the imaged stars that haunted the blue lagoons by her side. As she walked to and fro, her outblown hair softly lifting and falling about her form as though in rhythmical sympathy with her own deep dreams, she stared in fright out on the vast moon-ridden seas. Inclining her head, she placed her hand to her ear and listened. Only the far-away sigh of the winds reached her, the voices of the shell-gods were silent at last! Again she listened—a startled look leaped into her eyes, for she could hear the distant voice of Pelé rumbling across the pine and palm tracks. It was a noiseless sound, just as one hears when placing the ear against

the pearly entrance of a large sea-shell. As though she was haunted by the presence of some unfathomable terror, she wrung her hands, and began to creep tip-toe up the slopes.

"Hawahee! Hawahee! save me! I am a woman, I am weak, and you are strong," she cried. Her voice, though apparently soundless, sent an echo across the slopes into the ears of the sleeping man who listened!

Still she crept on, her hair blowing wildly about her, her rami's tasselled fringe swinging to the trembling of her own form. The next moment she stood outside Hawahee's open door. Her eyes were burning with a strange, beautiful sapphire light. All the visionary beauty of woman shone on her brow and in the fear of her parted lips as she called his name.

Slowly, as though in some terror of the fascination and dread over which her soul had no control, her pale hands clung, pulled at the canvas folds of the doorway's old curtain. Again and again she pushed and pulled till slowly that fragile curtain, which divided the wandering Sestrina from the sleeper, was swept aside, revealing Hawahee's handsome form and sleeping face. He tried to rise. He knew that he dreamed, and yet he knew that his dream was the unseen reality of the truth!

Sestrina saw the smile on his lips as he welcomed her presence, for though his eyes were closed he noticed these things. She even saw the warm blood of some passion mount to his brow—the eyelids quivered as though blown by some inward storm of the soul which they hid. "Hawahee, my beloved Hawahee!" she whispered.

Ah, how sweet the voice sounded to the sleeper's ears! That pale, wraith-like woman who dreamed and voiced all the feminine passion and sorrow of those infinite seas, saw the convulsive clutching of the strong fingers as the sleeper endeavoured to rise from his couch and embrace the vision of loveliness that leaned over him. He felt the touch of warm lips kissing his own. The radiant light of some great passion, mingled

with religious fear, shone in the eyes of the figure that knelt by his couch. It was only a momentary glance which he saw. The next second his sad, beautiful visitor gazed in startled terror. It seemed that a great wind had swept over an isle of dreams. It came up the shores like some rude breath of reality sweeping across the pale seas of romance, blowing the moon into shreds of mists and tangled light, scattering the pale-eyed stars in fright from the lagoons.

Hawahee was awake. He distinctly saw a form standing in the moonlight by his hut doorway, wringing its hands as though in terror. A shriek escaped the figure's lips. He stared again—like some moonlit cobweb stuff, Sestrina's shape seemed to have been blown from his sight.

"She only comes in dreams!" he sighed, and then the lone castaway fell into a deeper slumber.

CHAPTER IV

"THE shell-gods moan in the valley, and your shadow dances!" said Hawahee to Sestrina a few days after his midnight visit to her.

"What do you mean, Hawahee?" said Sestrina as she gazed long and earnestly at her solitary companion. A strange look, as though of fright, was in his eyes. His handsome face was pallid. Sestrina took his hand. He made no sign that she risked contagion by doing so, but stood quite still. Then he placed one arm gently over her shoulder and said, "Sestra, come and see, follow me."

Sunrise was peeping over the ocean's horizon, bathing the illimitable miles with liquid gold; like divine thrills of soundless sound from the bugles of eternity calling réveillé over the new day's birth, transcendent hues, rich harmonies of colour, swept, thrilled with unheard music, the infinite horizons of the sailless seas. "How

beautiful breathe the gods when Pelé's eyes stare from the east," whispered Sestrina as she stared from the hill-top, and like some goddess with an imaginary goblet in her outstretched hand, dipped it into the golden foams of the sunrise, and drank it with her lips and eyes!

"'Tis the great Atua's hand painting the skyline of the new day with the colours of the old sunsets," said Hawahee as he too turned and gazed on the ocean's eastern skyline. Then they both turned away, and walking beneath the breadfruits, passed down the little slope that led into the deep leafy glooms of the valley.

As they approached the temple they heard the shell-organ moaning soft and low, Lydian strains and mournful monotones, some as faint as the murmurs of a sea-shell.

As they stood within a few feet of the pagan temple, Hawahee said: "Look, Sestra, art thou not beautiful as thy shadow dances?" As Hawahee spoke he pointed towards the shades of the mighty buttressed banyan that stood just to the left side of the temple.

"I can see nothing," said Sestrina as she gazed in astonishment in the direction where Hawahee declared he saw the figure of a beautiful woman dancing—her own shadow—so he said.

Sestrina stared again. She could only see a moulting, dilapidated, large grey and red-winged parrot calmly preening its feathers as every now and again it gazed curiously at them from its high perch. Hawahee gave a startled look. He seemed to have suddenly come to his senses; for he looked round quickly and said, "'Tis only fancy, come away! come away!" He almost pulled Sestrina as he beckoned her to hasten from that spot. Slowly they both walked back, neither of them speaking one word to the other.

This incident greatly worried Sestrina. All day long she went about her domestic duties in an absent-minded way, reflecting deeply. "Perhaps his mind is

ill. I remember reading in books, long years ago, that men and women become strange and have peculiar fancies—mad, I think they call the complaint. I will go and watch him. He may harm himself through his desire that afflicts him. Sooner than harm should come to him, I would——"

She would not allow her thoughts to go further, but seeing that the sun was low, a great fear suddenly possessed her—she ran down the slopes to go in search of Hawahee. Where had he been all day? she thought as she stood on the shore. Seeing no sight of him on the isle, a terrifying fright seized her heart. For the first time during the long years, a faint realisation of how she would feel were she left perfectly alone on the isle came to her. In her new terror she put forth her hands and screamed as though in appeal to the dumb, bright sky: "Hawahee! Hawahee! Where are you? Come to me, Sestra calls you!".

Inclining her head she listened eagerly, but only the faint echo of her voice answered from the palm-clad hills. As she stared about her, she suddenly observed a dark object moving in the jungle on the elevation where the lepers were buried. The joy of life returned to her. Her feet, winged with hope and fear, sped towards that small necropolis. She suddenly stopped short. Her joy had turned to fear and wonder. What was Hawahee doing? Why dig on that spot, just as he had dug when the lepers died, one by one? She stared again. Sure enough, he was busily digging a hole exactly next to the last grave which he had dug when Rohana died. The next moment she had rushed out from the shadows.

"Why are you digging? Who has died, since 'tis only we, you and I, who dwell on this world?" she cried, her voice full of anguish.

"I make my own grave, Sestra, surely I must die some day," murmured Hawahee as he suddenly stayed his hand, and rubbed his eyes as though he had just

awakened from a strange dream. Then he hung his head as though in shame that he should cause the girl such grief.

"Come back to the palavana (homestead)," said Sestrina. And Hawahee followed her like an obedient child.

Directly Hawahee entered his hut, he rubbed his eyes and remembered what a strange thing he had done. Tears were in his eyes as he thought of Sestrina's grief. "I have brought pain to her heart, Sestra, the flower, the light of my soul, the goddess of my soul's misery! Surely the gods of the valley have deserted me that they should make me feel that I was as one dead, for did I not go and dig my grave by the side of Rohana's sleep, and my other comrades who dwell in Langi? 'Tis the madness of desire, the long darkness and thirst which has made me forget I still breathe the light."

As the sad Hawaiian reflected, he drew up the sleeve of his jerkin so that he might examine the leper patch on his arm. "Aue!" he exclaimed as he gazed on his arm, astounded! "'Tis dry! and hardly to be seen! O Atua! O Pelé! can it be that thou hast spared me? Kauhilo, blessed be thy name, and the pure fires of thy mountains.* In the fires of loveliness, O Kauhilo, thou hast surely purified my body! My body is sweet as are the flowers of the forest, and warm as the sunlight afloat on the seas. My desires! My desires! they shall be a blessing and not a curse on the woman I love."

In the deep gratitude which he felt towards his gods, his eyes filled with tears. Once again he pressed the muscles of his arms, and, sure enough, the leper patch was dry—cured! He rose to his feet. He pulled the delicately woven tappa shirt half over his shoulders, and

* Just as the ancient Greeks gave Cyclops and his vassals, Hephaestus, etc., abodes in the volcanic mountains, abodes which were supposed to be the workshops of the Olympian Gods, the Hawaiians believed that Pelè, Kauhilo, Atua and their vassals, had their abodes in the volcanoes of Hawaii.

then gazed on his full chest. The flesh was soft, full-looking, like a woman's, the throat's perfect curves and lines full of manly grace, and of the splendid flush of health. The physical characteristics of his race were shown to splendid advantage by his god-like figure, the symmetry, the muscular beauty of his body's strength. As he stood there, framed in his hut's tall doorway, his fine, clear eyes gazing on his pagan stars in gratitude, he might easily have been mistaken for some god-like figure expressing manly beauty, wondrously done in smooth-veined gold-brown marble. In his ecstasy over his discovery, Hawahee lifted his arms and prayed aloud. He thought of all that his discovery meant to him. Already the shadow of night lay over the isle. In a frenzy of delight he rushed from his homestead. Again he waved his arms to the sky.

As he lifted his hands and called to Atua, and Pelé, and Kauhilo he looked what he was—a pagan praying to the stars.

Then he lay prone and beat his hands on the ground. Again he rose to his feet, and, rushing down the valley, knelt before the wonderful stone figures that were the great hope and pagan joy of his spiritual-dreaming life. He lifted his arms in fervent prayer to Atua, and gazed in an awestruck way up at Kauhilo's eternal sidelong glance, and then again into great Pelé's face and the eyes that gave their immutable stare into the leafy shadows. Rising from his knees, he again paid obeisance to the gods of his own creating, and then rushed out into the shadows close by and prayed again!

The great grey dawn came stealing over the Pacific: Hawahee was still awake. He had only slept an hour or so. The wonder of his discovery had driven sleep from his mind. Again he leapt from his couch. Again he stood outside by his hut, in the soft light of the breaking day, and let the sunrise gleams fall like liquid flame on his muscular form.

"Atua, O Pelé, O Kauhilo! I thank thee!" he cried

aloud as he stared in delight on the perfect smoothness of his muscular flanks, his bosom and the healthful glow of his body! Hastily pulling on his tappa-robe, he ran down the slope, away once more to pray to his gods!

Such was Hawahee's delight when he left Sestrina and found he was full of health.

In the meantime, Sestrina wept. Directly she saw Hawahee disappear in his hut she hastened away over the slopes and filled in the grave which he had dug for himself! Then she had returned in sorrow to her lonely habitation. That same night, as Hawahee prayed in the frenzy of delight over his discovery, Sestrina knelt alone in her chamber, praying to the great White God of her childhood. Then, remembering, she bowed her head and prayed to the gods of the temple.

"O Hawahee, thou art now all the world, all of life and light to me, therefore I cannot desert the gods thou prayest to," she murmured, as she thought of the grave he had dug.

She was still awake when dawn sent a glimmer of silvery light over her couch and along the wooden walls, touching the faded faces of the past. She lay still, her eyes staring into the great sorrow of her dreams as the first gleam of sunrise touched her couch, and her ears heard the chatterings and melodious whistlings of the cockatoos and parrots. The music of the birds called her back to herself. She at once rose and swiftly attired herself in the picturesque costume which Hawahee, with such artistic toil and love, had weaved. Stealing from her chamber, she ran outside her doorway and stood like a graceful nymph in the cool morning air. Her face was strangely flushed, her eyes feverish-looking, as she gazed into the shadowy depths of the orange trees and smelt the damp of the glooms that were illuminated with flowers. Glancing around, she spied the calabash wherein Hawahee kept the fermented orange and lime juice which he so carefully made for himself. For often he, too, could not sleep.

"It brings sweetest sleep to my brain, O Sestra," he had said.

And so the pagan girl dipped the coconut-shell goblet into the calabash, and filling it to the brim, drank twice! Thoughts of Hawahee and their mutual sorrow commenced to haunt her mind. "O Atua, O great Pelé, why am I denied this man's caress—and yet——" and as she spoke she hesitated and dropped her eyes as some old memory seemed to steal on the soft dawn's breeze, coming to her as though from far beyond the seas. She placed her fingers into her ears as though to stay the hidden voices—for she had heard strange whisperings that night as Hawahee gazed in joy on the full grace of his graceful form and dreamed of the solitary woman who slept near him.

"Why not gaze into his eyes as I have longed to gaze in other eyes? Why not feel the lovely, strong clasp of the arms of love? Have I not secretly longed for such love—and have I not heard the hidden voices of his dreams steal to me across the moonlit yam-patch? Why have the gods given me this strange desire? Am I different to the women who walk the great living world that I am separated from by those far-away skylines of the ocean and by cruel fate. O Atua, O Pelé, do I not remember the old things of my childhood, of the longings and sweet, kind ways of the world of the past? Was I not a child once, and did not my head lay on the bosom of a mother who was beautiful in the virgin light of pure motherhood?"

And, as Sestrina reflected, she worked herself into a kind of pagan frenzy over the rebellious thoughts that began to haunt her.

"I am beautiful, O Pelé," she cried. She ran down the shore. Throwing her hair wildly about her shoulders she stared out to sea and began to sway and chant in a strange manner. She gazed enraptured at her image in the lagoon. "How rounded my limbs are,

how full and soft. O Hawahee, how happy am I in the thought of your praise."

She gazed on her image again and swerved, vanity ashine in her eyes, to see her mass of glittering hair rippling down the shadowy shoulders, falling below her waist as she unclothed, ready to leap into the cool lagoon's water. Her eyes were bright with passionate thoughts. She turned about and stared on the great shining seas. She drank in the tropical loveliness of the isle as she had never done before. The crimson glory of the tropic flowers gave her a strange thrill of delight. All the spiritual beauty of the forest had vanished! She only saw the warm colours, the hot sunlight and smelt the sensuous exotic odours of the bee-sucked crimson petals of the hibiscus and flamboyant blossoms. The pagan spirit that had suddenly awakened in her soul made her clap her hands in ecstasy as she gazed up at the bright-plumaged birds that sped across the sky. The huge-trunked breadfruit trees that stood by the shore were still her wise old friends as they leaned their richly tasselled leafy arms over her, nearly to the lagoon's sandy bank, and sighed. The next moment she had leapt from the waters and stood in their shades.

"O wise old trees of the forest, you are happy, and so why should I be sad?" she murmured as she stared at the big leafy heights and thought how Hawahee had told her that they were the reincarnations of mighty gods who had fallen in the past through having mortal desires!

She gave a silvery peal of laughter. She took forth her little bamboo flute from the folds of her rami (skirt). There beneath the sighing breadfruits, she placed the reed to her lips and piped like Pan in his leafy solitudes. Wherefrom came the sweet plaintive notes of the magical melody which she piped? Hawahee had never taught her that melody! She opened her eyes wide in wonder. She rose and ran back to the lagoon's

side, and, gazing on her knees in the water, spied the yet unhealed cut which she had received when she fell in the hollow. Throwing her head backward, she placed her arms up over her shoulders so that her head could rest on her hands as she gazed at the sky. Then with eyes half closed, she murmured dreamily : " Hawahee ! Hawahee ! I am but a woman ! " Suddenly her hair was outblown, for a great wind swept over the seas. The next moment she had dropped her arms and was staring with startled eyes, for the winds had swept down the valley. She could hear the gods of the temple in the valley moaning deeply. " What have I been dreaming ? Why have such thoughts come to me ? " she cried.

Hastily, and with trembling hands, she replaced her disordered hair, rearranged her rami, and placing her hands over her eyes, hid them in shame. She ran up the shore, ran as though in fright from herself ! She hastened to attend her domestic duties. In a few moments the yams and fish were cooked and placed in the platters.

" He is late this morning," she muttered, as Hawahee made no appearance. Then she heard footsteps ; it was as though Hawahee had heard her thoughts, for there he stood by the kitchen porch. Sestrina gazed on her lonely comrade in wonder. He looked very happy. The lines of sorrow had left his brow, and his eyes were full of joyous light !

" Sestra, you are late this morning; how is it ? Did you not sleep well, wahine ? "

Sestrina blushed deeply, and trembled inwardly in the thought that perhaps the strange man before her had read her thoughts, had heard the yearnings of her soul. " Why did he smile so wistfully and with such tenderness ? Why was his face suffused with a great warmth, as though colour of the jungle-peonies had left their rosy flush on his cheeks ? Why did his eyes gleam with a wondrous light as though he had scanned

the heavens and sighted the angels amongst the stars ? " Why ? "

As soon as Hawahee had breakfasted, he rose from the table and said : " Sestra, I will away to weave my mats, and shall not see you to-day." And saying this, the Hawaiian, with his soul full of fervent joy over his deliverance from the leprosy, went into the valley to spend the day in prayer. For Hawahee was truly a holy man.

That same night, whilst Hawahee slept, Sestrina made up her mind to go off to the shell-temple and pray to the gods. Rising from her couch she hastily attired herself in the much worn tappa-robe and went to the door. She looked out into the night and glanced fearfully about her. The winds were blowing wildly, and she could hear the seas thundering as they rebounded on the outer reefs. The deep strain of superstition in her nature was intensified by the ocean's monotone and the distant moaning harmonies of the shell-altar. She had heard those strange shell-murmurs for more than a thousand nights, till at last they chimed to her ears like voices of the infinite.

Taking advantage of the wild moaning of the palms as a gust of wind swept across the isle, she swiftly ran by Hawahee's silent hut. In a few minutes she had reached the solitudes of the valley. Approaching the temple, a great fright seized her heart. She could hear the gods, those wonderful oracles that had been fashioned by the toil of Hawahee's superstitious imagination, moaning loudly. In the darkness of the valley, alone with the terror of her own imagination, the big shell-mouths had spiritual voices.

For a moment she stood quite still, afraid to approach that pagan temple of the valley. A falling dead leaf touched her shoulder ; she gave a startled jump and almost screamed in fright. " Why should I fear since Hawahee prays so fervently ; what is the matter with me ? " she thought. The next moment she had entered the portals of the temple.

In a moment she fell on her knees before the mighty oracles. With lifted hands she gazed up at Pelé's changeless face. Was it some wild fancy of the brain, or did Pelé's large, pearl-white eyes gaze on her kneeling, supplicating figure in sorrow? Yes, as the curved, wide rose-flushed shell-lips moaned a deep contralto note of sympathy.

"O goddess Pelé, O Atua, and great Kauhilo, send the deepest oblivion to my heart, sweep the far-off past away! I would only wish to remember Hawahee, the one whose loving hands fashioned the solemn wonder of your presence." And as Sestrina knelt and appealed to the gods, they suddenly ceased their moanings—each voice stopped; then a violent gust of wind swept through the banyan heights and Atua's voice alone moaned a deep angry warning-note to the pagan girl's ears. Rising to her feet in the terror of her superstition, for she imagined the gods were cursing her, she rushed from the temple. In her fright she ran up the left slope, and ran into the leafy shadows almost behind the temple. She turned to the right and passed under the shade of the banyans through which the moonlight glimmered.

She suddenly stopped, stood rigid, with hands upraised, electrified, as though to ward off some terror—there before her, standing in the shade of the buttressed banyan, stood a figure; she stared on herself! She stood before a figure of carven coral stone, chiselled to resemble her nearly naked form, a marvellous work of heathen art, the lips, the brow, the expression perfect, even to the immovable eyelids. The massed crown of hair looked real! It was as though it had been carved with a needle. The raised skeins of slenderest stone were artistically left so that the carven ringlets should fall over the shoulders. It was a wonderful emblematical figure of love's highest achievement in sculptural poetic art. The figure resembled the astonished girl so much, that could one have seen the two figures standing

there in the moon-touched gloom, it would have been impossible to tell which knew the warm breath of life and which was the sculptured, soulless stone!

Hawahee had carved her image, made a goddess of her, so that he might kneel to her beauty, her cold loveliness, in secret! Every curve from the brow down to the perfect feet was exact. She stared again and trembled —the lips moaned! The Hawaiian fanatic had—and from what infinite selection and choice?—placed a shell in the mouth. It was a sad, sweet-linked, long-drawn note of melancholy that the shadowy mouth of the pagan girl's stone shape gave forth.

"Hawahee! Hawahee!" she cried in the momentary sorrow that came as she realised why the sad leper had made that figure. In a flash she realised that he knelt before that deaf, eyeless resemblance of her body so that he could appeal in secret to the woman he loved, could kneel in some half-divine passion without contaminating her own sad reality!

Only for a moment did she stand there staring in astonishment, face to face with the beautiful immobility of her stone self. The next moment she had turned aside, had fled in her terror.

Down the valley's side she ran. When she arrived outside her dwelling she was gasping for breath. She looked over her shoulder fearfully, then ran inside her lonely chamber, for she could hear the loud moanings of the gods and fancied they were racing in hatred after her!

No sleep for Sestrina that night! Her brain teemed with wild fancies as she lay on her couch thinking, thinking. The wonder of the figure she had seen behind the temple haunted her soul. For the first time for years she felt the terror of her own loneliness, in the dark, alone in that tiny dwelling, on an isle set in the boundless solitudes of the Pacific Ocean. As the first weird atmosphere, through seeing that shape, began to wear off, she rose from her couch, sat up.

"He shall not know that I have discovered it!" she murmured, as thrilling waves of strange indignation, of passion, and of sorrow for the Hawaiian came to her. She hardly knew what to think of it all. Then the curiosity of the feminine nature asserted itself. "I will watch him! I will see the meaning of it all!" And in this sudden resolution, she lay her head on the pillow again and fell asleep.

Dawn swept over the Pacific seas, bringing the splendour of the tropic day in its train. Sestrina was up with the birds. She saw the first etherealised impression of the sunrise come, as the great artist, Eternity, held the brush of Time in his unerring hand and swept the ocean skyline with a daub of liquid gold. Sestrina saw that daub twinkle like lightning as it ran in its splendid overflow and trickled across the tremendous dark heaving canvas—the Pacific Ocean.

Once more she carefully turned the cooking yams, then she turned her head—Hawahee stood before her.

"Sestra, I have been sleepless the last two nights," he said, as the castaway woman remarked on his early appearance.

Then Sestrina turned her eyes from his face, for she did not wish him to see the curious wonder that she knew must be visible in her eyes. It was then that Hawahee said: "Sestra, dear wahine, I have gathered no sea-birds' eggs at all the last two mornings, but have wandered by the shore, watching the dawn and the morning's gold steal over wide waters and brush all the lagoons with soft fire."

As Hawahee said this, Sestrina looked swiftly into his eyes. Why did his lips smile so tenderly and yet in so *knowing* a manner? She suddenly remembered how she had the morning before gazed on her image in the lagoon, had danced to her shadow and chanted! She blushed hotly at the thought that Hawahee had been on the shore side instead of far away seeking the morning seagulls' eggs, and had spied on her during

her strange madness. Hiding her face in her hands, she said: "I hate you!"

Hawahee, who had seen and heard so much, only smiled. "Why this shame, Sestra?" he said as he gazed at her. Sestrina was still trembling in her confusion. Then he continued: "'Tis true that I saw you; do you deny me the brief happiness that the Fates inspired you to give unto my soul at the breaking of the day?"

At hearing these words, and the tender note of Hawahee's melancholy voice, Sestrina's shame vanished. She half smiled to herself as she looked up at the tall, dignified man before her and thought of her stone shape behind the temple. And Hawahee smiled too, and was pleased that she should take it all in such good part, for he little knew what she knew!

CHAPTER V

THE sad Hawahee was strangely happy that day in the thought that Sestrina had smiled over his perfidious spying on her! Sestrina could hear him singing his pagan melodies as he chopped firewood on the huge log by the yam-patch. Hawahee's mind was full of glorious schemes for the future. Since he had discovered that the leprosy spot was almost cured, the outlook of his life had completely changed. He had decided to tell nothing about his wonderful discovery to Sestrina until he had quite made his plans for the future. He felt assured that his castaway companion loved him from the soul as well as the flesh. There was no denying that the heathen melodies he sang were cheerful strains, lacking all the sombre beauty of those chants he had sang till Sestrina's heart had ached. And so the long hot tropic day was full of anticipation and happiness for Hawahee as well as for Sestrina.

When the sun had set and the shadows were thickening the stars over the seas, Sestrina stole from her chamber. She knew that Hawahee had gone down to the shell-temple to pray to his beloved gods. As she passed by the bamboos on the ridge of the little hill to the right of the valley she looked seaward. Even the big, calm, bright moon seemed to stare with curiosity as it peered gently over the sea's horizon, its lovely eye sending a searchlight stream of ethereal beams over the dark palms of the isle. Away she ran! In a few minutes she was creeping along in the shadows of the palms by the temple of shells. The winds were blowing softly, only a faint murmur came from the shell-organ. Still she crept nearer, and then half in fright she peered round the portal's edge and stared into the great rocky sacred interior. Hawahee was not there! Only the great unlidded stone eyes of Pelé and the gods gazed in their solemn immobility on her fearful intrusion. Where was Hawahee? She could distinctly hear him chanting—she knew that he was worshipping some one. She pushed the feathery pulu leaves aside and peered, her eyes staring, fascinated by the sight she saw. Hawahee knelt with hands upraised before the carven, beautiful form of insensate stone! Again she gazed on the wonderfully raised crown of hair that rippled down to the cold lovely grace of the stone shoulders. He was singing, chanting some melodious melody for the deaf ears—so beautifully shaped, like rosy pearl shells of the ocean—she heard him whisper words of passion as he gazed into the wide open, wonder-lidded, delicately lashed stone eyes! She saw the warm glow of his own. A thrill of uneasy joy tinged with uncanny fright seized her heart as she watched. She remembered Hawahee's long absences from her side, when he told her he was away in the forest busy mat-weaving! She gazed down the veined marble-like limbs and on the artistically chiselled ankles and perfect sandalled feet—they were shod with the second pair of sandals—the sandals which

Hawahee had given her by mistake when he presented her with the rami and tappa-weaved bodice.

Even she gazed in ecstatic admiration on that wonderful carven shape of herself. The veined limbs, the curves, the symmetrical lines of the rounded flanks were perfect! In the inherent modesty of her nature, a tiny tinge of resentment came to her, a warm blush suffusing her face, as a nervous wonder leapt into her mind. How had the impassioned sculptor been able to achieve such perfect detail? In a flash she thought of her morning bathings in the lagoon when Hawahee was supposed to be far away on the other side of the isle seeking seagulls' eggs. She thought of his marvellous power of seeing her dreams and hearing the hidden voices of the soul—perhaps he had the power of seeing her visionary shape?

She swiftly forgave. A great love and tenderness for the kneeling worshipper swept through her soul. She knew how true he was to his gods. "Truer than I am!" she murmured as she watched and knew how easily she herself would have fallen had Hawahee been a godless man.

"Hawahee!" she cried.

In a moment the worshipper turned round. He stood as though riveted to the ground in his shame and surprise. He looked like some big child caught in some sinful act wherefrom there was no escape.

"Sestra! Aue! O forgiver me!" he murmured, lapsing into pidgin English in his shame.

"Hawahee, am I sweeter in the stone than in the flesh? Is my loveliness only divine in the curves and lines of your own mind and its creationary work?" she cried, a great wave of jealousy sweeping into her heart as she stared on her breathless, bloodless rival. And still the solemn-looking fanatic did not fly to the warm, living arms that were outstretched in appeal as she spoke.

"Sestra, 'tis beautiful; see the shoulders, the face, the brow, the hair, and the lips of my goddess—Sestra!

'Tis the divine beauty of thyself, thy soul's calm beauty in stone," he murmured, as he pointed to the wonderfully chiselled face that seemed to stare from the shadows in stony sorrow and fright at its bright-eyed startled living shape.

Sestrina felt that she stood gazing upon herself—divine, divested of the mortality of the flesh. Yes, there she stood, expressing in loveliest grace and perfect form all that Hawahee had created, made of her by the lovely creative-light of his imagination!

"Oh, Hawahee!" she cried.

The tall worshipper gazed first at the unchangeable grace, the cold spendour of his mind's materialised art, then he stared at the warm, living eyes of the jealous woman that fronted it!

"Can you not make a stone figure of thyself, O Hawahee? For 'tis only in stone that I should seem to truly love thee!" said Sestrina, a wrathful gleam in her eyes.

In a moment Hawahee had clasped her in his arms. Again and again their lips met. And still the gods moaned on in the shadows close by. And still Sestrina wondered why she looked so luring in stone, so beautifully unattainable, and why she felt so jealous of stone lips and arms which could never give their fruits to a lover's appeal.

"Sestra, forget not the presence of the gods."

"No, Hawahee!" said the woman, as she too felt the subtle command and warning mystery of the deep moaning voices of the gods—not six yards from where they stood.

"How loudly they moan! Hawahee, I curse the winds of the valley," murmured Sestrina as she stood there with her arms clinging over the strong shoulders of the man who had worshipped her image. Her face was uplifted, a startled look in her eyes, as Pelé moaned to the wind's deep breath.

"Say not such things, O Sestra, sweet wahine, love

of mine! Listen; I have a plan in my heart that will outwit the gods; but Sestra, you too must pray well; and in a very little while we shall be able to fall into each other's arms far away from the power of the gods that I have made out of the reverence of my soul's sorrow. Maybe, O Sestra, I know that the great White God of Langi is a kind god, but still, Atua, Kauhilo, and Pelé have been kind to me—I am cured of the kilia (leprosy). 'Tis the gods who have done this thing to me, so how can I sin in their sight?"

"Cured! Hast thou no fear of anything?" Sestrina gasped. She could say no more, so deep was her surprise and happiness in the thought that her sad comrade should be cured of the kilia.

"Outwit the gods, O Hawahee!" she murmured as she looked about into the shadows with awestruck eyes. Then they kissed again.

"Let us be calm, for if it is true, this that you say, we have eternities of happiness before us."

She well knew that Hawahee was strong and brave and that when he said he could outwit the gods he must have some wonderful plan in his mind.

"Let us away from here," said Sestrina.

Hawahee through long habit turned to pay obeisance to the lone, lovely figure that stood staring in splendid blindness from the shadows.

Sestrina noticed the spontaneous act. "Hawahee," she murmured softly, a note of deep sorrow in her voice, "I do not mind; kneel before the beauty and innocence of myself, the loveliness that your noble mind has created out of me; kneel to the innocence of my girlhood, the heaven of innocence that was mine when I once prayed and confessed to a dim, grey-headed old priest named Père Chaco."

Hawahee gazed into her eyes as she ceased speaking.

"Why are the tears falling, why can I hear the poetry and all the loveliness of the stars in the big sky, the innocence and beauty of the flowers and the

melancholy of the sunsets at Pelé's altar, why? O Sestra, why does the music of your voice sound so?"

Sestra made no reply, but to Hawahee's astonishment, moved four steps forward and flung herself down on her knees before the sorrowful, divine-looking carven cold stone image of herself—and wept bitterly.

That same night Sestrina knelt in her chamber and prayed to the heathen gods and to the great White God of Langi. Then she stood up and stared through the small window-hole and heard the hidden voices murmuring in the great speech of her soul. Her thoughts went out over the seas. She heard the roosting cockatoos, in the palms outside, give a dismal, startled screech, and even Rohana croaked as though in fright; "O Atua! O Pelé!" as she sent her thoughts across the oceans, away through the dim starry skylines that surrounded her island world. Then she sobbed as she lay in bed. She thought of the past. And as she lay alone in her silent chamber she heard the soft, quivering murmurings of Hawahee's dreams coming across the orange-scented hollow from his lonely hut. "O Hawahee, 'tis love of the flesh and not of the soul!" she cried.

CHAPTER VI

TWO days after Sestrina had surprised Hawahee before her image, he came to her and said: "Wahine, thou and I have tarried too long on this cursed isle, dwelling in the anguish of our secret desires."

"Yes, Hawahee," murmured the lonely woman as she hid her face and stirred the bubbling, sweet-scented poi-poi (taro and yam stew).

"I have thought deeply and long, Sestra mine, and feel 'twill be well to build a raft so that we may float away together over the seas, you and I alone, sweet goddess of my soul; shall it be?"

Sestrina heard the note of resolve in the man's voice. Her heart was thrilled with a great hope. She did not realise the dangers of being cast away on those infinite waters on a raft, at the mercy of the elements and the hot merciless light of the tropic suns Often during the first lonely years of their castaway life, Sestrina had suggested to Hawahee that they could build a boat and try and float away to the shores of the great world again. Hawahee had even, for the girl's sake, agreed to make the attempt, but Sestrina had dissuaded him when she remembered that he would only be captured and sent to Molaki if they *did* arrive safely on the shores of the civilised world again.

"Hawahee, I long to leave this isle. None need ever know that you once had the dreadful kilia," she murmured, as she turned her head and gazed tenderly into the face of the sad-looking man who stood awaiting her reply.

The first confusion that had come to her through Hawahee's presence had disappeared. A great future with a maze of possibilities had flashed into her hopeful brain. For a moment she stood stirring the poi-poi, speechless with joy.

"And the shell-gods—would you leave them—'twould be——" She stopped.

A shadow had passed across Hawahee's face. In a moment she felt that she had foolishly reverted to a subject that might be the cause of dashing her hopes to atoms. She too, revered the shell-gods, but what were their solemn moanings when compared to the beautiful world of the past, and the memories of her girlhood?

With a sweep of her hand, so to speak, she had swept the mighty heathen gods to perdition. "Curse the shells, curse the gods, I hate the moaning shells," was her mental ejaculation.

But Sestrina's fears were groundless, Hawahee had no intention of swerving from his resolve to build a raft and leave the isle.

"Beloved Sestra, do not fear: the shells and the gods will still moan on in the temple of the valley when we are far away and helpless on the great waters."

How strange is human nature with all its habits and old faiths and long-nursed beliefs!

The next moment a flood of sympathy came to Sestrina's heart—her jealousy of the gods had vanished—she felt a great wave of sorrow come to her soul in the thought of the poor shells moaning in the valley and she and he so far away!

"Hawahee, we shall be happy when we are out on the great water?"

"Sestra, we will; and see, already the hands of the gods are painting the colours of the sunset with gold and the warm blood of my desires; 'tis a sure sign that they will not be angry."

Sestrina sprang into his arms, and then turned her head and saw a great flood of crimson and gold staining the vast storied window of the remote western skyline.

"Thanks to great Langi for this hour!" murmured Hawahee.

Then Sestrina went on with her cooking and the Hawaiian stole away into the shadows to pray before his shell oracles. After chanting his prayers into those deaf ears, he passed out of the temple and stole into the shadows and stood before Sestrina's stone image.

Why did he gaze so solemnly, so silently on that form and face that represented all that was divine, all that was beautiful with innocence and immortal loveliness to his pagan imagination? What had happened that even a heathen's eyes should fill with tears as he bent and knelt before the cold stone and gazed up into the wide-lidded eyelids? Why did he, for the first time, place his warm arms around the cold grace of that bloodless thing? Who can tell, who can whisper one word, one murmur that can explain the deep mysteries of the human soul's aspirations for the loveliness which mortals call innocence and beauty and truth? Who?

Why is the sweetest nectar, in the divinest vintage that was ever squeezed from creation's mighty wine-press of toiling suns and stars, bitter to the soul's taste, bringing nought to sad mortals but the despair of shattered dreams and disillusionment ?

The soulful Hawaiian poet rose to his feet and placed his lips in sorrow against the grace of the cold bosom ; he placed his warm fingers amongst the chill fingers of the shape's outstretched hand and cried aloud—like a weeping child ! He had placed a withered flower that had faded in the statue's reality—in Sestrina's hair—in the small, cold hand's palm.

" O Atua, O Pelé, goddess of beauty and innocence, why is my heart afflicted ? Why are the visionary shadows of my unhappy soul when shaped into cold stone, sweeter than the realities I touch with living desire, sweeter than the wines of love, sweeter than the touch of passionate lips ? "

And there, with his head inclined, the tall, handsome, noble-looking fanatic, listened, awaiting a reply ! But only the solemn moan of the gods came to his ears as he gazed once more at the image of his soul's desire, and then stole away into the shadows.

* * * * *

Sestrina laughed like a happy child to herself as she lay in bed that night and thought of all that Hawahee had said. She could hear the white-ridged combers charging the shore reefs below, and they seemed to be calling, " Come on ! Come ! out to our wide waters that sweep away through the skylines to the great shores where the lights of the cities gleam."

" I'll see the great world again ! I'll gaze into the lovely eyes of memory—the long, long memory ! O Atua, O Pelé ! " she cried ; and then she remembered —she felt a great shame sweep through her, and immediately called out, " O great White God, God of my childhood, God of the white men, and his God !—he of long

years ago." Then she sighed and shed tears. "Have they forgotten me? Has he forgotten? No, 'tis I who forgot! I who have been faithful in the soul through all the long years. O God of my childhood, you! you *know* that I have been faithful in my soul to the past!"

Ah, sad, beautiful Sestrina.

* * * * *

Day by day Hawahee toiled over the raft. He had gathered many boards together and had fixed them side by side with the *Belle Isle's* old hatchway. With native dexterity he had lashed each plank to the deck and had framed a little bulwark. Then he made small lockers.

"What are they for?" said Sestrina, who kept running to and fro like a happy child, giving all the help she could to Hawahee as he toiled over the craft that was to take them on that great voyage out into the trackless seas.

"It is for food and water, for we must take much water and food with us, Sestra," said Hawahee as he dropped his rough tools and gazed across the infinite expanse of tropic ocean. No wonder he sighed as he gazed on the dim wastes and the encircling skylines, the only dim, blue hope of that wide world of water.

"That will do for to-day, Sestra. I am tired and will go and bathe in the lagoon and so refresh my body," said Hawahee as he dropped his tools.

"So am I, Hawahee," murmured Sestrina.

In a few moments they had both passed up the beach and had retired to their separate huts. They had already had their supper, for Hawahee was in a hurry to get the raft finished, and so had made up his mind to work till sunset each night.

Directly Sestrina had passed out of sight, Hawahee went down to the lagoon to bathe. In a few moments he stood in the cool water. His heart was full of happiness in the thought that a chance of a new life *did* lie

before him and Sestrina. Then he stood gazing towards the aftermath of the dead day as though he had suddenly died, and in some inexplicable way still stood rigid, upright, with the water to his waist, staring at the sky! What had done this, brought this awful change to Hawahee's face and eyes? It was nothing more than a stinging feeling in his back where the salt water was smarting. He gave a gasp and partially recovered. Then he placed his tappa-robe on, pulling it over his shoulders in a mechanical way as though he was moving in a dream.

Walking along the sand bank of the lagoon, he pulled the robe down and stared again on his imaged shoulder. It was true enough, no mistake!—a great leper patch had broken out! In his grief he ran up the shore, and, throwing himself on the ground, beat his hands and forehead on the stones till they were stained with blood. For several minutes the nobility of his character faded away and left him a frenzied, savage fanatic.

"Wahine! Sestra! come to me! I am clean! I am clean!" he wailed as he realised what the discovery meant to him, and to the woman he really loved—unless he deceived her, told her nothing about his dreadful discovery. In a few moments the natural bravery and nobleness of his soul come to his assistance. He rose to his feet, and lifting his poor hands to the sky, called in terrible fervour and anguish to the old gods of his boyhood. He trembled as he stood there, staring first out to sea and then in the direction of Sestrina's homestead. But all was silent, Sestrina had heard nothing. The next moment he had rushed down the slope; he was on his way to the *heiau* (temple). It was a terribly sad sight as he stood in the gloom of that big pagan aisle and with lifted, bloodstained hands, appealed to the goddess Pelé, Atua and Kauhilo. But their immutable sightless eyes and hollow ears brought no comfort to the stricken man's soul as the wide, reddish shell-mouths moaned while the wind swept down the valley.

Only the goddess Pelé seemed to gaze from her sombre immobility in sorrow upon the miserable man as he stood there with lifted hands and grief-distended eyes. In the flood of bitterness that came to him, he ran from the presence of those heathen deities and knelt under the palms just outside the temple. "O White God of Langi, Maker of the seas, the stars, the birds and all the wonders and beauty of the universe, and the wondrous clays which I have moulded into the great gods of shadowland, be merciful unto me, a poor heathen untutored savage of the wilds." And as he moaned on in this wise the night winds caught the words and swept them away! Again he rose to his feet, and, running a few steps, sought the spot where the stone image that resembled Sestrina stood. He wrung his hands in despair as he bowed his head before the moulded grace of the perfect, veined limbs. Then he turned his head and hid his face in his hands. A great fear had swept into his soul; he felt that he might be unable to control his passions, so great was the beauty of the figure before him. "Sestra, I am like to betray thee! I, Hawahee the leper, might make thee unclean. I, who love thy shape, might cast the reality of your loveliness as a loathsome object into the grave by the side of Rohana, Steno and the rest." In the terror of his thoughts and the possibility that he had lost Sestrina for ever, he leaned forward to embrace the passionless grace of that symbolical form which his imagination had incarnated, endowed with his soul's ideas. In the agony of his unsatisfied imagination, he embraced the air. The winds wafted the rich odours of the bread-fruits to his nostrils. Again he leaned forward and gazed through the dusk with burning eyes at that beautiful figure which he had fashioned with the warm fingers of a wondrous creative impulse, till he had actually robed the stone form with the glamour of a beauty almost divine. He forgot his gods. Only the shape appealed to his staring eyes, the divinity, the

spiritual light of his soul strangely seemed to fade. What had happened? Had he drunk too deeply of the pagan's starry heavens, of the foaming sunsets and Sestrina's eyes? Was it only sorrow, that almighty alchemist who transmutes mortal dross into purest gold, that had saved Hawahee and Sestrina from falling into the lap of atheistical luxury and warm-scented dreams?

"Sestra, O love of mine! Wahine, thou whom I have fashioned from the moaning ocean's coral stone, teach me to be brave, I am a leper, unclean! unclean!" he wailed.

The sight of the form's graceful beauty, the parted lips, the sensuous curves of the shape, the symmetrical loveliness of the outstretched arm and the hand still holding the faded flower, overwhelmed his senses. He sprang towards the silent shape——. His material self seemed to swoon into the grace of soulless stone! He gave a startled cry! Lo, the figure's outstretched arm had softly closed, held Hawahee in the grip of a passionate clasp! His impassioned lips met the lips of the shape—they were warm; the bosom heaved! The lips spoke: "Hawahee, thou shalt worship me. I, at least, care not for leprosy, or for——"

"Sestra! your arms—your arms are warm! The eyes I made have light as beautiful as the stars in them. O Pelé, what hast thou done?—forgive! forgive!"

"Hawahee! save me, the light fades—I fall!" wailed the trembling statue.

The giant banyans sighed. The heathen worshipper of stone folded the image of his dreams to his breast. His astounded, overwhelmed senses swam before the bright gaze of eyes that pierced his soul with darts of fire. The same wind that made the deep voices of the gods loudly moan, blew shadowy hair and gossamer drapery about his form and face. Their lips met in the sting of passion and some fear! Like fright the winds moaned as the beautifully moulded arms clutched the worshipper, and the faded flower that had once adorned Sestrina's hair, dropped from the hand to the forest floor.

Even the winds stayed their breath as though in grief over mortal frailty and sorrow.

* * * * *

"Sestra! where are you?" said Hawahee, as he groped about as though lost in the dark of his own mind. He realised! He broke away. He fled down the valley, and like one demented vanished in the glooms of the banyans.

And Sestrina, who through her subterfuge had heard the truth about Hawahee's sorrow and grief over his leprosy, fell prostrate to the ground again, and beating her hands amongst the flowers, moaned and wept. The next minute she rose, and running into the shadows, knelt before the stone shape, the rival she had outwitted, and cried like a child before its cold, passionless purity.

CHAPTER VII

NOTWITHSTANDING the sorrow of the night, of mortal frailty and grief, the door of the East slowly opened, and dawn in silvery sandals stood on the threshold of those remote sailless seas. The birds sang sweetly as the last troop of sentinel stars set out for home. Hawahee had long since stolen into the solitude of his hut and Sestrina in tears to her chamber. Nothing was changed. The sun rose just the same, and was welcomed by that great philosopher, Rohana, with cynical cries of "O Atua! O Pelé! ee! Wahinnnne! O Haw-wah-he cah cah whoo he!" The warm-coloured flowers, red and white hibiscus on the hill-sides, sent voiceful, rich odours to each other's rouged tiny faces and sparkling eyes. The whole isle, set in those illimitable seas, sighed over the tropical mystery of brooding loveliness and over the sorrowing heads of the torn hearts of the two lone castaways.

The isle itself resembled the vast brooding soul of the universe, of mortal aspirations, hope, prayer,

anguish and faith. The giant trees, haunted by multitudes of bright and sombre-plumaged birds, stirred and moaned to the sea winds like a mighty, dark-branched brain of brooding beauty and deep murmuring musical thought.

Sestrina saw signs of Hawahee's secret anguish on his face when he appeared before her in the broad daylight. The melancholy gaze of his eyes filled her heart with intense sorrow.

"Aloah, wahine," he murmured, as she swiftly turned her face away and threw the peeled *kalos* (sweet potatoes) into the cooking pot. "Hide not thy face, wahine, but tell me of the night just passed."

"Cah whoo O Pelé!" shouted Rohana as he stretched his neck and head forward as though he resented such words and that stern gaze at his beloved mistress.

But still Sestrina remained silent. Hawahee's face softened.

"Sestra, thou hast outwitted the gods and their faithful servant too!—or did I dream some madness in my sorrow last night?"

"One who worships a woman of stone might dream any mad thing!" said Sestrina as she threw a *kalos* (sweet potato) in the pot and splashed the hot water over her rami and Hawahee as well! But Hawahee was not deceived, he easily saw through Sestrina's simulated wrath with which she sought to hide her embarrassment—and shame! He heard the tears, the choking sob in the voice.

"Here is the faded flower that you dropped, my wahine."

Tears were in his own voice as Sestrina placed the flower to her lips and replaced it in her hair.

"Sestra, fear not, the raft is nearly ready. The gods may give us happiness yet," he murmured. Then, as a sudden burst of passion came to him, he said, "Sestra, beloved wahine, thou art more to me than all the gods of shadowland; we will seek the great waters together."

The next moment he had strolled across the yam patch and disappeared.

Directly Hawahee had gone, Sestrina lifted her hands in thankfulness to the sky. "O God, I thank thee," she said. Hawahee's words had warmed her chilled heart. She had lain in her bed in anguish of mind, thinking that now the leprosy had broken out afresh he would not seek to leave the isle on the raft. "Yet, he has put the flag out again," she thought. And as she thought she ran to the hill-top and stared toward the shore. True enough, there on the top of the palm, that stood on the promontory's edge, streamed the old tappa distress flag, calling silently to the skylines for help! For Hawahee, on discovering his fresh leper patch, had put the flag out again.

Sestrina gazed long and with deep misery on that flag as it flew from the dead palm top. "He will still risk the voyage on the oceans! He will not alter his mind, we will float away on the wide waters together and receive the boundless mercy of Him who made the stars."

So mused Sestrina, and strange as it may seem, she felt intensely happy. What cared she for leprosy? She had dwelt so long in its dreadful shadow that it had become an integral part of the universe around her. Besides, who was better than Hawahee? Had he not watched over her through the weary years and saved her from the grave many, many times? Had he not sat by her bedside when she was ill with fever, attending her with religious care and tenderness? "Ah, Hawahee! Poor Hawahee!" she murmured.

Hawahee had quite forgiven her for her deception when she had placed herself behind the temple, had removed her stone-shape back into the shadows and had then stood in its place—awaiting Hawahee's worship! She had told him straight to his face that she had no fear of the leprosy "What matters, so long as we are happy for a little while, even though it be away on the hot tropic seas, without water and dying, which you tell me might happen?"

As Hawahee listened a great fire burned in his eyes, and, unable to control himself, he had walked rapidly away.

Two days had passed since Hawahee had discovered the new leper patch, when he suddenly walked into the kitchen shelter, and, looking straight into Sestrina's eyes, said, "Sestra, you are the stars of the sorrowing night, and the light of the great day to me." Then he softly pulled her form close to his own, and standing in an attitude of prayer, stared over her shoulder, and gazed out to sea. Then he clasped the woman passionately to his breast and pressed one long kiss on her brow.

Before Sestrina had recovered from her astonishment, he had abruptly loosened his clasp and disappeared under the breadfruits of the valley.

Sestrina guessed nothing of the terrible battle going on in Hawahee's mind; how his body was wrenched with pain and anguish as his dual personality, the two deadly rivals fought for supremacy in his soul. His better self had knelt before the spiritual altar of his soul, asking the gods to help him control his mortal desires. Then again: his other self had knelt before the altar of his body's desire, till he had shouted in the passionate throes of a terrible appeal, beseeching the goddess Pelé, Atua and Kauhilo to destroy his better self! to touch his soul with the darkness which loves to degrade the thing it loves, and debase friendship—yes, so that he might revel in the lust and desires of self.

"O Pelé, goddess of blood and fire, make my passions supreme conqueror over those spiritual thoughts that gave this human heart of mine the priceless solace, the belief in honour and in woman's purity and the White God's boundless mercy. O let my hungering body sin gloriously, without one pang of remorse!" And as the frenzied Hawaiian pagan cried on, he suddenly remembered the warm, thrilling clasp of the statuesque-shape in the shadows by the altar, and cried out in sorrow unspeakable: "O Atua, I have fallen before the

fire—her beauty tempted me! Have I seared the soul of beauty, and scattered the flowers of her pure soul into the dust?—am I too late? Too late!"

So cried the poor Hawaiian leper, appealing to the blind, deaf, and dumb sky as he knelt before his shell-gods again. The valley echoed the cries of his misery and loud lamentations as the winds swept like anger across the island's trees, taking his voice on its hurrying wings away from Sestrina's ears. And still he raved on; the swollen veins of his brow standing out like whipcord as he cried: "O Pelé, Kauhilo and Atua, let me be as Rohana, Lupo and Steno were, so that I might once more fold her I love to this breast, and, caring not for the contagion, hold her in my arms and drink in the ocean of happiness through my satisfied desires and not this boundless misery born of my better self! If I am to die and mingle with the dust, why deny me the joy of a woman's embrace? Why deny myself that which I have surely seen in the hungry light of her eyes, telling me that she would freely give sooner than my soul should burn in the parching fires of thy cruelty, thy monstrous virtue, O Kauhilo! O Pelé, O Atua, hear me, I, Hawahee, the faithful: O make me dark and cruel, the fierce light of pangless sin dwelling in my soul that I may be happy in the joy of brief desire and not hating thee in my misery!"

So did the Hawaiian appeal from the nobility of his soul to his pagan gods! When he rose to his feet and lifted his hands to the sky, they were blood-stained, and the hot blood ran down his face.

While Hawahee's soul was plunged in misery, Sestrina calmly went about her domestic duties, her lips singing an old song. It was a song that reminded her of a world somewhere far beyond that vast solitude, of an isle which gave shelter to its castaway mortality that consisted of a pagan's noble soul fighting against fate, a moulting cockatoo, and Sestrina's own soul's budding hopes. It was only the falling shadow of approaching

night that awakened her sorrow; opened her eyes to the beauty and wonder of her existence. And, as she stood by the shore watching the sunset fade, her eyes saw the visible universe of fading light in the wonder of its true perspective. She realised that she roamed and sorrowed in some vast crystal of a dream, where the seas dashed and the trees waved by magical shores. And as she glanced up at the skies, Time's sad hand flung the shadowy bridal robe over the bed of Night, as Poetry's womb stirred in the tremendous pang that sighed her thousand thousand children—the stars that stared in wonder from the wide window of the dimly lit heavens.

She sighed, then stole up the shore and entered her lone dwelling. There, in her chamber, she knelt in fervent prayer, appealing to the gods which Hawahee had taught her to worship, enabling her eyes to see the splendour, the beauty and sorrow of Creation.

Notwithstanding all that had happened, all that troubled her, deep in her fatalistic heart a gleam of hope remained. She looked like Beauty's self kneeling there, as she prayed in her hushed chamber. Alas! she might easily have been some castaway representation of a sad, lovely Pandora dwelling on a lonely isle of the wine-dark seas of the boundless Pacific. Just as the Greek goddess brought Promethean fires from Heaven, and ills to destroy peace of mind, Sestrina had brought a fatal casket of love and passion to that isle's sole humanity—Hawahee's sorrowing heart. She too was fatally *All-gifted.* Some far-seeing Aphrodite of inscrutable spite had robed her with beauty's charm only that she might stir the heart of man to rebellious thoughts, turning his dreams from the gods to misery, and plunging her own peace of mind into the depths of despair, Hope alone remaining. Yes, Sestrina had also brought the blessings of the gods to the arcadian loveliness of that tropical isle, only to open the casket full of the gifts of Heaven, to see them escape—fly away into the darkness.

CHAPTER VIII

I am the sad composer of all time;
The ocean's deep orchestral boom—my own!
The singing birds and winds of every clime
Without my ears would be as songless stone.
The stars will cease to sparkle at the last,
When fades my mem'ry of the ages past,
And God falls from pale reason's shadow-throne.

THREE days had passed since Hawahee's terrible appeal to the gods. Sestrina stood in the shelter of her kitchen singing happily. The raft was finished. She and Hawahee were about to embark, to seek the future on the unknown seas around their island home. "Oh, how happy I feel! We are going out to the seas; the gods will be——!"

She dropped her platter full of cooked fish—a terrible cry had reached her ears! Whose cry was it? She stood trembling from head to feet. Hawahee had gone a few moments before for his morning swim in the sea, just behind the coral reefs where he would be hidden by the shore's palms. Why had he given so despairing a cry? Sestrina rushed from the *palavana*. Her feet skimmed the sands without noise as she ran out to the edge of the promontory. She stood perfectly still, as though death had stricken her stiff with terror while in an attitude of upright despair. Her face expressed terror in loneliness. Her outblown hair, and lips apart, seemed to voice the wail of all unknown sorrows, her hands, clasped tightly together, the symbol of all human appeal; her wide open staring eyes all dire disaster beneath the sun! For, as she reached the promontory's edge, she had seen two hands toss up visible for a second above the calm glassy surface of the sea, then swiftly disappear!

No thought came to her as to the cause of this calamity. Whether Hawahee had been seized by a shark, or cramp, or had deliberately tied a lump of coral stone to his feet

ere he took his last dive off the promontory's edge, was something that never puzzled Sestrina. He had gone! that was enough to know! Even the huge sea-birds seemed to hover near and gaze with startled eyes as she stood there—immovable, staring in the awful fascination of hopelessness at that spot!

All day long she rushed to and fro to the promontory's edge calling "Hawahee! Hawahee!" and weeping.

"'Tis coming, the night, the stars, the moon, I cannot stay!" she cried as she spoke with pagan grief to the ocean, over which the first pale stars were creeping.

She ran down to the raft. It was floating within the entrance of the creek by the reefs. One push and it would go seaward.

Darkness swept over the seas. Sestrina stared in fright up the shore. She was alone! Her half-demented mind peopled the shadows with unknown terrors. Indescribable loneliness smote her heart like a blow. She gazed up at the stars in anguished appeal. But the stars only seemed to gaze in some immutable sorrow and hopeless silence that thundered nightmare-sounds into her soul. Her grief-stricken mind magnified the solitude—if that could be. She groped about the bamboo thickets and puli ferns as she ran up the shore. Such was her loneliness, that she eagerly sought the companionship of the lepers' graves on the plateau. She ran back to the shore and screamed for Hawahee again. The echoes of her despairing voice awakened the roosting cockatoos and strange birds; up, up they flew, shrieking discordantly in the darkness as they dashed against each other in their blindness. The demented woman looked like a wraith calling the dead as she wrung her hands and ran along the shore, calling "Hawahee! Lupo! Rohana! Steno! come to me!" her mind so distraught that she reverted to the companionship of the dead lepers.

The lagoons along the shore and the calm ocean before her shone with the ethereal gleams of a thousand thousand stars. The trade winds that commenced to blow every

night, began to softly sigh. She had made up her mind to go seaward on the raft.

Suddenly she thought of her own shape standing under the palms by the shell temple. She turned round and stared inland, a startled gleam in her eyes—she would seek its companionship! The impulse to gaze on that shape which had been moulded from the dreams of the dead Hawahée, made her stand breathless in some terrible ecstasy of despair. Her sad, fallible mortal intellect, groping in its boundless dark, had clutched a straw on the ocean of hopeless misery. In some vague, mad fancy of the brain she had thought to crush, to outwit destiny's cruel spite, to still possess the companinship of Hawahee's mortal conception of herself in cold stone. The next second the impulse had vanished. She realised that the shattered mirror of the past can never again reflect the tender glance of loving eyes. She knew that Hawahee's conception of the sensuous beauty of her faultless form had vanished with the tossing of his hands from his ocean grave.

The thought of her stone-shape standing under the island's trees, suddenly filled her soul with boundless misery. She detested it! In her terror-stricken imagination she could see the full, perfect lips, the lovely lines of the bosom and the passion-charmed curves and pose of the whole form, clearer than had she run into the valley and stood before it. She remembered Hawahee's embrace of that unresponsive shape, and how he had breathed thrilling words when he had clasped her form and found it warm and impassioned as his own. Standing there, she tore her tappa blouse apart, and, gazing down on her bosom, longed for a knife to stab; then thumped and bruised the flesh in some agony!

"Jesu! God, Pelé! Père Chaco, forgive me!" Her voice echoed to the distant valley, coming faintly back as though vast night in sympathy repeated her despairing cries. Again she cried, "Save the soul of my lost girlhood and bury my womanhood for ever deep in these

everlasting seas!" That was Sestrina's last appeal to the hollow seabound-night, whereof she was the lone mortality, lonely as God before creation.

Standing there, trembling in fright, she stared seaward, afraid to glance behind her. Her hands were outstretched, her face slightly raised so that her eyes could stare on the horizon's stars. She resembled some emblematical figure of mortal despair, with lips apart, breathing a prayer to the winds of the universe. The religious emotion, the spiritual fervour of her soul had brought to her mind the magic flash which so often had inspired Hawahee and herself with the wonderful compelling power that had enabled them to send their thoughts roaming the universe. Again and again she felt the visionary beauty of that higher life which feeds the soul of sorrow and brings the light divine which enables humanity to become conscious of God and elevates the human mind. Again and again she appealed to the heavens, asking that her thoughts might fly back to the memory of her girlhood—that *he* might know she had been faithful in her soul to him through the years of sorrow. She inclined her head and listened. No answer came. Only the restless moaning of the ocean and the melancholy sighing of the bending shore palms whispered to her ears. And as she stood there with wide open eyes, her hair outblown, she might easily have been some terrible, but lovely representation, some symbol of all mortal sorrow, all broken hopes, all shattered dreams and blighted simple faith; some perfect chiselled goddess face telling of woman's perfect trust and love immortal, staring with cold, bright eyes across the infinite seas! Her head fell forward; her arms dropped to her sides.

Without a cry she jumped on the raft. She cast it adrift—away, away, anywhere from that despairing loneliness! Every tree, every reef and familiar spot filled her heart with a sickening terror as she gazed shoreward for the last time. Slowly the raft drifted, and slowly the shadows of the shoreline receded.

Suddenly she struggled to drift shoreward again. She beat the water with her hands for she had no paddles—she had heard a faint, sepulchral voice, coming from the deep shadows up the shore, from the direction of her silent dwelling. "O Atua, O Pelé!" it had cried—it was the aged cockatoo, Rohana, calling for his evening meal. But still the raft drifted out on the relentless tide of unchangeful circumstance. For a moment she lay prostrate in grief over her deserted bird. The next minute she had jumped to her feet, wringing her hands in despair. She placed her fingers to her ears, as slowly and mournfully came those sounds, stealing over the silence of the ocean—the temple gods had moaned aloud! The terror-stricken woman heard those solemn shell mouths calling her; she heard some appeal in their deep, moaning voices, asking her not to desert them, leave them alone in the great solitude of the valley of the island's lonely hills, set in endless oceans. As the raft drifted out to the silent, starlit seas, the moaning voices became fainter and fainter.

The castaway soon prayed for death. But death does not come easily to those who dwell in its shadow. She had neither food nor water on the raft. She had cast herself adrift, caring not where the mighty tides might take her.

Day came. The hot sunlight swept the silent tropic seas. Nothing but illimitable skylines surrounded the raft as it floated adrift on the burning waters—a tiny world of floating grief and misery unutterable, its whole humanity a fragile form, speechless with thirst, its whole breath of life and creed, tossing hands appealing to the great dumb, blind, earless tropic sky!

Night came. The vast tomb whereon the living dead moaned and tossed, no longer had the brassy glare of the day over it, but was covered with a mighty slab, bright with a million stars. Then the first great shadow of death crept over her brain. It came like a lovely dream, devoid of pain and anguish, a dream full of infinite hope. She even smiled as she dreamed on and

thought she heard some one climbing up the grape-vine below her casement in Port-au-Prince. And as she murmured the old names, memories brought ineffable peace to her soul as the raft drifted away for ever, fading into the vastnesses of the unknown seas.

* * * * *

Sunset still lingered on the skyline across the English hills, as a man gazed from the latticed window of his study that faced the Channel cliffs. He was watching the idly flapping crows fade away into the crimson-streaked western glow. Why did the sight of the distant firs and dark pines and the undulating grey hills so strangely influence him ?

Some one softly opened the door and said, " Would you like to see her ? "

" Yes," he responded as he turned his head and gazed on the speaker, who thereupon closed the door and departed. Then a pale-faced woman softly entered the room. She carried a swaddled child in her arms. It was Royal Clensy's first-born.

" Why call her Sestrina ? It is a strange name ; what made you think of it," said the woman as she gazed in wonder up at the earnest face of the man.

" Oh, nothing, it's the name of some one I knew abroad, years ago."

The man's voice had become strangely soft and tender. Why did his senses swim as a great sorrow crept over his heart ? He tried to calm himself ; then gazed in surprise at the child's eyes. They had suddenly opened wide, had looked straight into his own.

" She has dark eyes," he stammered as the woman stared. His voice shook. Was it imagination ? Why did the child's gaze and his own meet as though in the surprised light of swift recognition ?

The woman crept from the room, softly closing the door behind her.

Royal Clensy stared like one in a dream through the

window-pane, apparently gazing out towards the distant seas. "Well, of all the world of women the child reminds me of her—Sestrina!" he muttered. And as he gazed, the pale hands of half-forgotten romance seemed to scrape up and down the window-pane. He threw the lattice wide open. Was it the winds that caressed his brow as the rich scent of the wistaria drifted to his nostrils, coming like the scented odours from orange groves?

"Sestrina, you—after all these years!" he murmured.

Then he sadly smiled as he stared again at the image of the two stars that seemed to stare up from the bowl where the goldfish swam, as, like outblown hair, the leaves of the wistaria touched his face. His mind wandered, went far away. It was not the Channel cliffs by the English seas that he saw; he was gazing on the vast solitude of tropic seas, and knew that the voice that called his name was no foolish sound, no freak of the imagination. He felt the hot tropic wind touch his face. He saw the castaway's raft as it drifted on—on towards the skylines of infinity. The great blinding sun shone over a phantom day. He saw the silent, huddled form, and the fluttering rags as the hot wind blew, revealing the bleached, whitened skeleton—the relic that had called to him; the call which had roamed, how far across the universe before he heard? He knew the truth. Even the waves seemed to put forth their hands and pluck in sorrow, as they gently tossed against the craft which bore that sad burden of all his soul's conceptions of the beautiful on the drought-swept depths of the past. It was as though the ocean felt the sorrow of it all, had sent her children, the waves, that they might push the fragile freight of that lone argosy into the deep calm of her bosom for rest.

The vision slowly passed. The castaway's raft became as shadowy as those whitened bones of old trust, love and simple faith, as it faded away into the great dusk of the starlit tropic seas—with all that had once been the beautiful Sestrina.

EPILOGUE

NOT many years ago, a strangely rigged, rakish-looking brigantine hugged the shore of a lonely isle of the remote South Pacific Ocean. The skipper had sighted a ragged distress signal flag flying from the top of a dead palm tree close to the shore.

"*Manana!*" exclaimed the half-caste, sun-tanned boatswain as the yellow-skinned, mixed crew of Spanish-Mexicans, Yaquis, and Yucatan sailors walked up the shore and stumbled across the old kitchen.

They held their strange, red-striped tasselled caps reverentially in their hands as they gazed on the rotting mats amd calabashes, the mouldy remnants of an artistically weaved tappa-skirt and torn bodice that lay by the little bunk bed in a hut just by. On a small post's crosswise placed rod swung a tiny bunch of feathers and bone, swinging to and fro to the sea winds, like some sad relic of Hope's once radiant wings—it was Rohana, still chained to his perch! Then the wild-looking sailormen strode down the incline.

"*Sapristi!*" cried one of those tawny, sunburnt men from the seas in a startled voice.

The huddled crew stood just within the portals of the pagan cathedral-cavern, gazing on the wondrously fashioned moaning shell-organ and on the three giant, clay figures: Atua, with four arms, stood on the left, the extreme right arm still faithfully reclining on Pelé's left shoulder; Kauhilo, with the human skull on his shoulder, stood on the right of the goddess, whose uncrumbling hand of the extreme right arm still gripped the ivory idol. Their sombre faces were overgrown with hirsute-like moss, the ears sprouting delicate

hair-fern; but the big curved-lipped mouths were smooth and perfect. It seemed as though Time's hand had, in some melancholy sympathy, toiled on after Hawahee. For, as they stood there in the sombre solitude of that cavern's aisles, mysteriously expressing in wondrous carven beauty the grandeur of paganism and soulful belief in a merciful omnipotence, they looked more god-like than ever!

"*Quien sabe?*" said one of the crew as they stood staring at each other.

"*Dell 'anima!*" exclaimed another in an awestruck voice, as two of the sailors walked into the shadows by the altar cavern and found themselves before a wonderfully carven figure of a woman!

The exquisitely chiselled face was strangely untouched by the hand of time. The wide-open eyelids still mystically expressed the old half-divine sensuous charm that had fed the hungry, noble soul of a long dead pagan. It was Sestrina's shape, Hawahee's faith, hope, art and love of woman, expressed in stone. A tiny blue-winged bird fluttered from the hollow of the figure's bosom; it had built its nest within. There, under the bosom's polished fullness, nestled four red-specked eggs, nestling in the silent eternity that was to awaken and thrill to-morrow's leafy boughs with music.

As the astounded, red-shirted sailormen crept down the shore sands, going back to their boat, they glanced swiftly over their shoulders, half in fright—they could hear the calling deep bass moans of the deserted gods. Just as time enriches the music of a violin, age had mellowed the voices of the gods till they gave forth sounds that echoed as though from eternity. Even that rough, piratical-looking crew of the brigantine *Cruz* were affected as they heard the wailful, soulful music of the stone figure, of the lovely shaped sculptured woman crying in the isle's solitude, as though she would tell their ears that sorrow is the soul of infinity. Those wondering sailormen could still hear her voice calling

as they stood on deck, and the melancholy sounds came drifting across the lagoons and out over the calm, deep-moving waters of the tropic sea. They stared in each other's eyes in wonder. The skipper opened his bearded mouth and yelled a great oath. Then the yellowish canvas sails, bellying to the night winds, sighed sorrowfully as they faded away, flying south-west under the stars of the Pacific.